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INTRODUZIONE
INTRODUCTION

Alessandro Ippoliti, Elena Svalduz

Oltre lo sguardo/Beyon the Gaze rappresenta un'esplorazione a largo raggio sulla città come oggetto da osservare e interpretare, nella storia del suo essere e divenire. Divisa in sei tomi l'opera, che raccoglie 529 contributi, nasce dall'esigenza di riflettere sulle molteplici declinazioni della storia urbana, con un approccio interpretativo, metodologico e operativo tale da mettere in gioco nuove modalità e strumenti di lettura, che possano andare *oltre lo sguardo*. Se fino al XIX secolo infatti l'approccio era prevalentemente puro-visibilistico, *oltre lo sguardo* vuole evocare il passaggio a un atteggiamento più complesso e sistematico che comprenda dinamiche sociali, economiche, culturali della città nella sua realtà storica, ma anche presente e futura. Si tratta allora di considerare la città come oggetto sul quale diverse storie, diversi strumenti e metodi d'indagine si confrontano avviando processi critici.
L'ampiezza dei contenuti e della partecipazione all'opera conferma la capacità dell'Associazione Italiana di Storia Urbana di porsi come piattaforma di confronto/incontro a favore della ricerca e del dialogo interdisciplinare per la messa a punto di strumenti di studio e divulgazione dell'*heritage* urbano. I volumi si configurano come spazi tematici tendenti a

Oltre lo sguardo/Beyon the Gaze represents a wide-ranging exploration of the city as an object to be observed and interpreted, in the history of its being and becoming. Divided into six tomes, the work, which consists of 529 contributions, stems from the need to reflect on the multiple declinations of urban history, with an interpretative, methodological and operational approach: this allows us new ways and tools of reading, which can go beyond the gaze. If until the 19th century, in fact, the approach was predominantly pure-visibilistic, beyond the gaze wants to evoke a shift to a more complex and systematic attitude that encompasses social, economic, and cultural dynamics of the city in its historical as well as present and future reality. It is then to consider the city as an object on which different histories, different tools and methods of inquiry confront each other by initiating critical processes.
The breadth of content and participation in the work confirms the ability of the Italian Urban History Association to stand as a platform for comparison/meeting in favor of research and interdisciplinary dialogue for the development of tools in favor of the study and dissemination of urban heritage. The volumes are configured as thematic spaces tending

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BEYOND THE GAZE

a cura di
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Alessandro Ippoliti, Elena Svalduz

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LA CITTÀ RAPPRESENTATA
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a cura di
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Giorgia Sala

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THROUGH THE LENS OF THE ARCHITECT: INTERPRETING SABIH KAYAN'S PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE AND ITS ARCHITECTURAL REFLECTIONS

Bilge Beril Kapusuz Balci

Abstract

This paper explores Turkish architect Sabih Kayan's overlooked role as a photographer and its relationship to his architectural practice. Focusing on his photographs of the Hacettepe University Sıhhiye Campus, the study reveals his multifaceted approach as a "modern" architect, critic, and citizen. Kayan's photographic work embodies a dialogue between mid-century modern architecture and visual culture. His photographic perspective evolved during the 1970s, challenging traditional architectural photography. He used photography to position his work in a universal architectural canon and critique architectural contextuality. Kayan's photographs blur the line between objectivity and subjectivity, offering a critical distance from traditional architectural representation, making them valuable objects of interpretation and speculation.

Keywords

Architectural History, Urban History, Architectural Photography, Archive, Ankara.

Introduction

This paper is written with a fortuitous parallel to the unexpected emergence of an archive that points to Sabih Kayan's unrecognized aspect as a photographer. It constitutes an attempt to re-examine the archive, with the intention of understanding Kayan's positions in relation to his own architectural practice through photography and his methods of instrumentalizing the medium/environment. The photograph accompanying the beginning of the text (Fig. 1) depicts the shadow cast on the urban image framed by a photographer. The photograph reveals a moment from 1970s Ankara, where Kayan stands on Atatürk Boulevard, gazing towards *Kızılay* Square through the lens of his camera. The shadow of Kayan in the photograph transforms into a metaphor that could correspond to the inaccessibility of the true intentions behind his photographic production – a concept to be interpreted in this text.
The found photographs of Hacettepe University Sıhhiye Campus, designed by Sabih Kayan and subsequently photographed by the architect himself, have been integrated

into new narratives within the structure of this essay, treating them as unique historical moments wherein the architect reexamines his own practice from various perspectives: as an architect, as a photographer, or as an urban dweller, all from a critical distance. Each architectural imagination produced by Kayan through photography becomes a research subject indicating a network of distinct relational dynamics that define his manner of looking at the created object.
Artist and writer Victor Burgin considers evaluations or readings of photographs as evaluative and prescriptive, defining them as «a set of personal emotions and thoughts that arise from the photographer's work and are transmitted to the reader in an attempt to persuade them to the same view». According to Burgin, arguments put forth in evaluations are seldom truly arguments; they often exist more as a form of speech that consists of the declaration of ideas and the enumeration of assumptions, rather than a discourse whose accuracy is definitively established [Burgin 2013, 9]. The photographic readings in this essay occasionally reference Kayan's biography and professional practices, while simultaneously functioning as a visual investigation that attempts to lay down rules through the codes of architecture, the subject of photography within the historical and cultural context here. In its emergence, it can be seen as a conversation about architectural and urban representations rooted in the photographs produced by Kayan.



1: Sabih Kayan, From Sabih Kayan's Lens: Atatürk Boulevard, ca.1980 [Gökhan Tunçbilek Collection].

The Fragments of the Unexpected Archive and Photographic Evidence

At the turn of the millennium, architectural and urban historian Nancy Stieber marked the last twenty-five years of the twentieth century with a methodological tendency towards close-readings, or micro-history, that «eschewed grand narratives In favor of more focused stories», while defining the city in mind and memory, or the city perceived and imagined, as fruitful areas of research «with potential to shed new light on the meaning of the built environment» [Stieber 1999]. In a parallel vein, architectural historian Bülent Batuman [Batuman 2019, 11] defines urban imagination as «the memory we create regarding our perceptions of the entirety or parts of the city, the meanings we attribute to them, and the experiences we live within them», considering it as an accumulation that forms within various cultural mediums in relation to collective memory. Since, «the city as a composite of representational acts», as defined by Stieber, of concrete artifacts and their use is in constant flux, it can be claimed that the city can only as a representation, and the representation itself can be a multi-layered object of research and interpretation in search of alternative histories of the cities. As archives and tacit evidence of material culture were handled by architectural and urban historians in search of the city's visual and spatial history, studies on photography became another field of research of intertwined disciplines while photographic evidence gained a significant status. According to Angelo Maggi [Maggi 2019], an historian of architecture and photography, «different visual engagements with the urban environment mediated through photographic representations can bring new insights into the history and meaning of cities».

The "Architects Leaving Their Mark in Ankara" research project, the team of which I was a part and gave this paper its *raison d'etre*, aimed to reveal unknown histories of Ankara and less-heard voices that had once imagined the city and partaken in the material and social construction of it, as an alternative to the repeated histories of its being a capital as a significant construct of the nation-building process of the Kemalist regime in the early 1930s. While tracing back the architects who had an agency in constructing urban imaginations about Ankara, the project looked at a larger network of relationships that these architects and their architectural objects serve as intermediaries within, presenting a multi-layered and contingent cultural framework.

Visual documents also constituted a significant part of this accumulation as critical, cultural, and aesthetic declarations about the city. Photography, as a crucial medium in visual culture, has the potential to create alternative narratives about the history of architecture and the city, since the subject of a photograph is not passively "taken" by mechanical processes but is the result of an active act of "making"; the subject, the point of view, and the frame are "determined" by the photographer [Barthes 1981].

For the focus of this research on architect Sabih Kayan, accessing the archive of lawyer and collector Faruk Feza Üstünkaya and then unexpectedly accessing the archive of medical doctor and collector Prof. Dr. Gökhan Tunçbilek added numerous visual documents to the research process. These fragments shed light on hidden aspects of

architect Sabih Kayan and opened possibilities to reconsider his architectural practice beyond disciplinary boundaries, exploring forms of production that enable such reconsideration. The archive accessed through Gökhan Tunçbilek contained a multitude of photomontages, 35mm negative films, printed photographs in black-and-white, some personal and some of his interior design, and architectural projects. Particularly, a great number of photographs were related to Hacettepe University Campuses, which remained as one of the most important projects in Kayan's oeuvre, existed as negative films.

Those "visual evidence", to use Beatriz Colomina's term, «triggers speculative and critical writing» [Colomina 1996]. Reading "photographic evidence" complicates the researcher's work on one hand, but on the other hand, it can offer alternative perspectives due to the diverse and sometimes contradictory visual "texts" it adds to the understanding of architecture's production and consumption [Zimmerman 2014, 446].

Framing an All-rounder Architect: Sabih Kayan

Sabih Kayan, born and raised in Istanbul in the late Ottoman period and witnessed the Republic Revolution through his childhood, completed high school in *Alman Lisesi* (German High). Later when the war was rising, he was at the crossroads to decide his profession; he desired to be a painter while his dad wanted him to become an engineer. Architecture was the field where they compromised between art and science, which led Sabih Kayan start his bachelor degree in Berlin Technical University in 1937. Following the outbreak of WWII, Kayan left Berlin to pursue his education in Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (ETHZ). Although having completed the first academic year in Berlin, Kayan had to start over, as can be seen from the archival documents regarding his admission to ETHZ.[1] It remains as a milestone in Kayan's carrier as an all-rounder practitioner of architecture, where he had the chance to went through a formation encompassing art and architecture together.

Many significant biographical details about Kayan could be addressed here addressing his versatile practice informed by plastic and visual arts including painting, stage design, costume design and photography, however, this paper aims to draw attention to his approach to photography. To do so, Kayan's diploma and registrar's roll from ETHZ portray the figures Kayan's crossed paths with and provide clues to speculate about his way of using photography. In his diploma held in gta archives[2]. Hans Hofmann appears as his attained professor, who started his professorship in ETH

[1] Zurich. ETH-Library, University Archives. Registrar's Roll. EZ-REK1_124898.

[2] Zurich. gta Archives. Diploma theses and semester theses of the construction school of the Federal Polytechnic. 41-1-1944-1-1:1.

Zurich in 1941 and whose previous practices before teaching included exhibition architecture and other architectural forms of representation[3].
Through the *matrikel*, or registrar's roll, held in the ETH Zurich University Archives, the curriculum including the names of both the core courses and the elective courses, together with the responsible professors can be seen. Another figure to be highlighted, appears in the transcript under the elective courses Kayan attended through his own will: Hans Gisler's "figure drawing" course was one that Kayan passionately attended through his years at ETH. There is no evidence about Kayan's engagement with photography through his education in Zurich, however his interest and activity in artistic expressions of figures might be well associated with his peculiar photographic look later to the architectural figures he raised. Kayan also had a strong commitment with sculptors in his projects as evident in the case of this research.
Documents of Kayan's academic report, coincide with the pieces of the found archive, since his paintings, drawings, costume design, scenography design and photographic practice are all evident, addressing Kayan's multi-dimensional practice. As one of the hats he had been wearing, his photographer hat is here in focus.

Framing Architecture and the City: Speculations on Kayan's Photographs

In considering Kayan's architectural photography in the 1970's Turkey, we find various motivating factors within the architectural photographic tradition of his time in Zurich. First, during his architectural education in Germany and Switzerland in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Kayan became aware of the link between modern architecture, photography, and mass communication. This awareness drove him to incorporate photography into architectural practice. Second, his education, which had strong ties to the arts, exposed him to artistic and experimental architectural photography at ETH Zurich and through accessible printed media from Europe and America.
The repertoire of photography that he likely acquired within the cultural environment of his education could have been utilized to position Turkey's architectural practice within a universal compendium. Conversely, it could be asserted that he utilized this repertoire as a critical instrument, grounded in the debates of the 1970's concerning the "social dimension of architecture" and "contextuality", as suggested by the references inherent in the negatives. By photographing a single building throughout its

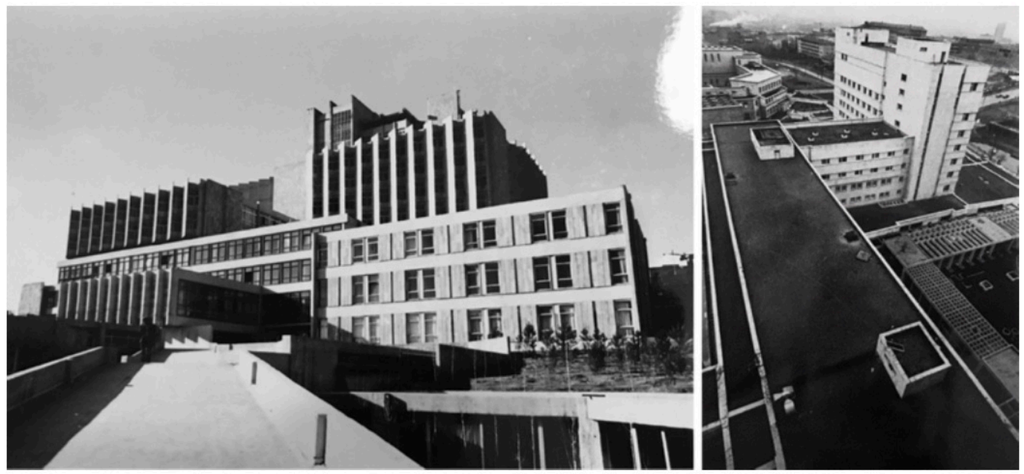
[3] Hofmann's role as an exhibition architect held significant importance. Simultaneously, his innovative designs played a pivotal role in shaping Switzerland's image at international exhibitions, including Barcelona (1929), Liège (1930), and Brussels (1935). In his capacity as the chief architect of the fourth Swiss State Exhibition in Zurich in 1939, he was responsible for various aspects, including the design of the "Höhenstrasse", a thematic link connecting and providing access to the exhibition's individual stations. For more details, refer to this link: https://archiv.gta.arch.ethz.ch/nachlaesse-vorlaesse/hans-hofmann.

construction processes to its integration into the urban image and the fabric of urban life upon its utilization, the architect inherently multiplies his directed perspective, as mediated through the camera, onto both architectural photography itself and the subject being captured.
One of the ways Kayan instrumentalizes photography as a medium becomes evident through the "documentation" and subsequent visibility of the campus architecture via "representation". The architect's photographic perspective here is seen to be shaped by the formal codes of the photographic representation of modern architecture, closely associated with his architectural education in Europe. It could be asserted that he employs photography not only as a means of documenting structures but also as a tool for "canonization", a means of securing a place within the architectural canon, effectively linking it to his education.
Indeed, upon their circulation, these photographs can play a significant role in shaping architectural identity, and in this context, they become indispensable within discussions concerning "canonical" buildings [Christenson 2017, 10]. Numerous negatives attributed to Hacettepe University's School of Basic Sciences, possessed by Kayan, encapsulate the character of the "New Vision" or "New Photography". This approach, grounded in new realism – an understanding of reality that focuses on object qualities and the inherent "thingness" of objects – is manifested in the new photography through the presentation of buildings as objects in light, characterized by stark shadows, precise symmetries, and a neglect of detail and use [Zimmerman 2014, 5].



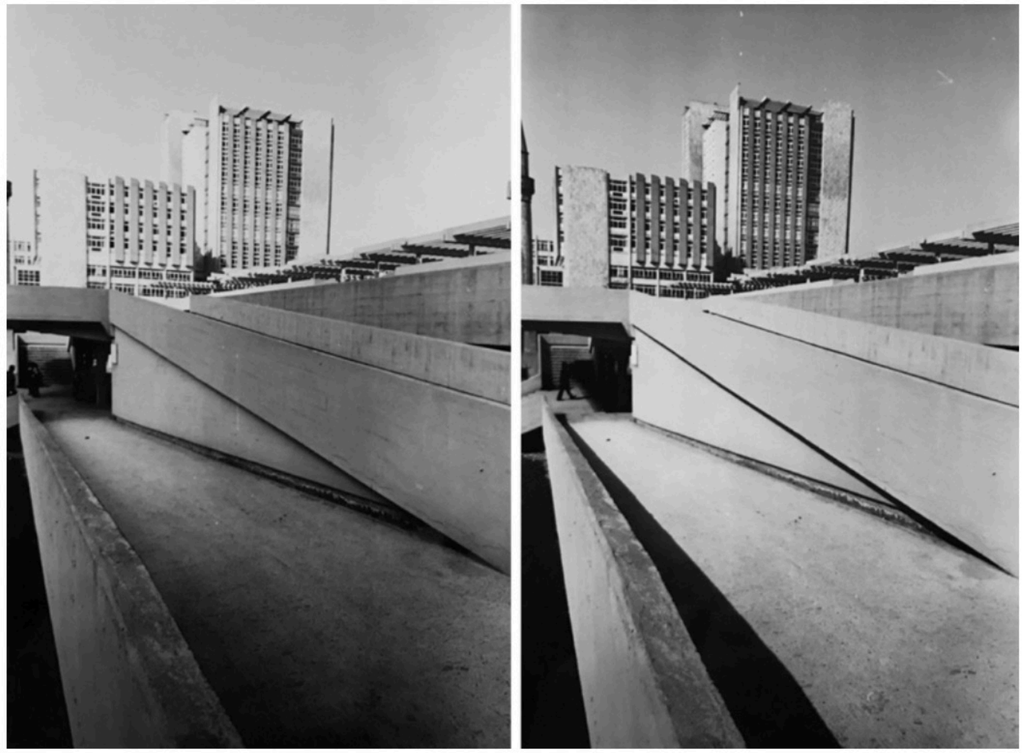
2: Sabih Kayan, Hacettepe University Campus, ca.1970 [Gökhan Tunçbilek Collection].

Adhering to these traditions, while photographing his buildings with a representational aspect of the architectural culture indicated by the way architecture is aestheticized through photography. This, in turn, bestows a potential canonical status upon his buildings through the circulated copies of the photographs.
In a photograph (Fig. 2) taken by Kayan beneath the main campus building, he adopts a ground-level, rear-facing perspective. Here, we can clearly observe the visual characteristics mentioned. Kayan's use of high-contrast black-and-white film and specific lighting conditions enhances the portrayal of the building's massing, aligning with his intention to showcase «distinct masses in architecture» [Kayan 1972, 154]. This emphasis on light and shadow contrast accentuates the building's form while eliminating material and detail specifics, giving it an almost dematerialized quality.
In another photograph of the same facade, Kayan departs from the conventional perspective while keeping consistent light-shadow conditions. He captures the building from below and at an oblique angle (Fig. 3a). In a separate shot, he opts for an overhead diagonal perspective (Fig. 3b). These images, along with many others featuring alternative viewpoints, reveal Kayan's experimental approach to architectural photography and echoes of Bauhaus photography with its innovative perspectives.



3a-b: Sabih Kayan, Hacettepe University Campus, bottom view and top view, ca.1970 [Photographs in possession of Gökhan Tunçbilek].

Consecutive photographs in adjacent negatives provide insights into Kayan's exploration of photography. Positioned along the underpass ramp, two successive photos taken from the same viewpoint, facing the rectory mass (Figg. 4a-b), reveal changes in lighting. The first displays even illumination with minimal light/shadow contrast, while the second exhibits heightened contrast. The ramp's geometry and the strong shadow cast by the parapet intensify the linear perspective in the second photo, altering its expression. These sequential shots depict Kayan's experimentation with light and shadow, capturing two distinct moments as the sun emerges from behind a cloud.



4a-b: Sabih Kayan, Hacettepe University Campus, consecutive photographs, ca.1970 [Photographs in possession of Gökhan Tunçbilek].

In the modernist tradition, architectural photos often depict buildings as static, timeless objects, resisting the passage of time [Till 2000, 286]. Yet, every object surrounding the building in these photos carries temporal information, adding a sense of time. Buildings, however, are neither fixed nor fleeting; they play a vital role in ongoing social processes [Borden 2007, 66].
Incorporating people within the photos adds a sense of time and scale to the images. In Kayan's works, social life on the campus appears alongside the buildings. He often includes objects like cars owned by the users in his photographs (Figg. 5a-b-c).
Another approach involves a critical perspective and distance. This critical and contextual viewpoint, typical of post-modern critique, is evident in postmodern photography where the building is framed within its context, including the urban environment [DeKay, Karatzas 2018, 11-12].







5a-b-c: Sabih Kayan, Hacettepe University Campus, Facades, people, automobiles, ca.1970 [Gökhan Tunçbilek Collection].



6: Sabih Kayan, Hacettepe University Campus, view from Sıhhiye/No Title, ca.1970 [Gökhan Tunçbilek Collection].

In numerous photographs by Kayan marking 1970s, the architectural object is framed within everyday life and its urban surroundings. This approach transforms photography into a tool for architectural critique, as Kayan views his buildings not as
In the first of two consecutive photographs (Fig. 7a), Kayan emphasizes the building while minimizing the surrounding landscape and urban context in the frame. In the second photograph (Fig. 7b), he shifts the focus to the building's surroundings. These sequential images reveal Kayan's evolving perspective and compositional choices.
Kayan's photographs can be argued to have assumed a position that explains «the struggle between a restricted, modernist space that emphasizes individuality, purity, and essence and an expanded postmodern space anchored to photography as a social practice and contingent conditions» [Burgin 2000, 150]. Through photography, Kayan not only acts as a documenter or editor of his architectural practice but also takes on the role of a critic in a particular historical period when the design of such campuses played a rich and influential role in the production of the built environment in Ankara. Hacettepe University Central Campus not only reinforced the complex narrative of the city's development as a center for health and education. It also highlighted controversial details regarding the preservation of historical environments in Ankara.



7a-b: Sabih Kayan, Hacettepe University Campus, consecutive photographs, ca.1970 [Gökhan Tunçbilek Collection].



8: Sabih Kayan. Kayan's photograph on the cover of the *Arkitekt* journal, 1972. [http://dergi.mo.org.tr/dergiler/2/273/sayi273.pdf]

Conclusion

Turkey's inaugural architectural journal, Mimar, initially established in 1931 and later rebranded as Arkitekt, holds historical significance. While it grew to be an influential publication in the 1980s, it played a pivotal role in the diversification of architectural publishing. Until its closure in 1980, the magazine served as a platform for contemporary Turkish and European architects, adhering to its modernist roots [Göloğlu 2011, 81]. In this context, Sabih Kayan's carefully "selected" photograph, representing his inaugural project featured in this influential architectural forum, offers valuable insights into his photographic practice in capturing his own architectural creations.

In 1972, Sabih Kayan and sculptor Hüseyin Gezer co-authored an article titled *Hacettepe University School of Basic Sciences and Monumental Square* in «Arkitekt». The first page of this article (Fig. 7) featured a prominent black-and-white photograph capturing a significant portion of the campus. While this specific photograph is absent from the negatives, it's highly likely that Kayan, writing about his own creation, also took this architectural photograph himself.

In this photograph, Kayan positioned himself on the amphitheater's first step, with the amphitheater dominating much of the frame. Behind it, the academy building emerged alongside a group of youths seated on the upper steps. The composition visually connected the building's fragmented structure with the figures in the amphitheater, suggesting a conceptual relationship between them. Kayan's editorial choice and his "selected" viewpoint omitted the urban surroundings and the city skyline, portraying the building behind the amphitheater in a conventional diagonal angle, isolating it as an autonomous "object" separated from its context.

This interplay between the seated figures in the amphitheater and the academy building highlighted an architectural duality, reflecting Kayan's dual role as an architect and photographer. It showcased his deliberation on whether to emphasize the building itself or its usage in architectural photography.

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