

NOSTALGIA FOR A WORLD I NEVER LIVED IN

Review on the text 'What is Post-digital' by Florian Cramer

Submerged in nostalgia, I am swinging back and forth between realities. My dad and I, we like to listen to The Doors or Rolling Stones, Nirvana. I would sing myself a tune (as if it is a memory), fall back and swoon.

Oh remind me of that time again, take me time travelling (honestly time is just a belief.)

I have just cut my fingernails and now I feel disoriented.

In the act of doing something we know, we drift off into realities, things that did not happen. We're in another time, another space, rapidly collecting false memories, inventing stories about ourselves. Within our minds there is barely a sense of time, but there may be a sense of a better world, a more aesthetic one maybe. Progress is not linear, just like time, it is abstract and incomprehensible.

I long for a time that I have not lived in. I long for the future, which is so similar to longing for an unlived past.

When I listen to my parents talking about their childhood, I feel immersed within it. I can touch the things they touch. I can taste the rain they get soaked in. Perhaps, I feel jealous. There is a kind of charm that is lost through the years. A charm that people want to revive and regenerate.

There is a certain value to using old materials. Not only in the appealing process but in the outcome as well, we value the glitches and mistakes more than we used to. Failure has come to be fetishised. Cramer comes up with the name 'glitch aesthetics' as a form of repurposing old media through valuing the mistakes. Where through history photographic scientists tried to erase the possibility to have a 'failed' photo, we now desire the romantic errors of an analogue produced picture, owing to the fact that we constantly make perfect pictures in our daily lives.

Still, these practices can only be meaningfully called 'post-digital' when they do not merely revive older media technologies, but functionally repurpose them in relation to digital media technologies. Because we know the technology of today there is a certain extra to using analog equipment. Taking a picture is supposed to be very easy but reliving the whole process of developing makes it more valuable with the knowledge of the now. Because we live in this age of digitisation and worldwide sharing where we move so fast, we can unravel the slowness of the past.

References:

Cramer, F. (2014). What Is 'Post-Digital'?. A Peer-Reviewed Journal About, 3(1), pp.10-24.