



Talking photobooks: Standing by Kinshasa

Alexa Färber, Laura Kemmer, and AbdouMaliq Simone

abstract

While photobooks generally offer a relatively controlled way of urban imaginering in that they convey a specific visual narrative of the city's past, present, and future, Alexa Färber's format of 'talking photobooks' turns them into a resource for research and debate. Talking photobooks enable different positions on and readings of what a city has been and promises to be. In this conversation between Alexa Färber (Vienna), Laura Kemmer (Berlin) and AbdouMaliq Simone (Sheffield), three urban researchers discuss the acts of 'suturing the city' depicted in Filip DeBoeck's and Sammy Baloji's (2016) eponymous photobook – not as a form of repair, but as a sociomaterial mode of organizing provisional arrangements that remain provisional. We tackle the relation between city and standby from two directions. First, we discuss how photography articulates the disparate temporalities of urban promises, asking what DeBoeck and Baloji's work reveals about the 'urban now', a spatio-temporal and social configuration that is couched between the broken dreams of a better future and the 'not yet' of urban redemption. Next, we probe how *Suturing the city* exposes acts of 'standing by' these promises despite an ever-ubiquitous urban failure. Can photobooks re/activate modes of with-holding, dis-engaging, and out-living the city's essentially loose promises?

Link to trailer: <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/contribution/talking-photobooks-standing-kinshasa>

Full version: <https://www.talkingphotobooks.net/standingbykinshasa>.

Concept: Alexa Färber. Postproduction: Işıl Karataş.

reference

DeBoeck, F. and S. Baloji (2016) *Suturing the city: Living together in Congo's urban worlds*. London: Autograph ABP.

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