

Sinais de Cena III, 6 Crossing Photography and Performance

Deadline: Sep 15, 2026

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Sinais de Cena, nr. 6, Série III (2027);

Thematic dossier: Crossing Photography and Performance.

The Archive, the Body, and the Medium.

(coord. Filipe Figueiredo and Cosimo Chiarelli)

The relationship between photography and performance is grounded in an apparent ontological paradox: on the one hand, the ephemeral and often fictional dimension of the performative act; on the other, the fixity and presumed transparency of the photographic image. Yet precisely this tension has opened up a broad and challenging field of experimentation, rich in mutual influences and conceptual exchanges. Such intersections can be observed in stage photography in the narrow sense, in the various forms of performed and staged photography, and in the appropriation of photography as both a dramaturgical strategy and an optical device in theatrical production.

Over time, these intersections drew the attention of scholars coming from distinct and somehow divergent disciplinary approaches, such as history of photography, visual culture, theatre and performance studies and performance art.

Although belatedly, concepts of “theatricality”, “acting”, or “mise-en-scène” integrated the main discourse of photohistorians and critics (Poivert, 2002; Fried, 2008), while seminal works allowed to revalue the long and innovative tradition of “staged photography” in the light of theatrical practices (Pauli, 2006). From a different point of view, major theorists of performance art (Jones, 1997, 1998; Auslander, 2006) substantially reframed the debate by questioning the role of photography in the documentation of live events and by foregrounding the collaborative and mediating dimensions of artistic production. Closer to theatre studies, photographic images contributed to defining the basis of the new disciplinary field of theatre iconography (Balme et al., 2002), combining archival research with visual and cultural analysis.

More recently, a growing number of conferences and publications (McAuley, 2008; Schneider, 2011; Anderson, 2015; Baker, 2016; Chiarelli/Noirot, 2015; Joinnault, 2021) have contributed to consolidating these heterogeneous perspectives into a coherent disciplinary field through the mapping of specific case studies and issues.

In 2022, the International PERPHOTO Conference* brought together in Lisbon scholars and artists from worldwide to better design this field of study. The event fostered an in-depth theoretical

reflection, even beyond the possible practical applications and questioning the processes, perspectives, and limits emerging from the intertwining of photography and performance, considering, namely, issues relating to the archive, the body, and the medium.

Following on from the contributions and discussions sparked by that conference, this thematic issue of *Sinais de Cena* aims to further this transdisciplinary debate. Therefore, we invite scholars and artists to submit proposals for papers reflecting on the multiple challenges, opportunities, and limits that arise from the encounter and intersection between photography and performance, in theoretical and practical issues, on the topics of stage photography, photography on stage and performed photography.

We welcome proposals addressing, but not limited to, the following questions:

How does the encounter between photography and performance shape our understanding of reality and representation, document and fiction, memory and archive?

How does it reconfigure the tension between presence and absence, corporeality and immateriality?

How does the performative dimension of photography relate to other lens-based media, particularly in terms of stillness and movement, as well as (re)mediation and intermediality?

All texts should be sent by September 15, 2026, to:

sinaisdecena@gmail.com

Papers must be submitted in accordance with the following submission rules:

<https://revistas.rcaap.pt/sdc/about/submissions>

* The International Conference The Archive, the Body, and the Medium - Crossing Photography and Performance in Theory and Practice (School of Arts and Humanities, University of Lisbon - September 21 - 23, 2022) was organised within the research project PERPHOTO - Performing the gaze, coordinated by Filipe Figueiredo and Cosimo Chiarelli.

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