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From Velázquez to Bloomberg 2020

The Portrait as a Representation of Power

João Pedro Amorim

“With the evolution of the political regimes, the image of a successful leader has shifted from an image of majesty to one of dignity, and later on to one of closeness and simplicity.”

When one visits the rooms dedicated to Velázquez in the Museum of Prado, it is extraordinary how portraits of kings and those of jesters and peasants are laid side-by-side. The nobility and dignity given to the lower members of the court exemplifies an early example of a revolution in the politics of representation. In the antipodes of this example, we analyse how the campaign of the millionaire Michael Bloomberg to be the Democratic Candidate for the 2020 elections hired companies to produce nonsense memes and digital propaganda. Our hypothesis is that on the center of its strategy the goal was to create an image of Bloomberg that besides viral would be relatable and humorous. The article overviews the evolution of the portrait as an element of political representation and reflects on how the development of modern and contemporary art transformed the art of political portraiture. Furthermore it deliberates on the two-way appropriation of representation techniques between art movements and political movements.

Keywords: Politics of representation, digital propaganda, Diego Velázquez, Michael Bloomberg, aestheticization of politics

The End of Majesty and The Representation of Dignity

In the rooms dedicated to Velázquez in the Museum of Prado, in Madrid, we discover a curious view. Side-by-side stand kings, princes, prime ministers, roman gods, jesters and other lesser members of the court. Our horizontal gaze connects the portrait of Phillip IV to the buffoon Sebastian de Morra but it certainly is not matched by a social or hierarchical horizontality in the society of the seventeenth century, even if the figure of the buffoon was one that had specific privileges. Paradoxically marked by folly and wisdom, the buffoon was one of the few members of the court that had the right to criticize or mock royal decisions. Centuries later, we witness such disposition of paintings as the radical proof of the dignity of humans – irrelevant of their social condition.

By applying Nordenfelt’s definitions of dignity to the paintings of Velázquez, Andrew Edgar (2003) describes how in Velázquez a “modern conception of dignity, tied to merit and individual achievement, is emerging to challenge a mediaeval worldview that is supportive of a divinely appointed hierarchy” (Edgar 2003, 12). With the empowerment of the bourgeoisie, the long-unquestioned power of the nobility was then put in check. Velázquez was the painter of the court, and throughout the years, he conceived several masterpieces that achieved to assert the royal family as resourceful, heroic and dignified. Edgar points out the military prowess that many of these paintings seem to evince. For example, the portraits of *Philip IV on Horseback* (1635), *Philip III on Horseback* (1635) and *Gaspar de Guzmán, Count-Duke of Olivares, on Horseback* (1636) show the monarchs and the noble in a presentation of strength and ability as they are depicted in rearing horses. All these works display a sense of phantasy that, knowingly or not, denounce the mission of Velázquez to a contemporary viewer. But it is the painting of prince Balthasar Charles on horseback (*Equestrian Portrait of Prince Balthasar Charles*, 1635–36) that pushes this illusion even further – the small prince on his small horse doesn’t depict so much a future promise to the royal court as it reveals the ideological phantasy that supports the monarchy. Yet, such commissions achieved what they intended – they create a representation of honour, a reality where these characters are empowered. These paintings are themselves objects of empowerment, of transfiguration.

As part of his work in the court, Velázquez was commissioned to paint a series of portraits of the buffoons to decorate the palace of Buen Retiro (Roncero López 2007, 106). Even if they were commissioned to depict the “property” of the king,¹ in order to better represent his greatness, these paintings evince sympathy and great respect towards the people depicted. It has been noted

¹ John Berger has described the tight relation between European art of this century and property (1972, 109). We can speculate here that such commissions were motivated by the desire of the king in having the diversity of his court documented in painting, hence registering towards the future his power and nobility.



Figure 1. The photograph of a couple of meatballs, one of them with the superimposed face of Michael Bloomberg.
<https://twitter.com/Mike2020/status/1217254115132235776>

by several scholars how portraits such as those of Sebastián de Morra (c. 1644) or *Buffoon with Books* (c. 1640) depict the jesters with great seriousness and dignity.² In these paintings “the authenticity of humanity, exempt from the problems of valor, (...) could be better captured” (Maravall cited in Roncero Lopez 2007, 106). The seriousness of their regards, the dignity of their pose is not challenged by the fact that the painting makes evident the fact that their bodies are quite smaller than the average human.

Earlier in his career, Velázquez practiced with genre painting – i.e. paintings that depict the lives of the lower classes. John Berger (1972) notes that genre paintings, being quite inexpensive, affirmed the “virtue” of those who purchased them – usually members of the growing bourgeoisie – as the “purpose of the ‘genre’ picture was to prove [...] that virtue in this world was rewarded by social and financial success” (Berger 1972, 103). Berger claims that the average genre painting “assert[ed] two things: that the poor are happy, and that the better-off are a source of hope for the world” (Berger 1972, 104). The genre paintings created by Velázquez are quite different however – they don’t offer cheap moralism for the sake of the paintings’ future owners. Instead, these *bodegones* portray a set of characters sometimes having well deserved leisure (*Three Men at Table [The Luncheon]*, c. 1618), others anguished by unknown private matters (*Old Woman Frying Eggs*, 1618). In these paintings, the characters are not mere objects for the bourgeois to identify with their morals, but possess their own individuality as they are painted “with a bitter and direct realism”³ (Berger 1972, 103).

The shift in the representation of monarchs was a symptom of a society susceptible to the bourgeois ideals of morality and value. We see it when we visit the aforementioned room 012 of the Museum of Prado. Among those paintings, *Las Meninas* (Diego Velázquez 1656) shines unparalleled. Much has been written about this painting where a crowd of characters, including Infanta Margaret Theresa and Velázquez himself, seem to regard something at the blind spot of the painting. A mirror strategically placed in the back of the picture denounces the invisible spectacle that everyone observes – the king and queen of Spain, Philip IV and Mariana of Austria posing for Velázquez. The painting we see results of the “exact superimposition of the model’s gaze as it is being painted, of the spectator’s as he contemplates the painting, and of painter’s as he is composing his figure” (Foucault [1966] 2005, 16). Representation reveals itself and at the same time the point-of-view of the monarchs – it is we, who behold the painting, that assume the place of models, hence of kings. Not only this painting breaks all conventions and hierarchies, but also here the representation is free from the relation to the depicted as well as to the perceiving subject, who would see it as an depiction. As Foucault describes this: In “its foundation – [it

is free] of the person it resembles and the person in whose eyes it is only a resemblance –” and, by doing that, it “can offer itself as representation in its pure form” ([1966] 2005, 18).

The Aesthetic Regime and The Avant-gardes

The 19th century witnessed a foundational shift in the artistic conventions and codes that would affect themes represented and techniques used alike. Throughout this century, a growing number of artists lost interest in the mimetic capacity of art to focus on its material, or in the medium-specific aspect. Likewise, the traditional hierarchy of genres of painting had been revoked, hence releasing the pictorial forms from the “poetic hierarchies,” starting with the “rehabilitation of ‘genre painting’” (Rancière 2011, 104). The “destruction of the representative regime,” with a focus on mimesis and on following specific conventions and hierarchies of representation, defined “an aesthetic regime of the arts that stands for another articulation of practices, forms of visibility and modes of intelligibility” (Rancière 2011, 103).

While representation remained possible, it was no longer the sole measure of value within the artistic work. The visibility of the work of art was transformed, hence becoming, as Rancière states:

[A] visibility of an aesthetic kind, where the coalescing relation between the thickness of the pictorial matter and the materiality of the gesture of painting imposes itself in the place of the representative privilege of the form that organized and annulled the matter. (Rancière 2011, 110)

In this new aesthetic regime the word still played (and plays) an important role – it is notable how dependent on discourse modernist art and the avant-gardes that followed were. It is however a word liberated of the constrictions of poetic convention. The themes, the people and objects that could be represented or depicted have been under constant expansion, paralleled by the expansion of materials, techniques and tools. During the 20th century in the 1960s three avant-gardes practically eliminated any possible development for the artistic practice – following Marcel Duchamp’s provocation to the Society of Independent Artists of 1917. Pop-art artworks offer representations of objects from mass culture in a subversive gesture that prompted the recognition of the aesthetics of industrialism and consumerism. Nouveau réalisme appropriated the objects themselves by including them in the artworks, expanding the meaning of *objet trouvée*. And finally, Fluxus proposed a complete fusion between life and art.⁴

The evolution of art is intertwined with the evolution of society itself. As we’ve seen before, the rehabilitation of “genre” painting

2 For a review of such scholars see Lopez 2007, 105–108.

3 John Berger uses these words to classify Adriaen Brouwer as “the only exceptional ‘genre’ painter” (1972, 103).

4 A decade before, the *Létterists* and later on the *Situationists* followed a similar motto.

can be linked to the emergence of the bourgeoisie, with the bourgeois buyer being interested in art that morally supports an ethics of work, sacrifice and effort as opposed to a hereditary moral value. On the other hand, mass culture and the existence of state-sponsorship allowed for a further experimentation within the arts, as well as the emergence of openly political art. Martha Rosler (2010) explains that, unlike the noble patrons, the bourgeois tended to be clients who could distance themselves from the critiques and discourses represented by the artworks. Furthermore, to own such artworks raised the moral authority of the bourgeois, as art-lovers and connoisseurs.

This shift in the artistic regime was not limited to the then emerging art – it meant that works of the past would be reconsidered according to different standards, just as the present ones were being developed against the background of a new aesthetic agenda. It is after this principle that we are able to look at Velázquez with a contemporary gaze and frame it to provide historical context to the evolution that we aim to track.

If in Velázquez paintings, we nevertheless saw representations of persons not blessed with a high social status being highly morally represented, in the following centuries we would see the preponderance of such, especially so because of an influence that mass culture, accessible to everyone, would have in all art forms. The dignified representation of low class and minorities grew stronger with the ideals of the Enlightenment and later with those of the French Revolution. Such ideals are in some ways ideals of democracy, and democracy needs democratic representation. It was when hierarchies of representation were broken that a new class of artists, supported by an emerging bourgeois class, shifted their focus on the representation of disempowered social groups. For example, lower classes such as workers (*The Floor Scrapers*, by Gustave Caillebotte, 1875) or marginalized social groups such as black citizens (*Bust of a Black Man*, by Théodore Géricault, 1808). Art was an agent of empowerment by extending the privilege of representation to the unprivileged, operating a reconfiguration of the “topography of the possible”, enacting a “process of political subjectivation” (Rancière 2010, 73). The transformation in the politics of representation means that a real political transformation becomes possible as well. Only by making alternative modes of social organization thinkable, can we even start operating to install them.

Populist Representations of Power

As art strived for its radical autonomy from the political classes (and the church), mass media and advertisement come to fill the void. Operatively, this shift mirrors the political transformations and the evolution of the areas of influence and legitimization that such representations should affect. Throughout the 18th and the 19th century, newspapers and pamphlets were the main stage

of power struggles among the revolutionary movements and the rising bourgeoisie, in a moment when Europe witnessed the emergence of constitutional monarchies and republics.

In the 20th century, mass media has become (and still remains nowadays) the privileged form for construction of the representations of power and dignity, and for legitimization of politicians, political parties and regimes. Authoritarian regimes had dedicated ministries of propaganda and information that created the mythology revolving around providential figures, civilizational and moral saviours – i.e. in the film *Padenie Berlina* (1950) Stalin's presence alone marks the defeat of Nazi Germany and is responsible for the positive resolution of the narrative.⁵ Likewise, the protagonists of the democratic regimes competed amongst themselves to create representations that prove that they are “the men for the job”. Debates, interviews and other forms of media presences all played a role in the perception of the dignity of each candidate. Here, dignity becomes entangled with a set of values specific to each political faction.

While the majority of the political systems in the Western countries nowadays has a democratic nature, its expression and extension varies wildly – with many excluded from participation as the dominant bourgeois classes have a control far greater than their fair share. Throughout the 20th and the 21st century, photography, cinema and literature in particular tried to extend, document, and give visibility to the invisible perspectives of modern life. At its core, such developments are analogous to the expansion of the blossoming democracy onto those most excluded from the systems of representation.

With the evolution of the political regimes, the image of a successful leader has shifted from an image of majesty to one of dignity, and later on to one of closeness and simplicity. As an example of this transition, the appeal of Barack Obama's presidency came also from the fact that it projected an image that blended the merit of a visionary with the simplicity of a man that didn't belong amongst the elites. The disenchantment with democratic regimes across the Western world, created a suspicion of traditional models of political correctness and rhetoric. Even if the later argument has been weaponized by the far right to defend racist and sexist messages, the fact is that the predominant centre-right and centre-left rhetoric fails to address the needs and concerns of an important part of the population. In the last couple of years, new forms of populism have emerged to satisfy a feeling of growing frustration and disempowerment – a feeling of shortcomings of democracy.

There are several key moments in contemporary political history, but perhaps the most evident one is the aftermath to the 2008's financial crisis. The TINA (There is No Alternative) politics

5 See Slavoj Žižek's analysis in the film *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* (2012).

still shape the political landscape today, as they cancelled the possibility of democratic debate. Centre-left and centre-right governments applied a series of austerity measures that have defined and lowered the expectations of most of the citizens of the EU in the last decades. Besides austerity measures that evince the limitations of democratic power in relation to financial and economic power, the democratic systems are often even formally unfit to provide representation to its entire people. Some political systems are full of formalities and rules that block and limit democracy – namely the methods of distribution of mandates, but also formalities and other bureaucratic devices created to block specific pieces of legislation.

In this context of insufficient representability of democratic regimes and unwillingness of representatives to decide against economic and financial power, new populist movements emerged. Despite very diverse, these new actors communicate in a very ordinary and straightforward fashion. Often controversial, sometimes politically incorrect, they do not follow the usual political rhetoric under the claim of fighting the status quo. Some movements are coming from the left, where they question established political procedures – like the questioning of TINA politics. Others come from the right, usually using racist, sexist and nationalist rhetoric as expressions of empowerment of the unsatisfied popular and middle classes.

We can find an early example of this attitude in Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. However, the most interesting case to analyse is the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson. The political comedian John Oliver (2019) attentively described how Boris has been for many years cultivating a goofy, sometimes ridiculous and careless attitude occasionally as a form of silencing polemics, but in general to conceal his privileged upbringing. Boris Johnson studied in Eton College, the elite's boarding school where the nobility (including princes William and Harry) and the political elite has been educated, and Oxford University. He is more known to the average British for his gaffes and simplicity. In fact, this self-constructed representation was fundamental for his election in 2019, where he won the support of “the red wall” – working class voting circles traditionally connected to Labour. In the United Kingdom, people have been increasingly unhappy with the elites that have been running the country since the Thatcher years and the rhetoric that have defined British politics ever since. Even though he belongs to the same political party and has the same background as his predecessor David Cameron, he was capable of channelling the populist vote through his carefully crafted careless appearance and goofy behaviour.

Johnson was not the only one to ride the populist wave. However, while Donald Trump, despite being a millionaire, is nevertheless an outsider of the political debate, Johnson is an insider and member of the political elite. Taking advantage of the sensationalization

of the media, he finds in viral irrelevant episodes the possibility of presenting himself as someone with whom the average worker can identify and relate – while still having a political program for the liking of economic elites. The representation that Johnson and many of the contemporary political leaders aim at is one that matches the populist environment.

Irony and Nonsense – New Forms of Political Representation

After a long period of speculation, Michael Bloomberg finally announced his candidacy officially in November 2019, 7 months later than the last serious candidates (Pete Buttigieg and Joe Biden), having already missed important debates. The main Bloomberg's justification for of his late candidacy was the lack of a strong candidate to beat Donald Trump. His candidacy appeared in a moment when the favourite candidate of the moderate Democrats, Joe Biden, was losing protagonist against the rise of progressive candidates like Bernie Sanders (who is sometimes referred as being a populist) and Elizabeth Warren.⁶ Despite not winning the nomination – he would quit the race on March 4th and endorse Joe Biden – his candidacy was a major pivot to shield Biden's candidacy from criticism that found in Bloomberg a much preferable target.

Throughout his political participation, Bloomberg moved between supporting Republican candidates – G.W. Bush – to Democrats – Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama – and despite having spent most of his life as a Democrat, when he served as the Mayor of New York he ran as a Republican in his first term, and as an independent in his second. Despite the significant role that he played between 2002 and 2013, he was still a relative outsider. Apart from being a politician, he's best known as a businessman and philanthropist, but most importantly, as a billionaire. In 2019, he was proclaimed by *Forbes* as the 9th richest person on the planet. His most well-known business is software, data and media company Bloomberg L.P. In his 2020 campaign, he spent over 500 million dollars of his personal fortune to fund his campaign. An important part of that budget went into TV-ads and into social media strategy that flooded the social networks with ads featuring ironic attacks on Trump and nonsensical representations of Mayor Bloomberg.

Even though it failed to convince the Democratic voters, the campaign of Bloomberg was successful in becoming viral and achieving dominating online presence. Bloomberg's campaign followed the latest trends of meme culture and might just have blocked the strategy of the opposing representations from troll

6 According to [realeclearpolitics.com](https://www.realeclearpolitics.com)'s aggregated poll, on the last day before Bloomberg entered the polling options, November 16th, Biden had 26% of the intentions against 20.8% by Warren and 17.8% by Sanders.

factories around the world. These are networks of users, often hired by foreign states, that create fake accounts and flood social media with politically divisive content to foster instability in a given territory, taking advantage of the algorithms that favour online clickbait posts which are interactive, and incite strong reactions. While we are not in a position to understand the goal and motivation of the strategy, we can analyse how such representations transform the political spectrum. Like Trump before him, Bloomberg's invested heavily in internet campaigning. However, if the representations chosen by Trump's campaign conflated the image of a presidential candidate with the image of the rebel, the antihero that will fight against the "elites" and the foreign "menaces,"⁷ Bloomberg's campaign seemed random in comparison, seemingly without a clear goal except the one of increasing the name recognition of the candidate. In an article in *Mashable*, Tim Marcy shortlists some of those "weird" moments: "a cringey video about President Donald Trump lying that featured a dancing gingerbread whose pants were on fire", "a corny video of all the dogs that "like" Mike after he greeted a dog by shaking its snout" and, of course, the photo of a couple of meatballs, one of them with the superimposed face of Michael Bloomberg (2020) (fig. 1).

At the moment of the writing of this paper, Joe Biden, who has largely beaten Bloomberg and the rest of Democratic candidates, seems to be the favourite candidate for the Presidential Election – a candidate that has many weaknesses, but has some lead among voters' perception of honesty (Blumenthal 2020). If Biden indeed wins, Bloomberg will have achieved his main goal for this election (at the same time that he prevented a win of more progressive candidates who defended higher taxation). By flooding social and traditional media alike, his campaign might have had an impact on the electoral results by neutralizing for some months – between November 2019 and March 2020 – the strong presence Trump had on them.

This type of nonsensical campaigning had its precedence in previous ironic electoral candidacies, but most of them were for low-profile positions and/or had little success. For example: Tiririca the Clown was elected in 2010 as a Federal Deputee in São Paulo; the satirical political candidate Lord Buckethead has already ran for four general elections in the UK. And if Trump's, Johnson's and Berlusconi's campaigns used nonsense and ridiculous humour as spin strategies to hide the essence of their candidate's elitist political programs, Bloomberg's campaign used irony and nonsense that completely overshadowed any political ideas of the candidate whatsoever. Anthony Nadler, associate professor of media studies at Ursinus College, commenting on Bloomberg's campaign, suggests that the campaign "might do some dumb things, at first, that are clearly laughable, but

they're probably testing things out... trying to see which ones get engagement, which ones get traction" (in Marcin 2020). The campaign of Bloomberg tried to create a representation of the candidate that could enter the debris of the internet landscape of post-capitalism. As we moved past representations of majesty and representations of dignity to embrace "populist" representations of vulgarity – the non-politicians, the common men who say obscene things –, Bloomberg's campaign hints at a novel form of political representation. Post-ironical and nonsensical, such representations aim at visibility for visibility sake, detached from any real political significance.

Bloomberg's campaign seems to fit within the critique of postmodernity made by David Foster Wallace. Namely, the proliferation of irony with no significance, imbued with cynicism aimed at an inflation of the self-image (Wallace in Woodend 2019, 465). Reviewing the reception of David Foster Wallace's work, Kyle Woodend contests the mainstream opinion that the writer criticizes irony in general; his critique is instead focused on "irony that is used for an ulterior motive in support of the ego" (Woodend 2019, 466). He claims that before postmodernity "irony had a political aim," and served as a "tool of proper critical engagement" (Woodend 2019, 464–466). Therefore, he concludes, it is possible to have irony, sincerity and affection concurrently. It is possible to have a "simultaneous use of irony and sincerity, using one to challenge the other and vice versa, thus creating a delicate balance where neither can grow dominant" (Doyle 2018, 261).

The Dissolution of Representation

Historically, political movements have been able to appropriate aesthetics as a tool. Throughout the 20th century, we have assisted to a transit of signs and language between politics and aesthetics. As avant-garde artists were appropriating and disrupting dimensions of political life, politicians from the entire spectre – starting perhaps with the fascist movements – aestheticized their political movements. For Walter Benjamin, writing under the threatening shadow of Nazism, such aestheticization of politics – where "an apparatus is at the service of the production of cultural values" – culminates in war ([1939] 2000, 314). Only war, the ultimate aesthetic fascist experience, can "give a purpose to the bigger mass movements, [...] mobili[zing] all the available technical means of the contemporary epoch without changing anything in the regime of propriety" (Benjamin [1939] 2000, 314). In contemporary times, however, war is not the only form of mobilizing all the available technical means and reinforcing the regime of propriety. Economic crisis and natural disasters, sports and other mega-events, and the internet as a battleground can achieve the same effect as a war.

As a response to the artistic subversion of political and communication tools, the political subversion of aesthetics is a

7 For example when Trump published on his twitter a video where he appears photoshopped as the powerful villain Thanos in a scene from the Marvel blockbuster *Avengers* (O'Neil, 2019).

form of reinforcing existing ideologies. Constantly adapting, these processes reach a chaotic nature in the contemporary times. In her text “Art as Occupation: Claims for an Autonomy of Life”, Hito Steyerl explains how the aestheticization of politics has become an aestheticization of all domains of social activity, as a process of economic valuation. At the same time that this is happening, experiencing art autonomously becomes increasingly difficult:

On all levels of everyday activity art not only invades life, but occupies it. This doesn't mean that it's omnipresent. It just means that it has established a complex topology of both overbearing presence and gaping absence—both of which impact daily life. (Hito Steyerl 2011)

Throughout our daily activities, we are constantly being exposed to aesthetic (and ideological) experiences, and as such, experiencing life as well as art as autonomous becomes increasingly difficult. Within the digital economy of visibility, the artistic experience often becomes a moment to be documented and shared in social media. More often than not, the aesthetic experience itself becomes a mere vessel for a given economic or political purpose.

Bloomberg's campaign represents a new stage on the representation of power, invested in the proliferation of strategies of derision and disruption first developed in art. Following some of the techniques of the populist movements, this campaign extended the uses of social networks and developed the appropriation of irony, here devoid of a clear message, and used for the enhancement of the visibility of the candidate. As cynical irony is insincere, it fosters isolation and a narcissistic engulfment (Woodend 2019) that can have dangerous consequences on the context of a political movement. By flooding traditional and contemporary media, Michael Bloomberg's campaign used aesthetics to promote his self-image, adhering to contemporary trends of nonsense and humour.

Bloomberg's campaign can be taken as a paradigm of contemporary campaigns using new forms of representation. The campaigns that are not designed for a specific person, nor even an audience, therefore the representations that are the results of these campaigns are not directed at the majesty figures, nor at dignified bourgeois sensibly, nor meant for vulgar “mass consumption”. They are directed at the algorithms, for achieving virality and widespread reach. They are supposed to take advantage of the ongoing “delegation of the analytical functions of the understanding to computational automatisms,” for which a “new hermeneutic epoch borne by [the] screens” is necessary, the screens that have become “the unavoidable interfaces of the data economy” (Stiegler 2018, 174–176). As Bernard Stiegler notes, at the present moment, the “networks of screens” that compose the digital are more of “agents of entropy than elements of a hermeneutics” (Stiegler 2018, 174).

The campaign of Michael Bloomberg was not able to take advantage of the digital entropy, at least directly. In a moment where traditional models of wisdom are disappearing – and after all wisdom is a “communal virtue” that cannot be “transferred to a machine” (Sardar 2020, 9–10) – we might see in the following years more of these campaigns that rely either solely or partially on entropic forms of representation. If such strategies are not complementing a definite representation of democratic power, then we are facing the dissolution of representation, and the emergence of metadata as the fundamental political agent.

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Short biography

João Pedro Amorim is a visual artist, a PhD candidate and researcher at the Research Center for Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR), with a FCT fellowship. His papers have been published in indexed journals (Scopus and WoS). His film *on shadows and their names* was premiered in Doclisboa 2020. Previously, he was a research fellow at the Digital Creativity Centre at the School of Arts at Universidade Católica Portuguesa, where he coordinated the communication team and the residency program in partnership with Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. He holds a Master in Contemporary Artistic Practices (Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto) and a Bachelor in Communication Sciences (University of Porto). Between 2014 and 2015 he collaborated with the collective Caucaso Factory (Bologna/ Berlin) in several film projects as assistant director.

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