

PONTIFÍCIA UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA
DO RIO DE JANEIRO



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**“Parallel Universes”:
A study of Ugur Gallenkus’ Multimodal Texts**

Orientadora: Professora Dra. Barbara Jane Wilcox Hemais



Rio de Janeiro
July 2021



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Monografia apresentada ao programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras PUC -Rio como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Especialista em Língua inglesa.

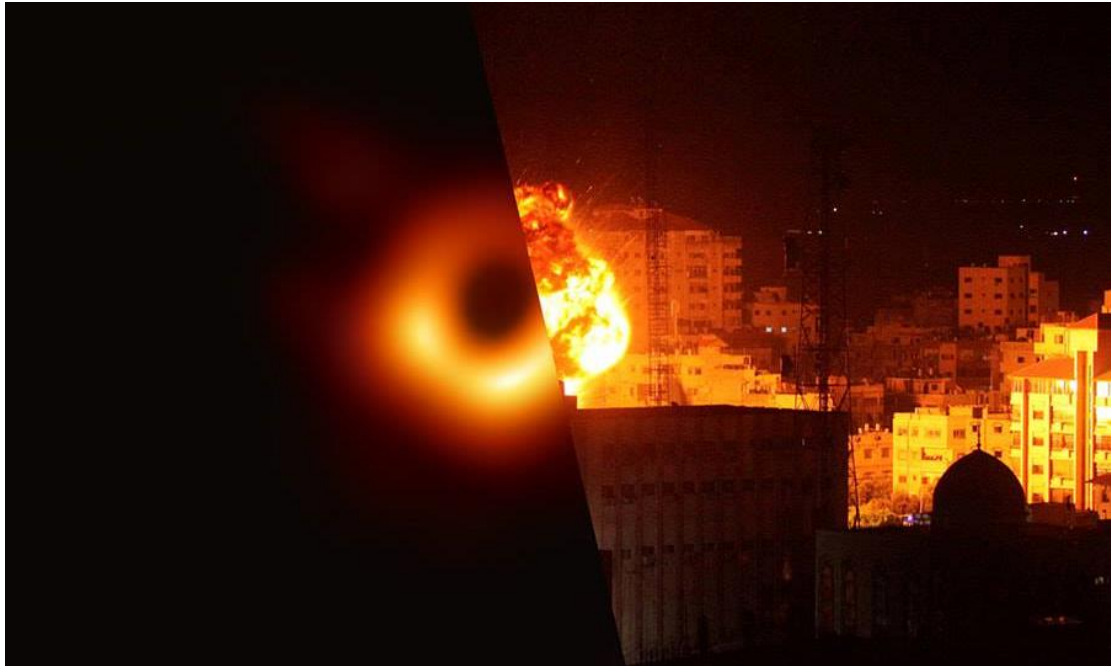
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Sign-making is not a random act, but a carefully planned one (Kress; Van Leeuwen, 2006). Somewhere in Istanbul, a young graphic artist invites us to reflect on the state of our world, showcasing his multimodal creations on social media channels of communication. His creations confront us with semiotic parallels in which $1+1$ seems to be more than just 2.

“Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.”
Michele Besso, Swiss/Italian engineer and close friend of Einstein

“Reality is not what it seems”
Carlo Rovelli, Theoretical Physicist

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank ALL my teachers: What a new fabulous world you have shown me! What new intriguing windows you have opened in my mind! Your knowledge has enriched me beyond measure.

I feel profound gratitude especially to Adriana Nobrega and Marcia Lobianco Amorim. Adriana, you so kindly opened the door at the beginning of this journey; Marcia, you so enthusiastically pointed the way forward a few months down the road, in what I will always remember as one of the most fantastic 'eureka' moments of my life.

Bebel, Ines, Monica: always smiling, always inspiring and always willing to assist, even in the darkest of hours. This is how I will remember you.

Barbara: your kind availability, stern support and invaluable guidance have allowed me to close the cycle. THANK YOU!

Vera: what an honour to have you as my examiner.

To my dearest classmates: what a ride! The laughs and tears, and arguments!

Ulysses, my dearest ODY: what fun I had with you! My journey is a remittance to your name, and this will forever make me laugh. Let's have more coffees, more often and let's buy loads of books.

Flavia, my little daughter, you may never read this, but you too said to me, in the final days: "COME ON MUM, I know you can do it, you will be ok."

Last but not least, Mami y Papi: es siempre un placer el poder intercambiar con ustedes el tema que sea. ¡Adoro nuestras conversaciones, desde que tengo conciencia!

ABSTRACT

This monograph is a discussion and analysis of three digital works created by Ugur Gallenkus, an emerging graphic-design artist from Turkey. Aspects such as multimodality and intertextuality will be explored in three of his purely visual artifacts, using texts by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) and Bazerman (2004) as core analytical resources. The objective of this study is to analyse how a purely visual image can be as meaningful as written or spoken texts, even more so if the aforementioned linguistic devices are observable in the final semiotic visual document.

KEY WORDS: Instagram; multimodality; intertextuality; systemic functional linguistics; Ugur Gallenkus.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION	7
1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE: REALMS OF SUPPORT	11
1.1 <i>Multimodality</i>	12
1.2 <i>Intertextuality</i>	18
3. METHODOLOGY	21
4. ANALYSIS	24
4.1 <i>Image 1: "Romantic Crude War", a description.</i>	24
4.1.1 Deconstruction of the Photomontage into its original Modes	29
4.1.2 Intertextuality, Situational and Cultural Context	32
4.2 <i>Image 2: "Windows into Windows into Windows," a description.</i>	36
4.2.1 Deconstruction of the Photomontage into its original Modes.	41
4.2.2 Intertextuality, Situational and Cultural Context	45
4.3 <i>Image 3: "Metropolitan Gala Refugee", a description</i>	50
4.3.1 Deconstruction of the Photomontage into its original Modes	54
4.3.2 Intertextuality, Situational and Cultural Context	58
5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS	61
6. APPENDICES 1-3	62
7. REFERENCES	64
8. ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS	68

INTRODUCTION

*“In the middle of our life’s journey,
I found myself astray in a dark wood.”¹*

Ever since I began this postgraduate degree, I sensed that the way forward for me consisted fundamentally in finding a way of connecting my background as an Art Historian (not to mention my profound love for art in all its forms: paintings, poetry, music and so forth) with the field of Linguistics. I had to find something that truly resonated with me in order to be able to write a monograph related to an academic field almost foreign to me until I began the course. My desire and intention were to explore the possible meanings generated when those two specific worlds intertwined. A few months into the course, and almost as if in an eureka moment, I was introduced to the specific discourses and meanings that Multimodality and, in a complementary manner, Intertextuality can produce. By a series of coincidences, I came across the work of Ugur Gallenkus: a contemporary multimedia Turkish artist, whom I believe to be an important visual commentator of our current global situation. In my opinion, Gallenkus excels at both multimodality and intertextuality, in the latter case specifically when he mixes Western masterpieces of art with real images of current events. His semiotic parallels, which I will explore in three of his photomontages (Appendices 1-3), create a whole that appears to be greater than the sum of its parts.

¹ “Dante’s Inferno: Translations by 20 Contemporary Poets” edited by Daniel Halpern (199 pp.) Seamus Heaney. Also, in: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-05-23-bk-38605-story.html>

It is no secret that communication is becoming more and more visual, quite in an unprecedented manner, due the advent of new technologies and means of communications.² The image is substituting the written word in many ways; for one thing, images elicit emotional responses in our brains with much greater speed than the written word. It is almost an instantaneous and simultaneous phenomenon: one sees something, one reacts, according to Lewis, Ammini and Lannon (2000). One must just think about emoticons: every one of them encompasses concepts, ideas, frames of mind or emotional states that would require many words if they were to be expressed verbally or in written form. The immediate effect that an image has on the brain is referred to as limbic resonance. In other words, it points to the specific capacity that mammals have for empathy and connection through non-verbal forms of communication via our limbic brain (Idem). Lewis, Ammini and Lannon also affirm that images produce more limbic resonance in our brains than words and, consequently, the more limbic resonance, the more our brains engage. This is one of the reasons that Instagram (One billion active users)³ seems to be a more enticing social platform than Twitter (330 million active users)⁴: images communicate in an instant what word cannot. Twitter requires more of an effort, from both the producer and the receiver of the message. Gallenkus uses Instagram as his platform of choice in order to present to the world the images/photomontages that he has called “Parallel Universes”, hence, multimodality will be the fundamental framework that this study will use in order to examine his work.

Another enticing aspect of carrying out this investigation is that, to my knowledge, no specific analysis of Ugur Gallenkus’ works has been done to this moment, and I believe that the study of his creations can be of value to both the linguistic and the artistic community. The study may open opportunities for greater awareness of meanings in multimodal and intertextual images. The present work will be a qualitative study of three specific photomontages

² <https://tech.co/news/world-now-visual-ever-2017-01>

³ <https://dustinstout.com/social-media-statistics/>

⁴ Ibid.

produced by Gallenkus (Appendices 1-3). The complete body of his works can be accessed at www.instagram.com/ugurgallen/. This study will aim at identifying and understanding the linguistic devices employed in the constructions of the images and, in doing so, hopefully unveil the discourse that the artist intends to generate.

On a side note, a peculiar aspect of Gallenkus' evolution as an artist is that a few months back when he began to produce his photomontages, none of the images were for sale and he had just over three thousand followers on Instagram. Today, his account is followed by more than one million people and, ironically, Gallenkus has recently become an active part of the consumerist world since the giant corporation Saatchi Group sell printed versions of his photomontages ⁵. In addition, he also now works in a paid partnership with the educational Kulczy Foundation⁶ in Poland, and his photomontages are exhibited in murals around Warsaw and Krakow. ⁷

Overall, his work is indeed quite remarkable because of how he manages to unapologetically present diametrically opposed realities that are in no way convergent. In his work there is no room for comfort or for turning a blind eye. When looking at his photomontages, we see that he uses two images that already on their own have meaning, that already belong to a particular type of discourse and that are already supported by a particular ideology. When Gallenkus superimposes the images, together they co-create a greater discourse. This study intends to identify precisely how this greater discourse is produced and it will do so by delving deeper into the various areas of research applicable to the analysis. Finally, and coincidentally, on July 3rd 2021, Gallenkus announced on his Instagram account that from July 21st, 2021, he will be having his first solo exhibition in Germany,⁸ and that all the proceedings

⁵ <https://www.saatchiart.com/ugurgallen>

⁶ <https://www.kulczykfoundation.org.pl/en>

⁷ <https://www.instagram.com/kulczykfoundation/>

⁸ <https://www.instagram.com/ugurgallen/>

will go to the ONG “Doctors without Borders”. In doing so, Gallenkus appears coherent with his message: yes, he benefits from the sales of his work that denounces the contradictions of our world, but he also makes quite a statement when donating all the proceedings of his first worldwide exhibition.

This study will be organized in the following manner. First, it will present a brief review of literature where the core concepts utilized to observe Gallenkus’ work are explained. Secondly, the study will explain the methodology followed in order to carry out the observation of the selected photomontages. Thirdly, the study will proceed with an in-depth description and deconstruction of the three selected assembled images into their modes, and in doing so, identify and analyze their possible meanings as the resulting multimodal text emerges. Finally, the study will propose a few final remarks regarding possible linguistic explorations in the field of purely visual texts.

1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE: REALMS OF SUPPORT

In order to be able to examine the texts that Gallenkus' creates, it is important to consider several crucial concepts. The core of this work will be based on the ideas presented in *The Grammar of Visual Design* (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006), which in turn emerged from ideas developed by Halliday (1978), when he began approaching language in general as a social semiotic system of communication. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) went one step further from Halliday's ideas by examining images (with no written text in them) also as social semiotic events, and therefore equally competent at conveying or carrying messages.

Complementing the concept of visual language, this study will examine the intertextuality in Gallenkus' work. Usually, intertextuality explores how a written text or utterance relates to other written texts and utterances surrounding the one under analysis. Very seldom is intertextuality observed in an exclusively visual dimension. Nevertheless, this study will look at images where intertextuality happens in visual terms.

Finally, the three images being observed will also be treated as a reflection of the author's discourse in action. According to Norman Fairclough (1995) and Ruth Wodak (2001), language, ideology and discourse are not separable the one from the other; they coexist giving social structure to texts. This study will also explore extralinguistic concepts such as context of situation and cultural context. The context of situation is the immediate environment of the text, and the context of culture refers to the whole history behind the participants (HALLIDAY; HASAN. 1989). This allows for a more enlightening look at the images, since they are seen as part of a wider social context. Language, whether written, spoken, or visual, is socially constructed. In fact, societies do not function without language (PINKER, 1994). We are constantly negotiating meanings with others and with ourselves, in order to understand what happens around us. Ultimately, realities are constructed through language (BERGER; LUCKMANN, 1966), and it is in the analysis of that language that

we can identify discourse. Gallenkus' texts are discourse in action because they propose the negotiation of an idea to the consumer of his text. By precisely analysing the ideas he proposes, this study will observe the force they gain as multimodal texts.

1.1 Multimodality

The advent of the Internet has brought about the emergence of more vehicles for conveying meaning than ever before in human history. Nowadays, a social movement may be just one stroke of the keyboard away⁹. Perhaps one of the most intriguing aspects of the development of social media is that they have dramatically changed the way we engage with the world. For one thing, social media have undoubtedly allowed us to gain immediate access to events, almost in real time: information has never travelled this fast. Secondly, traditional media or means of information (TV, radio, newspapers, magazines and so forth) have morphed from being mainly a one-way system of communication, into multi-layered avenues of co-creation of meanings with multiple participants.

Up until very recently, consumers were not included in the conversation that traditional media proposed. At best, they could get involved by writing a letter to the editor or by making a call to a radio talk show. Nowadays, according to James Porter (2010), anybody, anywhere in the world, and at any given time, may not only participate in the conversation but also add to the discourse: the once passive consumer may become a producer of information, with the bonus of the possibility of reaching out to a massive audience. This is exactly what Ugur Gallenkus is: a producer of information who via Instagram, his social

⁹ <https://www.theodysseyonline.com/social-media-social-change>

media platform of choice, is taking advantage of the possibility of reaching out to thousands of consumers in real time at almost no cost whatsoever.

Porter (2010) believes that the current digital economy is allowing for an incredibly inexpensive creation of multimodal texts that may either bring about a myriad of social consequences or at least function as socio-political commentary. As far as Gallenkus is concerned, he is indeed producing content at almost zero cost, except perhaps the costs of his electricity bill or mobile phone subscription. The one thing he does do is give due credit to the producers of the original photos or images he selects to use in his photomontages, but without paying royalties. There is no doubt that his multimodal texts elicit emotional responses where there is a basic level of visual and societal literacy. However, whether his multimodal texts detonate social change or not is something yet to be seen, and it will not be considered in the scope of this study.

Having said this, one can affirm that the proliferation of digital environments has afforded greater relevance to texts that are multimodal in nature. Curiously, in some of those texts, the written element is beginning to disappear. In fact, many of those texts have now become totally visual in nature. This is indeed the case of Gallenkus' work. In this context, the phrase 'images speak louder than words' could be affirmed without irony. Social platforms have amplified and brought to the foreground the creation of texts that are constructed only with images and that can be seen by a greater audience, something that the art of painting had done for thousands of years but in a more exclusive manner and directed towards reduced circles of society. Gallenkus' texts are without doubt multimodal artefacts. They are constructed by using more than one mode of communication. And, although the modes are identical in nature, their convergence still makes them multimodal texts (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006). This will be the basis for the examination of Gallenkus' images.

Multimodality is an interdisciplinary approach proposed by Gunter Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen originally in 1996, in which the authors understand

communication as taking place not just through written or spoken language, but also through the convergence of different modes such as words, gestures, images. A mode, therefore, is considered a semiotic resource capable of being culturally recognized; multimodality is what happens when the modes interact (KRESS: 2000) According to Kress and Van Leeuwen “visual structures point to particular interpretations of experience and forms in social interactions” (2006: p.2). Therefore, every culture requires some visual literacy skills in order to interpret the images it produces. Humans are constantly negotiating meanings with others and with themselves, in order to understand what happens around them.

By closely analysing the ideas the artist proposes, this study will aim to observe the force they gain as multimodal texts. Although a photomontage may appear to be just one mode of communication, the word ‘montage’ implies the use or assemblage of more than one mode of communication. A photomontage is defined as: “montage using photographic images, also a picture made by photomontage”¹⁰ As this study will see, Gallenkus uses two modes, that is actual photos of current events, and a photos of works of art to construct a final composite text.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) presented the linguistic world with a systematic and thorough analysis of grammar of visual design. In order to carry out such an inquiry, the authors took into consideration all the formal aspects of the images’ structure: elements such as colour, perspective and composition. Their work scrutinized a significant range of examples of visual texts; and it is precisely this ample selection of visual texts which allowed them to arrive at a clear recognition of the parallels and distinctions between a language-dominated culture and one where visual literacy is becoming increasingly crucial. According to the authors, multimodal texts are those “whose meanings are realized through more than one semiotic code” (Ibid. p.177). These codes or “modes” when brought together form composite ensembles that

¹⁰ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/photomontage>

communicate information in a social context. The analysis of the ensembles' modes is hence called multimodality. This study will aim at showing how Gallenkus' visual texts are indeed multimodal in nature.

It is important to note that the field of studies on multimodality had its theoretical birth in the social semiotics studies carried out by Michael Halliday during the 1970's. Halliday was the first linguist to look beyond the syntactic aspect of language and incorporate the notion that language must be examined as the product of a meaning achieved within a social system (KRESS, 1976: pp vii-xxi). Halliday proposed that "the internal organization of language is not arbitrary but embodies a positive reflection of the functions that language has evolved to serve in the life of social man." (1970: 26). In other words, every text is socially and historically inserted, a product of the time in which it was created. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) went one step further and considered images as also historically inserted and capable, like written or spoken language, of generating meaning and of behaving like social semiotic resources. This study will observe how Gallenkus' multimodal images are semiotic resources that indeed generate meaning, as their respective modes interact in a signifying manner.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) further wrote about the "representative" function that all images have, and in doing so they identified two major types of functions: images that are narrative in nature and images that are conceptual in nature. For the purpose of this study, definitions of both types are required. According to the authors, narrative images are those that show participants interacting with other participants or simply involved in specific actions, whereas conceptual images emphasize the participants' individual characteristics and identities (2006: pp 45-113).

Since Gallenkus' images are multimodal texts, it goes without saying that the modes become one as they are assembled into a single construct (Ibid: 97). Therefore, this preference of specifically compounded semiotic resources unveils an intended image charged with symbolic meaning. Participants in conceptual images do not engage in action, nor are there vectors that connect

participants; rather they are represented in a generalized primordial and static essence (Ibid: 79). Diversely, participants in narrative images are indeed engaged in action, usually connected via a vector that indicates directionality (Ibid:59).

According to the authors, conceptual images may be further analysed through three distinct subcategories: (1) a classificatory one, which relates the image's participants via a specific taxonomy; (2) an analytical one, which observes the image via a part-whole relationship between the participants, and (3) a symbolic one, which aims at discovering what the images mean. (Ibid: pp 87-113). This study will observe all of Gallenkus' images through the symbolic process. "Symbolic processes are about what a participant means or is" (Ibid:105); and often these processes are defined by specific or suggestive attributes typical of conceptual images, for example "they look out of place in the whole, in some way or they are conventionally associated with symbolic value." (Ibid:105). Following this line of thought, symbolic structures may be attributive or suggestive, and this study will strive to identify which of these characteristics are identifiable in Gallenkus' work.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) also spoke about two further types of functions observable in images: the "interactional" one and the "compositional" one (Ibid: pp 114-153 & pp 175-214). The interactional function takes place via the patterns of interactions between the participants in the image. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), there may be different types of participants: the ones that are just being represented and the ones that interact and, in addition, there may also be various types of interactions between the participants (Idem: 114). In other words, images establish relationships between their participants and the viewer, and Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) describe various visual resources that may help to construct such interaction: visual contact, social distance, attitude and power. The image act is directly linked to the direction of the gaze of the represented participants. If the participants are looking at the viewer, the image act is called a demand; if the gaze is not directed to the viewer, the image act is called an offer (Idem: pp.166-124). The visual resource of social distance refers to the different sizes of the

participants and objects or landscapes in the image. An image may have a close-up or a distant frame, this in turn leads to different relationships between the viewer and the participants (Idem: pp.124-129). Finally, the visual resource of the interactional function has to do with point of view or perspective, in the sense that an image may present a subjective point of view (a perspective established by the producer of the image) or an objective one, when the image depicts everything to be known about the participants (Idem:143). This visual resource is observable through the various angles that appear between the participants (horizontal, oblique, vertical and so forth).

The final function that can be studied in an image is the compositional one. It has to do with the position the participants or objects occupy in the image. Said position gains meaning according to three main characteristics that Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) call: information value, referring to specific placements in the image with specific meaning; salience, referring for instance to placement in the foreground or background, and relative size of what is being represented; and framing, referring to the lines that connect or disconnect the elements of the image (Idem: 177). This study will examine how Gallenkus utilizes these visual resources in all of the three photomontages.

1.2 Intertextuality

*That which has been is what will be,
That which is done is what will be done,
And there is nothing new under the sun.*

(Ecclesiastes 1:9 New King James Bible Version)

A few millennia after this biblical verse was produced, one could light-heartedly argue that Charles Bazerman (2004:83) is paraphrasing it when he says that “almost every word and phrase we use, we have heard or seen before.” This is a crucial fact if we are to understand how intertextuality creates meaning. It is precisely in the interrelations between previous and present texts where we can observe this linguistic phenomenon (Ibid.). Norman Fairclough (1995) further expands the concept by telling us that intertextuality occurs when new texts emerge as they specifically and deliberately incorporate other texts into their foundational structure. In other words, the new text does not produce a new meaning without the presence of the other one. Curiously enough, the texts Gallenkus uses in order to create a new one are not necessarily in a linear sequence of time relation, that is one produced previously to the other. As a matter of fact, sometimes the intertextual texts are occurring simultaneously. For example, this study will observe this characteristic specifically in the third image (Appendix 3): two events taking place in different countries and in different parts of global society (USA/Uganda) yet at the same time. One event occurs at a specific date (The Met Ball) but the other one is an ongoing event (The Kuluba Refugee Camp in Uganda)¹¹, they became simultaneous and intertextual specifically on the evening of May 4th, 2019, Easter Standard Time. The refugee camp is an ongoing event; the chances that any child in the camp, at any given time, may wrap a sheet of cloth on her shoulder for whatever reason, are quite high: she may be cold, she may be playing at being a princess or she may have nothing else to wear. The moment an attendee to the Met Ball dons a cape can very well coincide with a child, on the other side of the world, donning a sheet of cloth around her shoulders. Nevertheless, regardless of this

¹¹ <https://africa.cgtn.com/2020/09/15/10-refugees-missing-in-north-west-uganda-after-deadly-clash-with-locals-unhcr/>

simultaneity, this study will see how the texts still are in dialogical interrelationship (BAKHTIN, 1986).

Purely visual intertextuality is still quite rare, but the emergence of social media is changing the rules and Gallenkus is quite an example of this. Gillian Rose, Professor of Cultural Geography, proposed the following idea in her book *Visual Methodologies*: “Intertextuality refers to the way that the meanings of any one discursive image or text depend not only on that one text or image, but also on the meanings carried by other images and texts” (2001:136). Furthermore, for the author it is perfectly feasible to consider viscosity devoid of language as complete discourse, and therefore perfectly capable of containing purely visual intertextuality (Idem: pp 135-163). In other words, not to perceive images as semiotic artifacts, capable of behaving like written or spoken texts, would be equivalent to having an impoverished view of the wealth of language and discourse that humans are capable of.

Bazerman (2004) identifies various levels of intertextuality and six techniques that may be used for intertextual representation (direct quotation, indirect quotation, mentioning a source, evaluation of the source invoked, using recognizable phrasing and using language that echoes certain communication). The levels of intertextuality refer to how explicitly or implicitly one text invokes other texts and how this relation is represented. The most explicit level is called “source of meaning to be used at face value”, defined by Bazerman as “whenever one text takes statements from another source as authoritative and then repeats that authoritative information or statement for the purpose of the new text” (2004: 86).

One of the techniques used for this level of intertextuality is direct quotation. This study will identify precisely this level in Gallenkus’ visual compounds. For example, in the images of Appendices 1 & 2, as the images are deconstructed into their addendums, the study will see how Gallenkus does not modify them at all; he does not change anything at all (neither colour nor position) but just cuts them in order to be able to ultimately join the parts he

chooses and create one single compounded document. For the purpose of this monograph, I will understand that the direct visual joining of images corresponds to a direct quotation, hence, a visual quotation. Bazerman also talks about intertextual reach, which he understands as the extent to which a text travels for its intertextual relations (2004: 89), and re-contextualization when some text is used in a new context (2004:90). This study will aim at identifying both phenomena in the three selected photomontages.

3. METHODOLOGY

Since the purpose of this study of Gallenkus' work is to explore the expressive force generated by multimodality as it is complemented by intertextuality, what follows is a qualitative research of three of his photomontages available in his Instagram account.¹² According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 3), a qualitative study is by definition "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible." In other words, this monograph will situate and interpret Gallenkus' selected photomontages in the contexts from which they originate. The situational and the cultural contexts and their intersections will then be used as clues to decipher the author's resulting discourse.

As said in the Introduction, it was a series of coincidences that led to the discovery of the visual work of this emerging Turkish graphic artist¹³ Since mid 2018 up until now, I have had the pleasure of watching this graphic artist evolve and grow. This discovery coincided with a specific lesson in the course during the module of Discourse Analysis, when Professor Marcia Amorim presented the concepts of multimodality and of intertextuality. In that lesson, as we observed a very famous Edward Hopper painting,¹⁴ I realized that I could apply the same analysis to a digital work of art, basing my work on Kress & Van Leeuwen's proposed methodology for reading Images (2006).

The three photomontages have been deliberately chosen because they are a varied selection of Gallenkus' work. They are multimodal examples of both conceptual and narrative images, and this allows for a better understanding of how Gallenkus creates meaning. Furthermore, in each image,

¹² <https://www.instagram.com/ugurgallen/>

¹³ <https://linktr.ee/ugurgallen>

¹⁴ <http://idata.over-blog.com/0/19/69/68/llustrime-artikujsh/edward-hopper.jpg>

the functions of visual language are realized in different ways, and this grants a deeper understanding of their visual grammar. This study will show how two of Gallenkus' images are conceptual representations because they only show individuals, performing no actions whatsoever and with specific static peculiarities, which in turn attribute to them an almost timeless essence (Appendices 1 & 3). On the other hand, this study will consider one of Gallenkus' works (Appendix 2) as both narrative and conceptual because of the nature of the modes that compound it: one is conceptual and the other one is narrative, and this creates, in my belief, a very striking composite semiotic document.

One aspect that became very intriguing about Gallenkus' photomontages is that their multimodality is complemented by the intertextuality occurring in the interrelations between the modes that he utilizes to construct the final compounded image. These modes vary from works of art, specifically paintings of the Romantic and the Post-Impressionist styles (Appendices 1 & 2), and current-events photos of war ridden places in the Middle East, a refugee camp in Uganda and the Met Ball that takes place once a year in New York City (Appendices 1,2 & 3).

As for the analysis of intertextuality in Gallenkus' work, this study will examine the degree of manipulation in the images where intertextuality can be observed and, thus, will look at the original sources that make up the final compounded visual text in order to understand their degree of connection. What the notion of manipulation will mean for the analysis is whether Gallenkus did or did not modify specific characteristics of the modes (colour, size, image blurring), before he assembled parts of them in the final photomontage.

Appendix 3 is also deliberately chosen because the intertextual interrelations occur between two specific contemporary current-events photographs, as already briefly described in the previous chapter. This simultaneity makes the image quite a compelling one, and perhaps the one most full of universal meaning. By studying the attributes of the participants, this study will try to establish that they are extremely recognizable and therefore

placeable in context. Consequently, the analysis of Appendix 3 will show how this photomontage is the one most prone to be comprehended anywhere in the world and across any culture.

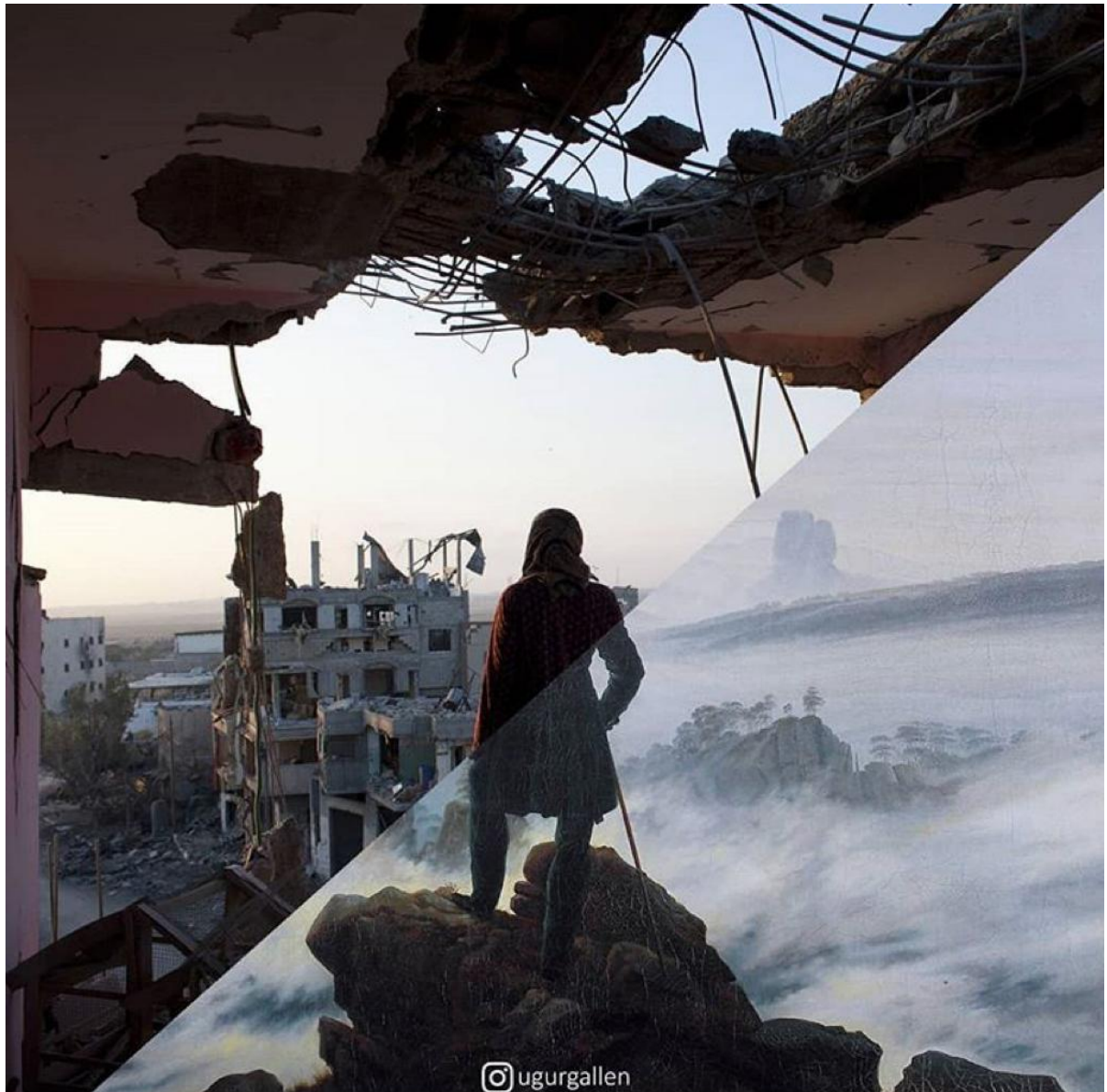
For fluidity purposes, each multimodal text will be examined one at a time. This study will try to identify, not only the degree of manipulation in all the photomontages (Appendixes 1,2 &3) since intertextuality can be observed in all of them, but also the techniques chosen by Gallenkus in order to achieve intertextual representation.

Lastly, this study hopes that after having read this monograph, the reader might be able to read and comprehend the compounded text presented in the title page of the monograph, even if just for fun.

4. ANALYSYS

4.1 Image 1: “Romantic Crude War”, a description.

Gallenkus' Photomontage:



15

¹⁵ **Note:** As of 2020, this photomontage was removed from his Instagram account, but it can still be found at:

<https://www.juxtapoz.com/news/collage/ugur-gallenkus-sobering-collages-of-a-polarized-world/>

It is tempting to assume that Gallenkus' works may have a universal appeal that invites immediate understanding. The absence of writing, and therefore of linguistic concern, may create the illusion of a straightforward comprehension. The first text to be analysed will immediately dissipate this notion. Not in vain do Kress and Van Leeuwen affirm that the way in which images are constructed is "culturally and historically specific" (2006:2) There is indeed some background knowledge required for full meaning to come to the foreground, although this background knowledge is not completely alien to Westerners. Secondly, in all his creations, Gallenkus juxtaposes at least two distinct realities or two distinct situational and cultural contexts.

One could argue that the final photomontage is indeed just a *photo* uploaded to a *photo-sharing* social network; nevertheless, when deconstructed, it becomes obvious that the visual text in question is multimodal in nature. Both addends are in effect photos, apparently equal in essence, but one of them happens to be a photo of an oil painting, and this subtle discrepancy immediately generates multimodality. In a conversation with Berit Henriksen, promoted by the Institute of Education of the University of London in 2012¹⁶, Gunther Kress affirmed that one mode alone will not necessarily fulfill the intended or desired communication, so "multimodality affords a composition in which certain things come together in a particular way that best signifies or communicates what I want to mean." Those "things" are indeed modes, and Kress continues by defining modes as a "term that allows us to get away from using language for everything".¹⁷ The curious thing about Gallenkus' creations is that the modes that he chooses are equal in nature, that is both are purely visual. One could almost speak without irony of mono-modality. Nonetheless, in their convergence and superimposition, Gallenkus' modes become different cultural resources that allow for meaning to become comprehensible. And it is

¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt5wPIhhDDU>

¹⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJ2gz_OQHhI

precisely in their convergence and superimposition that these images are revealed as multimodal texts: the modes may be both visual, but one is a photograph of a painting and the other one is a photograph of an event or of different events, as in the case of Appendix 3.

A photomontage is an assembly of images that come together in one way or another, to create a single visual document.¹⁸ Therefore, already by definition, a photomontage is without a doubt a multimodal text. Let us then first describe what is being shown in the compounded document before we look at the modes that were used to construct it.

In this first photomontage, there is a human figure placed exactly in the middle of the text, with his/her back turned to the viewer. It is impossible to determine whether the figure is that of a man or a woman because of the headscarf and the neutrality of the clothes being worn: an ample three-quarters length jacket, a pair of trousers and boots. The figure is standing on rugged rocks, holding a cane in his/her right arm. The right bottom side of the image appears to be a misty natural landscape, as if the figure was standing on top of a mountain. The top left-hand side of the image appears to be a landscape ravaged by war or a natural disaster, and the top part of the figure appears cloaked, as already mentioned, with a head scarf as he/she gazes into the horizon. Continuing with the description of this side of the image, the figure appears to stand inside a destroyed building, under a severely damaged roof. The colour palette on the entire image is a symphony of subdued grey and blueish tones.

As mentioned already, Michael Halliday (1994) presented a theory stating that language had three specific and simultaneous metafunctions: an ideational

¹⁸ <https://www.wordnik.com/words/photomontage>

one, an interpersonal one and a textual one. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) reinterpreted them as a representative function, an interactional one, and a compositional one. For the authors the representative function looks at patterns of representation and at how the image is constructed. The authors speak of how there can be: “narrative structures,” which depict unfolding actions (Idem: 59), or “conceptual structures,” which depict participants in connection with their class, structure or meaning (Idem: 59). I consider this image to be conceptual in nature. However, there is a consideration to make that applies to the three images being analysed, which is that there is always room for negotiation regarding this classification in the representative function. With a more detailed analysis, one could indeed argue that there is an action taking place: a person is looking at the horizon. However, for the purpose of this study, I will look at the image as a conceptual one. The main reason for this conclusion is precisely the evident absence of interactions or vectors. Kress and Van Leeuwen defined vectors as lines that connect participants while they engage with each other (2006), and in this first photomontage we cannot observe any of these components. Furthermore, the emphasis in this image seems placed on the figure’s attributes and identity: pose, gaze, clothes, and both situational and cultural context (HALLIDAY; HASAN 1989). The last two aspects regarding context will become more evident as the photomontage is deconstructed into the original modes that Gallenkus used to create the final compounded visual document.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) also subdivided conceptual images as depicting classificational processes, analytical ones or symbolic ones. While observing Image 1, one can conclude that there is neither a classificational process taking place, since there are no participants relating to each other in a subordinate or superordinate manner (Idem: 80), nor an analytical process, since the participant does not appear in relation to a part/whole dynamic within the image (Idem: 87). However, what may be observed in the photomontage is indeed a symbolic process. “Symbolic processes are about what a participant means or is” (Idem:105). According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006),

symbolic processes can be further subdivided into “Symbolic Attributive” or Symbolic Suggestive”. Symbolic attributive texts are those where two or more participants are “made salient in the representation in one way or another...they are pointed by means of a gesture that cannot be interpreted as an action... or they are conventionally associated with symbolic values” (Idem:105). Suggestive attributes have only one participant, such as the photomontage in this case, and their “posture cannot be interpreted as narrative: they just sit or stand there, for no other reason than to _display themselves to the viewer.” (Idem:106).

The figure we observe is not even looking at us. The participant’s pose gives precedence to what Kress and Van Leeuwen refer to as the photomontage’s mood or atmosphere. The authors describe how this can be achieved by the using of subdued colours, such as the soft and dark blues in the image, the misty clouds in the right-hand side of the photomontage, the darkness of the rocks and of the roof, or even the dark apparel that the figure is wearing, all of which give to the image quite an ethereal appearance. As we look at the photomontage, the figure becomes almost a generic outline of a human being, whose meaning comes from within, from what his or her thoughts may be regarding what he/she is looking at. We see somebody suspended in a sort of timelessness moment, looking out onto the horizon, almost as if in an “Existential” manner.¹⁹ In other words, the figure at the center of this photomontage is standing alone and isolated, confronting or being confronted by both the grandeur of nature and the ravages of war. Gallenkus creates meaning by constructing a text via a symbolic suggestive process, where meaning and identity derive from qualities intrinsic to the carrier.

With regards to the compositional function, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) define it as_“the way in which representations and communicative acts cohere into the kind of meaningful whole we call ‘text’” (Idem: 176). Three

¹⁹ <https://www.wordnik.com/words/existentialism>

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism>

interrelated systems are the tools being used to build meaning: information value, salience and framing. The information value system refers to the main visual areas where the participant is placed within the image; the salience system is determined by how the participant is depicted in order to attract the viewer's attention (foreground, background and size); and the framing system refers to the way in which elements in an image may be connected or not by frame lines (Idem: 177). In the case of information value in Image 1, the participant is placed right at the center of the image, as the "nucleus of the information to which all the other elements are in some sense subservient" (Idem:196). The figure is shown alone and immersed in thought. Furthermore, regarding salience, the central figure is not only placed in the foreground of the image, but the darkness of the clothing lends it greater relevance in relation to the rest of the image. Placement in the visual field and colour contrast are some of the elements that can be used precisely to generate salience (Idem: pp 201-203). Gallenkus presents us with a photomontage that one could say focuses mainly on the participant, even if his introspectiveness may be taken as a reflection on his/her surroundings.

4.1.1 Deconstruction of the Photomontage into its original Modes

If this is a multimodal text, then this means that it has been constructed with more than one mode of communication. In order to find meaning in Gallenkus' photomontage, the process begins when the original modes used to construct it are identified. For the purpose of this investigation, those original modes will be referred to as addendums. After all, they are indeed part of a sum.

Addendum 1



20

The painting depicts a blonde man wearing trousers and a dark coat. He is standing on a rocky hill contemplating a cloudy landscape, with his back turned to the viewer. The rocks in the foreground appear clifflike and rugged. The landscape is made of distant converging misty fields and further mountainous terrains. The imaginary lines of the painting meet right at the level of the man's chest, as if the center of the painting itself rests in the man's heart.

²⁰ <https://www.caspardavidfriedrich.org/> *The Wanderer above the Mist* (1817-1818).

Caspar David Friedrich

Addendum 2



21

As we observe this mode, it is important to remember that this is not the original mode used by Gallenkus but a similar one. The original war image of Gallenkus' photomontage is unavailable. When he first posted the photomontage in 2018, there were no credits given to the journalistic photo, that is the mode that occupies the right-hand side of the photomontage. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study, a similar image has been used although in this one, the figure seems to be that of a man, and is less generic than the one used for the original photomontage.

The photo shows a man standing on the destroyed rooftop of a building with his back turned to the viewer. He is contemplating a devastated landscape, full of debris and ravaged by war. He is wearing camouflaged gear and he is carrying a long-range firearm on his back.

Art Historians, particularly those specialized in the Florentine Renaissance are used to looking at paintings or works of art through the lenses of "iconography"

²¹ Source: <https://www.history.com/news/syria-civil-war-assad-rebels>.

and “iconology:” iconography is the study of representative art in general whereas iconology is the study of the possible meaning of the work of art within the cultural context that produced it (PANOFSKY,1939).

Having applied the methodology that Kress and Van Leeuwen developed in order to analyze the compounded photomontage, it becomes very interesting to do the same for its addendums. Coincidentally, both images may also be considered conceptual since we observe that in both images there is only one participant, who is standing alone as if immersed in thought, placed in the foreground and with symbolic suggestive attributes. Nevertheless, let us remember that this is an open analysis and that another viewer may very well see action taking place in the fact the figures are both contemplating the horizon. It is true that there are no vectors, but one could see a narrative process in the participants’ sole contemplative act.

4.1.2 Intertextuality, Situational and Cultural Context

We will now investigate the extralinguistic level of the modes: the context of situation and context of culture. The context of situation is the immediate environment of the text, and the context of culture refers to the whole history behind the participants (HALLIDAY; HASAN. 1989).

The bottom right-hand side of this first photomontage is an exact reproduction of a masterpiece of the Romantic era: an oil painting by the German landscape artist Caspar David Friedrich. Bazerman would define Gallenkus’ technique of intertextual representation as a “direct quotation” of Friedrich’s work (2004:88). As such, Gallenkus is deliberately choosing the extent or size of the quotation as well as the context in which it will be inserted. As for the intertextual reach

or distance between the two modes, Bazerman would say that there are exactly 200 years of intertextual reach between the two of them (2004:89): one is a photo of an oil painting finished in 1818 and the other is a journalistic photograph taken in 2018. Even if the photo of the painting were to be made just now, the intertextual reach would still be 200 years, because the original mode is still the painting and not its photograph. One could even argue that we are looking at a mode within a mode, yet the painting is still Gallenkus' departing choice. He obviously knows about the painting and whether he has seen it in person or not is unknown to this writer but totally irrelevant. His choice speaks for itself.

It is important to mention here that Friedrich's scenes were "characterized by mysterious lighting effects and lonely figures, almost insignificant before nature." ²² Nonetheless, what is here truly indicative of Gallenkus' ulterior intention is his choice of an image created under the precepts pertaining to German Romanticism, what Halliday & Hasan (1989) would call cultural context. In the last quarter of the 18th century, the West witnessed the bloodshed of both the American War of Independence and the French Revolution, not to mention the rise to absolute power of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Furthermore, the First Industrial Revolution had brought about societal changes that were both exciting and frightening. Much like today, the world seemed to be changing at an unprecedented pace. Confronted with such devastation and uncertainty, German Romantics found solace in a poetic interpretation of the godly stability and strength of Nature (GOMBRICH, 1984). Reason had failed to provide them with answers, and they no longer considered themselves as descendants of the Greeks. Historical paintings were replaced by depictions of Nature imbued with the artists' feelings and beliefs, what Halliday & Hasan (1989) would call context of situation. Romanticism was a revolution of the spirit, full of subjective sensibility, philosophical interpretation and esoteric mystery. These principles are epitomized in Friedrich's own words: "Just as the

²² STANGOS, Niko (Ed). *The Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Art and Artists*. Thames and Hudson Ltd, London. 1991

pious man prays without speaking a word and the Almighty harkens unto him, so does the artist with true feelings paint and the sensitive man understands and recognizes" (HONOUR; FLEMING, 1984: p.561) In *The Wanderer above the Mist*, the onlooker becomes the man in the painting, seeing the landscape with equal eyes and in equal awe of the mysterious and infinite vastness. There is an almost religious self-reflectiveness, although the comfort with which the man stands reflects a certain confidence.

The top left-hand side addend of Gallenkus' text is a photograph taken in war devastated Syria, both cultural and situational context.²³ This mode perhaps carries the greater amount of common stock visual language shared between cultures and nations. The current ubiquity of news reports (not to mention the greater accessibility to them through cell phones) and the weapon carried by the man in the photo would allow many viewers to immediately identify the image as that of a place ravaged by war. For a particularly informed person, the photographed landscape and its topographical characteristics (For example: the desert-like palette) would point to the Middle East as the possible context.

In conclusion, Gallenkus creates a semiotic landscape inside of which the Romantic man is thrown back into what he most dreads: the devastation of war. He recontextualizes Friedrich's painting and in doing so, Gallenkus is commenting on it, adopting a stance. It is precisely through this intertextual comment (Bazerman: 2004) that his discourse becomes evident. Gallenkus' photomontage confronts us with an almost rhythmic circularity, which he constructs using multimodality and intertextuality. Both addendums create an image of profound introspection, almost like a meditation on death or on the transience of life. A lone individual investigates the horizons as if in waiting, as if in expectation of what is next to come. By using a direct quotation of Friedrich's painting, Gallenkus seems to attenuate the horrors of the destruction caused by massive bombardments, but by quoting the landscape ravaged by war, the viewer cannot take refuge only in the mysticism of romantic clouds and

²³ <https://www.theodysseyonline.com/syrian-civil-war-in-nutshell>

ignore the cruel reality of how death can indeed occur in such a ruthless manner. Both addends begin an eternal dance which goes from mysticism to horror and back again. There is no escape. There is neither one nor the other: there is only the totality of reality. This study believes that therein lies the force of Gallenkus' discourse.

4.2 Image 2: “Windows into Windows into Windows,” a description.

Gallenkus’ Photomontage:



Note: The above image is the original photomontage that Gallenkus published in his Instagram account in early 2017. Nevertheless, he replaced it with the photomontage below dated September 2019.



24

The theoretical framework that will be used in this second analysis is almost the same as the one used in Section 4.1. Therefore, in order to avoid repetition, this study will proceed straight to the description of the second photomontage, adding new theoretical notions when warranted.

²⁴ I have not been able to locate either of the original photos taken evidently in two different museums. The frames of the paintings vary in both photomontages, as well as the paintings exhibited along the work of art (a Van Gogh painting). Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study, we will be looking at the 2017 photomontage, although both photomontages are similar in composition, construction and essence, and so the analysis applies to both.

The image is a multimodal text constructed via the assembling of two distinct modes. In the lower side of this photomontage there are two people in what looks like a museum, since there are various works of art being displayed on the wall. The participants appear as if contemplating the painting of a landscape, for their heads are slightly turned towards it. In the painted landscape, there is a tree in the left-hand-side foreground, a hilly scenery in the background and in the middle ground a construction with a steeple which may very well be that of a church. The top side of the photomontage shows the shattered frame of a window, which opens onto a war-ravaged landscape. The frame of the window coincides with the frame of the painting, a superimposition of modes that creates just one text. Through the window, one observes a city in ruins; there are even shell marks on the walls around the broken window frame of the image's top part.

The analysis of this photomontage can prove to be quite tricky yet fascinating at the same time. Curiously enough, this study considers this image to be both a narrative one and a conceptual one, and this duplicity is afforded because of the different nature of the modes Gallenkus chose in order to create the final photomontage. This aspect will be discussed in the following section of the analysis.

Considering the precepts of the aforementioned representational function of visual language, in the lower half on the image one can observe that there are two participants and that there very well may be an action taking place: both seem to be looking at a painting, and their heads seem to be connected by an invisible, slightly oblique vector. According to the parameters presented by Kress and Van Leeuwen, these are fundamental elements of narrative representations (2006: pp 45-78). When observing the photomontage, one may sense that the participants are engaged together in an action. It is impossible to know whether their eyes are open or not, and whether indeed they are

contemplating the painting. But even if this was so, they are both sitting together, connected by a vector that in turn connects them to the complete landscape painting/window. This painting/window is created via the superimposition of two modes, creating a single image where we observe both a war-ravished landscape joined to a bluish post-Impressionist²⁵ landscape. In conclusion, the participants seem indeed “represented as doing something to or for each other” (2006: 59). They are actors from whose heads a vector departs towards the painting, which in turn becomes the goal of their action (Idem:53). The photomontage can be considered a narrative artifact.

At this point, and for the sake of argument, one could say that this is not true, that the image being analyzed is conceptual in nature because the participants are not engaged in action. Instead, perhaps they are being represented in terms of their class or taxonomy: as museum visitors for example (Idem:59). Nevertheless, when further understanding the parameters presented by Kress and Van Leeuwen regarding the action processes, the participants in the photomontage are the most salient elements in the image, placed directly in the foreground and engaged in a transactional reactional event: looking directly at something, which in this case the viewer assumes to be the painting hanging on the wall (Idem: 63) .

If the image is a narrative one, then this analysis must address the interactive function. Kress and van Leeuwen spoke about interactive meaning observable in three distinct aspects: image act, social distance and point of view (2006: pp. 114-133). The image act refers to the participants’ gaze direction, which can be directed at the viewer or not. When the gaze is directed at the viewer, it is denominated a “demand” because it is supposed to establish a direct relationship between the participants and the viewer (Idem: pp. 63-66). This is

²⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Postimpressionism>

clearly not the case here because the participants' gaze is not directed at the viewer. In this case, the image act is referred to as an "offer" because there is no gaze contact, and the participants are represented impersonally for the viewer to contemplate them (Idem: pp.116-120). As we observe the participants, they seem to be offering the viewer an invitation to do the same as they are doing: looking at the painting/window. Furthermore, considering Kress and Van Leeuwen's notion of the reactional process that narrative images have, the action the participants are performing is a transactional one. This is observable because the vector that joins their heads has an identifiable target: the painting. (Idem: 67)

In terms of social distance, we can see that the participants in this image have the same size, are sitting more or less close to each other and are thus defined by a horizontal informal relationship with a certain level of intimacy (Idem: pp 124-129). Lastly, in terms of point of view, Kress and Van Leeuwen speak of two different images: those that present all its components from a perspective chosen by the producer of the image (In this case, Gallenkus' subjective point of view) and those that are objective because they represent all the information available and pertaining to the participants (Idem: 143). Since the photomontage is a deliberate assembly of images created by Gallenkus, then there is no doubt that the image has a subjective perspective.

Finally, and addressing the compositional function of visual texts, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen a narrative image's meaning is achieved by the interrelations of three already mentioned systems: information value, salience, and framing. Because of the multimodal nature of the text, and the fact that it is both a narrative and a conceptual artifact, the analysis of the information value system in this image can prove to be tricky. On the one hand, the information in this photomontage is composed on a horizontal axis: the couple is placed more to the right of the image, whereas the painting/window is placed right in

the center. It is almost impossible to apply to this photomontage Kress and Van Leeuwen's parameters of a left to right classification - where what is placed on the left represents given information and what is placed on the right refers to new information - or a top to bottom one - where what is placed at the top of the image is presented as the ideal and what is placed at the bottom signifies the real (Idem: pp 179-185). These information values are not observable in this image. However, the centrality of the painting and the contemplative reaction that causes in the participants means that the painting/window "is presented as the nucleus of the information to which all the other elements are in some sense subservient" (Idem:196). The same applies to salience: the centrality of the painting/window and its size in relation to the whole photomontage once again are what make the difference among all elements and present the painting/window as the more alluring component of the image (Idem: 2013). Finally, as for the framing of the photomontage, there is a play of words applicable to this analysis: the viewer is looking into a window within window. There is a central frame (that of the painting/window) contained within a perimetral one (that of the photomontage). The one echoes the other. The photomontage starts to become a conceptual structure. But in order to inspect this in greater depth, this study must now proceed to identify the original modes that make up the assembled photomontage.

4.2.1 Deconstruction of the Photomontage into its original Modes.

This study will first look at the photographic mode, a part of which occupies the top side of the photomontage. This choice is deliberate because of the nature of the mode. This study believes it to be conceptual and will discuss this in section 4.2.2.

Addendum 1:



26

The image is a photo taken from inside a damaged room, with a broken window frame and no glass, looking out onto a destroyed city. There are shell or mortar marks on the wall, as well as what looks like broken furniture by the windowsill. On the left-hand side of the window frame, the inside of the fractured wall is exposed. The first thing that comes to mind when looking at this addendum is the absence of human participants, of action and of connecting vectors.

Addendum 2:

Since I have not been able to locate either of the original photos with participants in the lower part of the photomontage, Addendum 2 will be described using similar objects.

²⁶ Source: Felipe Dana @felipedana for @apnews July 19th 2017.

The city of Mosul ravaged by war from a hotel's window located near the Old City.



“Starry Night” (1889)

Original painting by Van Gogh, displayed at the MOMA Museum of New York.²⁷

It is important to describe the painting being observed and “offered” by the participants in the lower part of Gallenkus’ photomontage, because it is a direct quotation of a post-Impressionist masterpiece painted by Van Gogh in 1889. This work currently hangs at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The painting depicts a starry night over a little town. In the foreground, towards the left-hand side, there seems to be a cypress tree. More towards the center, there is a steeple of what may be part of the villages’ church. There are swirling clouds over hills in the background, and a waning crescent moon in the top right-hand side corner. The palette of the painting consists mainly of different shades of blue and green, which contrast with the yellow and white of the stars, clouds and moon.

²⁷ <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79802>

For the sake of analysis, this study will now look at two similar photos to the one that makes up addendum 2: an image of general people observing Van Gogh's painting.



28



29

28

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/9c/ae/3a/9cae3a020f13a4ae9b105d9e30bbb1f5.jpg>

29

https://68.media.tumblr.com/55ea86ca86f43840e011ec857d8c3b8f/tumblr_nm1lf8R3uu1r1jmv0o1_1280.png

In both images we see participants looking at the masterpiece, therefore doing an action and with vectors that connect them to the painting. In both images the action is a transactive one because their glance has an identifiable goal, the painting. It does not matter if their eyes are not visible; to the viewer the position of their heads leaves no room for imagining what they are looking at. Moreover, there is that powerful vector that connects heads and painting.

4.2.2 Intertextuality, Situational and Cultural Context

Once again, the maxim addressed by Kress and Van Leeuwen is undeniable: visual grammar is not universally understood, it is culture specific, and in this case almost individual specific. The authors address this specificity by affirming that “the messages produced by individuals will reflect the differences, incongruities and clashes which characterize social life” (2006: 20). Following this line of thought, Gallenkus continues to combine elements of languages he seems to know quite well but, in doing so, he also seems to expect a bit of background knowledge from the viewer in order for the latter to achieve comprehension of his narrative. Nevertheless, this study still believes that Westerners have a common visual language stock that would still allow many viewers to derive meaning from the photomontage without necessarily knowing every minute detail of the war in Syria or of Van Gogh’s life. Notwithstanding, this study will now proceed to look at both the situational and cultural context of both modes, and at the visual intertextuality that emerges as a result of a direct quotation used by Gallenkus.

Post-Impressionism was a predominantly French art movement, which rejected the precepts of Impressionism, and which took place approximately between 1886 and 1905. Halliday & Hasan (1998) would define this as the cultural context from which “Starry Night” emerged. Impressionists had been fascinated with the depiction of naturalistic light and colour; post-Impressionist artists became more inclined towards a “new search for standards” (GOMBRIGH:1984); they began to give precedence to abstract qualities or symbolic content in their work (Idem: pp 525-442). Van Gogh was one of these

artists, a deeply religious man and a self-taught artist who can be described as one of the loneliest artists of all times (Idem: 435). In December 1888 he suffered a mental breakdown and was admitted to an asylum, still painting during lucid intervals. This would be the situational context of the painting being contemplated in the addendum, as well as in Gallenkus' photomontage. Two years later Van Gogh committed suicide.

On a curious note, this study would like to include this very interesting detail.



30

The above image has been incorporated into the analysis of this photomontage because it is the place from where Van Gogh painted “Starry Night.” He did so, ironically, through the window of his cell. Therefore, there is what we may playfully call a further hidden “window” hidden in Gallenkus’ work, which adds another invisible layer of historical intertextuality to the photomontage. Nevertheless, it is not relevant to the comprehension of the photomontage.

In the bottom center part of Gallenkus’ photomontage, we find an exact reproduction of Van Gogh’s 1889 masterpiece. As in Appendix 1, Bazerman would define Gallenkus’ technique of intertextual representation as a “direct quotation” of Van Gogh’s work (2004:88). As such, once again, Gallenkus is “deliberately choosing the extent or size of the quotation as well as the context in which it will be inserted.” (PERRONE: 2021) As for the intertextual reach or distance between the two modes, which only happens when the painting and the photo are superimposed, Bazerman would say that there are exactly 128

³⁰https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Starry_Night#/media/File:Chevet_de_Saint-Paul_de_Mausole.JPG

years of intertextual reach between the two of them (2004:89): one is a photo of an oil painting finished in 1889 and the other is a journalistic photograph taken in 2017. Irrespective of whether the photo of the painting was made just yesterday, today or tomorrow, the intertextual reach in this specific area of the photomontage would still be more than 100 years, because the original mode is still the painting and not its photograph. “One could even argue that we are in front of a mode within a mode, yet the painting is still Gallenkus’ departing choice. He obviously knows about the painting and whether he has seen it in person or not it is unknown to the writer but totally irrelevant. His choice speaks for itself.” (PERRONE: 2021).

As for the cultural and situational context of the top part of the photomontage, we must look at the credits of the corresponding addendum and see that it refers to the ongoing war on Syria.

In conclusion, what is important in Gallenkus’ semiotic text as a whole, and what gives it immense meaning, is the following: the stark contrasts. On the one hand, the viewer is invited to contemplate a beautiful work of art, which nevertheless is the artistic product of a brief moment of lucidity in the life of an otherwise insane man; and on the other hand, the viewer is confronted with the result of the madness that apparently sane people are capable of engaging in as they stand by their justifications and beliefs. Gallenkus presents us once more with this circular dance between horror and apparent beauty.³¹ We are presented with parallel realities that curiously do converge in the metalanguage observable behind them, in their extra linguistic elements. And even if the viewer was oblivious to the metalanguage, he or she would still see the contrast between the worlds presented. Not in vain has Gallenkus named his works

³¹ This study takes the poetic license of saying “apparent beauty” because “Starry Night” happened in a moment of calm before the storm. Van Gogh’s life was no walk in the park; and although his works are stunning, by knowing how terrible his circumstances were, I always see in them that sad, desperately lonely man who ended up not only cutting off his own ear but finally taking his own life.

“Parallel Universes”. In doing so, he does not seem to be concerned with the viewer having any previous knowledge of his modes. He just wants to bring to the foreground how mankind is both capable of great beauty and of great horror. This is clearly an invitation to reflect upon the world that we live in.

4.3 Image 3: “Metropolitan Gala Refugee”, a description

Gallenkus’ Photomontage:



32

³² This photomontage was published on Gallenkus’ Instagram account in early 2019 but it is no longer available, probably due to copyright matters or the association of a name with an undesirable circumstance. According to the caption in Gallenkus’ Instagram account, the girl in the photo is called Vicki and she is four years old. She is holding a blue hairbrush in her mouth as she walks in the Kuluba refugee camp, Uganda. The photo was taken on March 31, 2017. The image chosen for analysis is still available at:

<https://www.juxtapoz.com/news/collage/ugur-gallenkus-sobering-collages-of-a-polarized-world/>

Below is a photomontage he has on his account dated February 24th, 2020.



The theoretical framework that will be used in this second analysis is almost the same as the one used in Sections 4.1. & 4.2. In order to avoid repetition, this study will proceed straight to the description of the third photomontage, adding new theoretical notions only when novel notions are to be considered. Furthermore, the analysis of this photomontage will refer to theoretical notions in the most minimal way possible.

Once again, the image is a multimodal text constructed via the assembling of two distinct modes. On the left-hand side of the image, we see

³³ <https://www.instagram.com/ugurgallen/>

a little girl, with what looks like a hairbrush in her mouth, wearing orange flip-flops, green shorts and a yellow sheet wrapped around her shoulders and held at chest level with her hands. The background is out of focus, but we can clearly see a figure wearing a red t-shirt sitting on the ground to the left-hand side of the girl. On the right-hand side of the photomontage, we see the “continuation” of the sheet, this time transformed due to the superimposition of the modes into the long train of a glamorous dress made of pink feathers. The ground is covered by a darker pink carpet, and in the middle ground we can observe a decorative wall made of flowers and leaves, that separates photographers from whomever is wearing the dress. To the very right-hand side of this part of the photomontage, there is a staircase going up, with people all dressed in black, as if they were ushers in waiting.

We have already read how Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) affirm that the representative function looks at how the image is constructed through the pattern of representation. In this photomontage we do not observe an obvious unfolding action; there are no vectors that indicating interaction. Instead, we observe how the emphasis has been placed on the figure’s identity and attributes: her pose, her context both situational and cultural, but mainly in her tremendously long cape. The girl is standing alone with her thoughts, enveloped by this huge mantle, oblivious to the participants on the left-hand side of the photomontage. Hence, this study will consider the photomontage in question as conceptual image even if it is possible to argue that in the girl’s sole act of contemplation there is a narrative taking place.

The child is looking out into the horizon, frozen in time, giving emphasis to what Kress & van Leeuwen called the atmosphere of the image. One way to create an image’s atmosphere or mood is via modality, and this is particularly evident in the right-hand side of the photomontage. According to Hodge and Kress (1988:124), modality is understood as the degree to which a text is representing something real. When it comes to images, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) further discuss how modality can be expressed through the use of various markers, which determine “how real” the image should be considered (Idem: 166). The authors speak of eight markers (colour saturation,

colour differentiation, colour modulation, colour contextualization, representation, depth, illumination and brightness).

The marker of modality most visible in the left-hand side of this photomontage is the one referring to contextualization: “a scale running from the absence of background to the most fully articulated and detailed background” (Idem: 161) The background on the left is totally out of focus. It places the girl almost in a void, with no particular relation to a specific place or moment in time. Because of this, the viewer is drawn into the internal world of the child, and we wonder what she might be thinking.

This timelessness is in stark contrast to the same timelessness of the right-hand side of the photomontage. The modality marker here is that of representation: “a scale running from maximum abstraction to maximum representation in pictorial detail.” (Idem: 161) On this side of the image we see every detail of the cape’s train: its feathers, its creases, its folds, every individual strand of the material, the sharp pinkness of the rug, every dark leaf and pink flower in the middle ground of the image, every camera held by all the people dressed in black, with black shoes and even all of them with black or very dark hair. Kress and Van Leeuwen say that there is “a point beyond which a further increase of detail becomes ‘hyper-real’ and hence lower in modality from the point of view of ‘photographic’ naturalism” (Idem: 161). Nevertheless, the mood is still the same: we see a figure, standing alone, not isolated, but turned away from other participants, oblivious to them and to her surroundings, imbued with symbolic suggestive attributes as they just display themselves to the viewer, doing nothing else other than standing there (Idem: 106). The girl is not even brushing her hair, the hairbrush seems almost irrelevant but, since she has it in her mouth, her self-immersion is intensified. Meaning is derived from qualities that are intrinsic to the participant.

Regarding the compositional function of this photomontage, we see that Galllenkus uses two specific tools to build meaning: information value and salience. As seen, the information value refers to the area where the participant is placed in the image. In this photomontage, the girl is in the very center of the

text; there could not be a more powerful way to call attention to her. Furthermore, regarding salience, Gallenkus places the girl right in the foreground, telling the viewer that there is nothing more than her and her massive cape with its long train. This clothing element takes center stage, so it is obvious that Gallenkus is using it to attract the viewers' attention.

4.3.1 Deconstruction of the Photomontage into its original Modes

Addendum 1



This is a photo of a girl taken at the Kuluba Refugee Camp in Uganda. We know this because of the credit Gallenkus gives to AP News in the photomontage. Once again and considering all the theoretical parameters proposed by Kress

³⁴ Photo Jerome Delay @jeromedelay for @apnews (April 29th, 2017)

<https://www.instagram.com/apnews/>

& Van Leeuwen (2006) that have been already described in the previous analyses, we are faced with what can be understood as a conceptual image. In this case, we see more than one participant as opposed to a lone one. In fact, we can observe at least six participants. Nevertheless, they appear blurred in the background and disconnected one from the other (particularly because of the disjointed direction of their gaze) and these characteristics eliminate any interaction whatsoever; there are no identifiable vectors either that would speak of an interaction taking place.

We observe instead a conceptual image where the participants are presented according to a relationship of taxonomy, that is, they are classified in a specific category, in this case, refugees (Idem:79). The authors speak about “participants represented as ‘species of the same genus’, and as all belonging to the same overarching category” (Idem: 79). This is exactly what we see: not just men standing, or someone just sitting, or just the girl, but generic refugees. Of course, this knowledge is given to the viewer as Gallenkus tells us about the sources of the modes of his photomontages. But even if this was not so, just by looking at the image, we would be reminded immediately of a problematic environment or cultural context. The fact that to the left-hand side of the girl, and in the blurred background, we see a man with something in his mouth (a toothbrush perhaps) tells the viewer that this is not typical bucolic village life. That and the sheet of cloth wrapped around the girl’s body speak of a context of crisis, and not necessarily of harmonious daily life. Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) define this type of taxonomy as covert: “a taxonomy in which the Superordinate is inferred from such similarities as the viewer may perceive to exist between the Subordinates, or only indicated in the accompanying text” (Idem: 79). An exact description of this addendum: the refugees are the Subordinates, and the Superordinate (the refugee camp) is indicated by the text Gallenkus writes as authorial credit.

Addendum 2



35

In this photo we see a woman right in the centre, wearing a long light salmon-coloured formal gown, and a coat with a long train, made from light salmon-coloured feathers. She is standing right in the foreground of the image on a darker pink carpet, and she is surrounded by people dressed in black, many of them holding cameras as if they were photographers.

This addendum is of the exact nature as the one above: a conceptual image, where we see participants being represented according to a relationship of taxonomy: attendees and recorders of an event. The taxonomy of the whole image is still a covert one because we only discover the subordinates and the superordinate when we read the authorial credits Gallenkus gives. The superordinate is the Met Gala of 2019, and the subordinates are the people on

35

<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/fashion/g27387324/met-gala-2019-10-best-dressed/?slide=3>

the pink carpet at the precise moment this photo was taken. Curiously, in this photo there is a double classificatory process based on taxonomy, one contained within the other: a greater one that encompasses the whole image and that we have just analyzed, and a smaller one. In the smaller classificational process, the superordinate is the woman attending the event, because of the relevance she is given in terms of placement, salience and direction of her gaze (directly at the viewer, hence, a demand), and the subordinate are all the people dressed in black, which is what places them in the generic group of non-attendees. There is even a physical barrier between them; their physical placement tells us that they clearly are two distinct and separate types of people.



As stated above, the image on the right-hand side of the photomontage corresponds to a photo of a participant of the Met Gala 2019. Gallenkus has taken a portion of the image and reversed it so as to fit his narrative. In this respect, there has been a minute modification of the original mode so that he can properly assemble the final composite text.

4.3.2 Intertextuality, Situational and Cultural Context

Perhaps this photomontage is the one that requires the least amount of background knowledge for the meaning of Gallenkus' discourse to become evident. Both the refugee camp and the celebrity packed event would refer to the cultural context of the photomontage, that is the cultural circumstances that surround the two modes. The photomontage is a visual epitome of the contradictions of our world, and this contradiction would not go unnoticed to anybody who has access to the internet nowadays. We are constantly reminded of where wars are taking place, but also where the glamorous celebrities or digital influencers are too.

In relation to the Met Ball addendum, it is important to remember that we live in an era that has seen the emergence of digital influencers, thanks to the exponential evolution of social media and the transformation of the ways people consume information and products. Many people, especially younger ones, are looking at popular digital influencers in order to decide what to wear, where to go and what to do. According to Addweek, the market value of influencer marketing reached a \$10 billion value already in 2018. The pandemic has increased that value exponentially.³⁶ The Met Ball is perhaps the best example of this aspect of our era, and in the case of this addendum, it is also its situational context. Formally, the ball is known as the Costume Institute Gala, and it is held every year to raise money for the preservation of the Museum's Costume Institute.³⁷ In contrast to this situational context, the situational context in Addendum 1 is the Kuluba refugee camp in Uganda, which receives people fleeing from the Democratic Republic of Congo and from Sudan.³⁸ The

³⁶ <https://www.adweek.com/performance-marketing/giordano-contestabile-activate-by-bloglovin-guest-post-influencer-marketing-in-2018>

³⁷ <https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/met-gala>

³⁸ <https://www.westnileweb.com/news-a-analysis/koboko/the-forgotten-congolese-refugees-of-koboko>

camp was established in 2013 in order to help people fleeing the insurgency taking place in the DRC due to the rebels known as M18. The conflict has its roots in the terrible conflicts that took place between the Hutu and Tutsi people of Rwanda and Uganda as far back as 1972 and culminating in a genocide that took place in 1994, in which 800,000 people were killed.³⁹ In the DRC these tribal conflicts are still happening for political and economic reasons, and the Kuluba refugee camp is a collateral consequence of this continuous conflict.

With these two modes assembled, a very powerful intertextually occurs: apparently these are two events taking place in different countries and in different parts of global society (USA/Uganda). Yet, paradoxically, because of the conceptual narrative of both images, they are also occurring at the same time: they became simultaneous and intertextual specifically on the evening of May 4th, 2019, Eastern Standard Time. BAKHTIN (1982) would say that both addendums are in a dialogical interrelationship, as they come together in the photomontage, because the visual text, inserted in its cultural and situational context, does not consider language just as “a system of abstract grammatical categories but rather a language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even language as concrete opinion” (Idem: 271). In other words, language, whether visual or written or spoken, cannot be disconnected from history. A humble sheet morphs into a luxurious coat with a massive train, when two historically and socially distinct contextual situations come together in the unicity of one single intertextual camera flash. Even if there has been a slight modification in Addendum 2 (the reversing of the image) Gallenkus is still using direct quotation as the technique for intertextual representation. The intertextual reach between the two modes would be approximately two years apart (time), as well as having the Atlantic Ocean in between them (space) (Bazerman: 2004).

As we look at the assembled photomontage, the figure becomes almost a generic outline of a child, standing in the foreground, not even looking at us,

³⁹ <https://www.thoughtco.com/location-of-conflict-tutsis-and-hutus-3554918>

and whose meaning comes from within, from what his or her thoughts may be regarding what he/she is looking at. Furthermore, in the juxtaposition of sheet and luxurious train there is what Linda Hutcheon (2013) would call an adaptation because we observe “an extended inter-textual engagement with the adapted work” (Idem: 35). Linda Hutcheon would say that Gallenkus adapted a photo the viewer would recognize somehow: a generic photo of a glamorous event. The photomontage is a repetition of a familiar story in our world, but not a replication. Hutcheon also speaks of the adaptation as a “creative and interpretive act of appropriation” (Idem :35). Gallenkus appropriated himself of part of Addendum 2 in order to make a new reason: the creation of new meaning. This is precisely what Bazerman calls recontextualization. Once again, we are seeing a circularity that takes us from one extreme aspect of our world to another one. This study does think that Gallekus is trying to ridicule or create a parody in this photomontage. As mentioned above, not in vain, Gallekus himself titles his visual artifacts as “Parallel Universes.” They coexist; the question is, do they converge? Can they converge? This study believes this is the reflection that Gallenkus is aiming at eliciting in viewers.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By no means does this study defend the idea that specific background knowledge is a sine-qua-non condition for meaning to be perceived in Gallenkus' work. Language is socially constructed but it can also be intuited, as seen in the three analyses. Pinker (1994) said that societies do not function without language and that some language is indeed culture and experience specific, for instance, Western Culture versus Eastern Culture, educated versus having no access to education, and so forth. Nevertheless, this study has revealed how multimodality and intertextuality provide meaningful ways to construct meaning.

Furthermore, this study has a limited scope because it has only looked at three specific works by Gallenkus. Gillian Rose reminds us that "interpreting images is just that, interpretation, not the discovery of their 'truth'" (2001:02). This study does not pretend in any way whatsoever to be the only way to look at Gallenkus' work. This study has revealed some of the visual resources Gallenkus uses in order to draw our attention into his work and his discourse. The methodology proposed by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) has proven to be quite applicable and Gallenkus' photomontages have allowed for a deeper understanding of the concepts of multimodality, modes, intertextuality, context of situation and cultural context.

These visual artifacts, just like written or spoken documents, are all parts of the use we give language as a social action. Gallenkus shapes his photomontages according to his goal: provide an invitation to the viewer to reflect on the diametrically opposed realities that occur in our world. This study concludes that Gallenkus' texts do reflect indeed his ideology as producer of content, and somewhere in between his photomontages we can sense his intention to precipitate some form of social action: awareness, shock, indifference. This, undoubtedly and ultimately, is only for the viewer to decide.

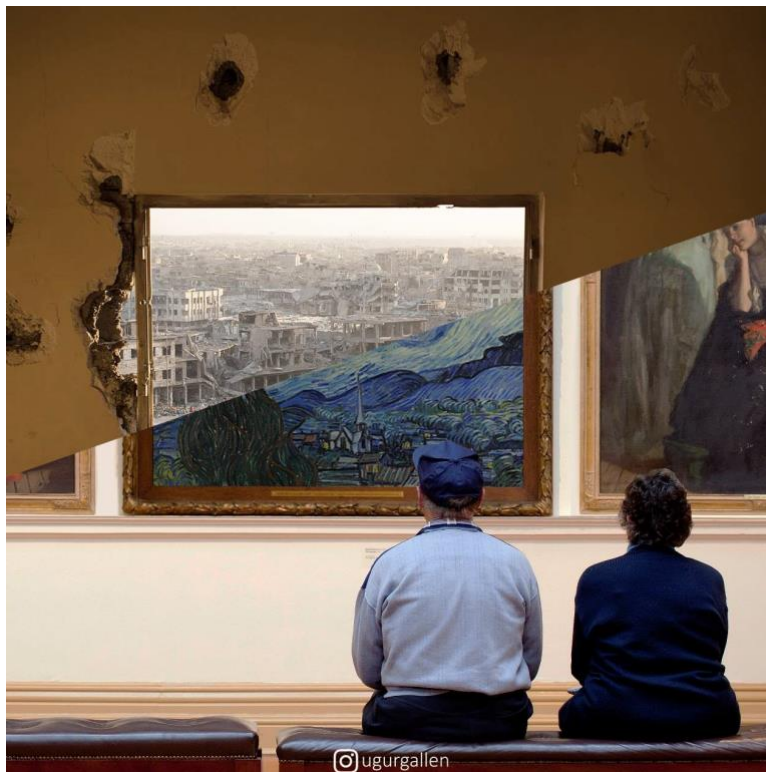
6. APPENDICES 1-3

SOURCE: <https://www.instagram.com/ugurgallen/>

Appendix 1



Appendix 2



Appendix 3



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