



Juan Esteves Photos&Reviews

Tempus Fugit > Ilan Kelson

>What we think, what we feel, our relationships and our experiences can be trivial or remarkable. But transforming them into art is a little more difficult. In 1984, Czech philosopher Vilém Flusser (1920-1991) wrote in his small but relevant book titled *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* (European Photography) that ‘there is no everyday activity which does not aspire to be photographed.’ This is a complex exercise because time goes by quickly, it flies, since when Virgil (70 BC-19 BC) in his long poem *The Georgics*, coined the expression *Tempus Fugit*, a well-known phrase that is also the title of Ilan Kelson’s photobook, published by Fotô Editorial in late 2020.

Today, our metrics are different and, as Tunisian-born French philosopher Pierre Lévy (who specializes in implications of cyberspace and digital communications) says, it is necessary to observe the new perspectives regarding the advances of the means with which we communicate, which certainly involves one of the conflicts of photography, which generally seeks to describe the present, but making it immediately past. In fact, as this thinker says, not even online moments happen in real time, as they have a chronic delay. Then, how about the images that reside in distant past?

>Tempus Fugit, according to its editors, attempted to think about what to do with the photos we’ve accumulated in life. It is a joint work of curator and author. Eight years ago, Kelson

did a portfolio reading with editor Eder Chiodetto, who in that moment couldn't find connections between the images. However, he says "it had a promising core that involved the issue of ancestry, the passage of time, life cycles, although still not fully developed." The photographer then returned years later with a larger collection, still presenting these characteristics, thus allowing a more condensed and interesting editing process.

Kelson poetically says that he became interested in photography when he was a teenager, when he developed a photograph: "a fluid and nebulous image slowly assuming its shape until it is completed in the developer. In the serenity of that static image, I envisioned how I could contain the world. It seemed that I was given time to silence and empty my quiet mind." Certainly an experience that many other authors had while performing that slow but pleasant analog process.

>The author's lyrical way to express himself semantically is similar to his imagery, which in turn is supported by the graphic design created by Fábio Messias in a classic style of fabric cover with a cradle for a small contemplative photograph, which is mirrored on the back cover, causing some nostalgia for the beautiful Aperture* issues in the 1970s. The smooth transparencies on Clear Plus paper, among images printed by Ipsis on rigid Garda Kiara, reinforce the idea of the passage of time to which the author seeks to allude.

As a recurrent characteristic seen in contemporary photobooks, apparently old informal family photos mix with contemporary images, finding some reference aspects seen in other interesting photobooks of the publisher, such as *Vereda Mágica* (Fotô Editorial, 2020) by Norma Vieira (review here: <https://blogdojuanesteves.tumblr.com/.../veredas-m%C3...>). These images contrast with beautiful shots of landscapes displaying a more metaphysical character, with abstractions created by movement, graphical representations, textures, overlapping, and collage, while the four seasons of the year are presented in a metaphor indicating the passage of time, using color and black and white moments skillfully connected by the editor.

>Fabiana Bruno and Eder Chiodetto ask themselves: So what are photographs for? When flying over the collection of a photographer as Ilan Kelson, with philosophical questioning and sensitive thinking, we enter a constellation whose stars illuminate each other, transforming each other, with many questions about the fate of the world (...)". Although we can envision an animistic search that in certain moments finds its visual translation, more critical situations are noticeable in their impossibilities, although their well-structured graphical representations apparently avoid the diachronic deepening analysis of certain photographs.

However, there's an explicit merit in *Tempus Fugit*: an amalgam of subjective issues regarding the existence and the possibility of expressing them in an ecstatic way, which the dying conceptual period, with its excessive inconsistencies, ended up removing from a large part of contemporary production. It is interesting to think that it's not the clarity of the discourse, but the uncertain emotion that can provide enough empathy to enter the author's universe. Instead of trying to reveal his attributes, we must consider him comprehensively, not forgetting the proposed mystery nor exaggerating the questioning of its most trivial sense.

>The author describes his experience as a constant path in his searches: He graduated in economics, attended the course of language studies, which he abandoned in the third year, and discovered later that he would like to have studied architecture. He became a reporter and tried to be a photojournalist, and then started working in the financial sector, where he has been so far. He found in his photo lab a possibility to empty his 'walking mind' and discovered in photography 'a placid, full, and passionate' way to express himself. In his favor, let's recall the history of photography: how can't we think of modernist dilettantes like Rubens Scavone (1925-2007) or José Yalenti (1895-1967) whose contributions have become essential?

As French Georges Didi-Huberman wrote: "The artist invents times. He shapes and gives life to forms so far impossible or unthinkable: aporias, fables and chronicles."

Imagens © Ilan Kelson texto © Juan Esteves

*Aperture Foundation is a nonprofit arts institution, founded in 1952 by photographers and critics like Ansel Adams, Minor White, Dorothea Lange and Nancy Newhall, as 'a common ground for the advancement of photography,' creating a forum for fine-art photography, a new concept at the time.

Today, it's a publisher and multiplatform community involved with photography as a language of ideas and committed to the contributions from the community to pressing issues of society and contemporary culture.

In this moment of restrictions due to the pandemic and political irresponsibility with health and culture, let's support artists, researchers, publishers, print shops, and our culture. Their contribution is essential and goes beyond our existence and domestic comfort in this quarantine period.

