Reimagining urban spaces: Deconstructivist and Deleuzian themes in Murat Germen's photography

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Abstract
Architectural photography has long been a tool for expression, documentation, and propaganda, primarily aimed at portraying urban landscapes and modern buildings as aesthetically pleasing, livable spaces. This tradition aligns with modernist architecture's moderate aesthetic view. However, by the 1960s, a shift occurred, as architectural photography began to engage with the representation of the city critically, embracing poststructuralist theories and questioning the roles of both architecture and photography. Despite this transformation, the adoption of a deconstructivist approach in architectural photography remains rare. This study examines the work of Turkish architectural photographer Murat Germen, exploring how he integrates deconstruction into his photographic practice, particularly in relation to unplanned urbanization. The research employs conceptual analysis to investigate Germen's themes, such as Muta-morphosis, Construct, and Facsimile, and formal analysis to examine the visual and compositional strategies in his photographs. Using a deconstructivist and poststructuralist framework, particularly drawing on Deleuze's concepts of the body without organs, flow, and lines of flight, the analysis highlights how Germen's work critiques the conventional representation of modern architecture and urban spaces. The study concludes that Germen's deconstructivist approach challenges traditional visual representations of the city, offering a deeper understanding of the complexities of unplanned urban growth and modernist architecture. His work demonstrates how architectural photography can evolve beyond mere documentation to become a critical social and artistic critique tool.

Keywords: Architectural photography, Deconstruction, Murat Germen, Modernist photography, Deconstructivist photography

Extended Abstract

Introduction: Architectural photography has traditionally been as a tool for documenting, interpreting, and promoting architectural works, capturing urban landscapes, and modern buildings as symbols of aesthetic beauty, functionality, and urban progress. This tradition has often aligned with modernist architecture's principles, which sought to present clean, ordered spaces as emblematic of social progress and design ideals. However, by the 1960s, a paradigm shift occurred in architectural representation, as both architecture and photography began to engage more critically with urbanization and the complexities of modern life. Poststructuralist theories emerged, challenging the established roles and representations of both architecture and photography. These theories, rooted in deconstruction, emphasized the instability of meaning and form, questioning traditional narratives in both architecture and the ways it was represented through photography.

Purpose and scope: Despite the significant transformation of architectural photography, the integration of deconstructivist theory into this field remains relatively rare. This study seeks to fill this gap by closely examining the work of Turkish architectural photographer Murat Germen. Germen's photography offers a unique interpretation of deconstruction within the context of urban environments, particularly in relation to unplanned urbanization. Unlike traditional approaches, which often aim to showcase architectural beauty and order, Germen's work challenges these conventions, dissecting and reinterpreting the visual and structural elements of urban spaces. This study explores how Germen integrates deconstruction into his photographic practice and the way his work critiques modern architecture and urbanization.

Method: This research employs both conceptual and formal analysis to explore Germen's work. The conceptual analysis focuses on recurring themes in his photography, such as Muta-morphosis, Construct, and Facsimile, examining how these ideas function as a critique of architectural norms and urban spaces. Formal analysis investigates Germen's compositional

strategies, use of light and shadow, and manipulation of perspective, examining how these elements contribute to his deconstructivist approach. The study applies a deconstructivist and poststructuralist framework, drawing on the concepts of Gilles Deleuze, including the "body without organs," "flow," and "lines of flight". This analytical approach reveals how Germen's photographs challenge conventional representations of modern architecture and urban environments.

Findings and conclusion: Germen's work aligns with deconstructionist philosophy by exposing the contradictions and complexities inherent in the built environment. His photographs do not simply document architectural forms; they destabilize and deconstruct them, highlighting the flux and transformation of urban spaces. Through his use of fragmented compositions and unconventional perspectives, Germen challenges the static, organized view of the city often presented in traditional architectural photography. His approach critiques modernist ideologies that focus on the harmonious, ordered aspects of cities, instead drawing attention to the disordered, fragmented, and often chaotic nature of unplanned urbanization. By employing Deleuze's concepts, such as the "body without organs", Germen disrupts the traditional notion of the city as a coherent and organized whole. Instead, he captures the dynamic, fluid, and ever-changing nature of urban spaces. His work also engages with the idea of "lines of flight", emphasizing the potential for escape or rupture from the established structures and systems of modernist architecture. These lines of flight manifest visually through his fragmented imagery, which evokes a sense of movement and disruption, reflecting the socio-political forces that shape the urban landscape. Furthermore, Germen's work critiques the ideological foundations of modernist architecture. While many contemporary photographers emphasize the "creative destructiveness" of urban order, Germen's work goes beyond visual representation, questioning the optimistic ideologies that underpin modern architecture. His focus on the collapse of these ideologies offers a radical reinterpretation of the city, shifting the conversation from aesthetic beauty to the underlying social, economic, and political forces that shape the urban environment.

Keywords: Architectural photography, Deconstruction, Murat Germen, Modernist photography, Deconstructivist photography

INTRODUCTION

Architecture and photography, together with their concepts and practices, are fields that affect each other, transform into various representations, and change the way of life of the city and its subjects. In the formation and development process of urbanization that emerged and accelerated with the 19th-century Industrial Revolution, these two means of representation initiated significant changes in the structure of the city by applying their concepts and practices on each other in the modernist context. Cities, where capital and bureaucracy meet in the same space, have rapidly implemented economic and political transformation on subjects by creating unwalled borders inside (city squares, boulevards) and outside (suburbs). According to Özgüleş (2019: 34), the main reason for this is that such places create spaces that have sharp boundaries, do not allow smooth transitions, and thus isolate themselves from the outside world. In this respect, the planning and construction of 19th-century modernist architecture created a new type of identity and representation by determining new urban behaviors, such as how and where subjects should walk, travel, spend money, and remember where and how. On the other hand, photography has emerged as a medium that can highlight cultural, political, and capital indicators in that it reconstructs the visual memory and representation of the urban bourgeois family structure in similar parallels (Bourdieu, 1990). The 19th-century saw a significant alignment between urbanization and the rise of photography as a "realistic" medium driven by the modernist perspective. Photography and architecture converged to visually convey the architectural process, from construction to completion. Architectural photographs, disseminated through media, played a role in framing how the building was perceived—highlighting certain values, functions, or ideological narratives embedded in its design. Modernity and photography collaborated to reshape urban representation. In the context of bourgeois culture, photography and architecture shaped each other's approaches to visualizing urban space. As cities transformed rapidly, photography became increasingly integrated into this process, supported by capital investment and centralized authority, and played a key role in reinforcing spatial narratives through architectural imagery.

Since the 1960s, modernist approaches in both architecture and photography, as well as the photographic representations that mediate their relationship, have been subjected to criticism from a poststructural perspective that challenges the crisis of representation. These critiques argue that modernist visual regimes misrepresent the city, destabilizing the relationship between signifier and signified (Kahn, 1994). This breakdown is rooted in challenges to the dogmatic foundations of modernism, articulated by figures like Robert

Venturi and Aldo Rossi, who rejected the functionalist and universalist claims of the modernist architectural canon (Mallgrave & Goodman, 2011: 18). In response, some architectural thinkers and practitioners have turned to deconstruction—a method that questions formal coherence, fixed meanings, and hierarchical structures—as a representational strategy. Deconstruction operates both in theoretical frameworks, as seen in Venturi's writings (Venturi, 1996), and in built form, exemplified in the practices discussed by Wigley and Johnson (1988). Despite its presence in architectural theory and practice, the deconstructivist approach has rarely informed the field of architectural photography. While architectural photography spans a wide range of intentions—from professional documentation to artistic exploration—it typically adheres to conventions that emphasize clarity, coherence, and legibility. These conventions tend to align more closely with documentary modes of representation, even when photographing postmodern or contemporary architectural structures.

THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

Poststructuralism and Architecture

Rapidly accelerating urbanization in the 19th century turned into a crisis of representation in which the subjects could not physically exist, and beginning in the 1960s made it necessary to reconsider the concept of the city in every aspect. Kevin Lynch (1960), Robert Venturi (1966) and Aldo Rossi (1982) examined the problems of structuralist and functionalist architecture, criticized modernist approaches, and suggested alternative approaches. The effect of these initial theories, in which postmodern traces have begun to be seen in architecture, suggests a more democratic structure that gives importance to "cultural diversity" (Harvey, 1990) in urban architecture. For all "others" who are oppressed in the holistic, closed and dominating urban construction of modernism, space becomes an important indicator. Counterculture strategies thus carry the non-personalized modernist approach to another multi-layered area, where the progressive aspect of space design and urban planning is "celebrated" (Harvey, 1990: 36). According to Bookchin (1980), the designers and planners associated with this perspective prioritize designs that emerge from the diversity of social relations, emphasize personal privacy, favor non-hierarchical structures, and promote spaces independent of the market economy, rather than aiming to accelerate the city's structural development. The contexts put forward by postmodernist architecture as a critical design of the spaces and urban structuring disidentified from modernism, thus revealing an intertextual structure. Intertextuality, one of the basic theories of poststructuralism, has also been one of the basic templates of postmodern architecture in urban design. Postmodern architecture's heterogeneous, multi-layered, and pluralistic structure with vocal, fragmented, double-coded features creates an inter-spatial or inter-structural situation. Harvey (1990), explains the postmodern intertextual practice of architecture as follows:

> Postmodernism cultivates, instead, a conception of the urban fabric as necessarily fragmented, a "palimpsest" of past forms superimposed upon each other, and a "collage" of current uses, many of which may be ephemeral. Since the metropolis is impossible to command except in bits and pieces, urban design (and note that postmodernists design rather than plan) simply aims to be sensitive to vernacular traditions, local histories, particular wants, needs, and fancies, thus generating specialized, even highly customized architectural forms that may range from intimate, personalized spaces, through traditional monumentality, to the gaiety of spectacle. (Harvey, 1990)

Therefore, the intertextual design of postmodern architecture suggests that the city and space are not autonomous, authorial forms but multi-layered structures that quote what came before and shape what comes after—much like texts. Here, deconstruction emerges as a basic methodology for the intertextual construction of the city and space as Sarup (1993: 52) states:

> Deconstructionists tend to say that if a text seems to refer beyond itself, that reference can finally be only to another text. Just as signs refer only to other signs, texts can refer only to other texts, generating an intersecting and indefinitely expandable web called intertextuality. There is a proliferation of interpretations, and no interpretation can claim to be the final one. (Sarup, 1993: 52)

Tschumi theorizes this new spatial context with a deconstructivist approach and explains the formation of the space-event relationship by subtracting it from space-time. Architectural structure or space is not the phenomenon that occurs with time-space, but the occurrences and events that occur in space-event. It rejects

the dialectical unity in the space-event structure and applies a deconstructivist strategy with the concept of disjunction. In Tschumi's (1996) concept of disjunction, space transforms into an interrogation consisting of repetitions, superimpositions, distortions, compression and fragmentations, and temporary events. In the deconstructive method of disjunction, foundational assumptions of structuralist thinking—such as fixed meanings, binary oppositions, and stable spatial hierarchies—are questioned and decontextualized. Spaces lacking a clear beginning or end are reconfigured and re-contextualized within new conceptual frameworks.

Contextual Overview

Photography, like all other artistic disciplines, has been dealt with in different contexts, theoretically and practically, under the broad thought framework of the postmodern period. This new representation process, which started with a critique of photographic and documentary reality in post-structural and deconstructivist strategies since the 1970s, has shaken photography's entire discourse of reality that can be associated with social, cultural, and political reality about the world (Crimp, 1979; Andre, 1984). Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Still" series (1977-80) focuses on the place of women in media, society, and culture from a feminist perspective; Sherrie Levine, in *After Walker Evans* (1981), asks who is the artistic author; Jeff Wall's art-historical intertextual fictional works criticizing documentary photography in general deconstruct both photography and the subject and authorities in front of and behind photography with a poststructuralist approach. Other methods such as appropriation, irony, allegory, re-photography, painting photography, and re-representation have also been other strategies used in the representation crisis as a criticism against the purity, authority, and pre-eminence of the viewer. All these approaches generally emerge as other counter-narrative possibilities presented under sub-titles such as postcolonial, feminist and ecocriticism against the works produced and represented by the masculine white man in the documentary field of photography with an Orthodox understanding.

In this context, it would be correct to say that architectural photography develops its own narrative possibilities in parallel with these developments. However, architectural photography has not been as productive against the postmodern and post-structuralist transformation of architecture and photography as separate disciplines. Currently, architectural photography has a wide production area that we can see in different ways.

It may be useful to go through some architectural photographers' approaches and creations in this wide area of production. Although contemporary architectural photography and postmodern and poststructuralist architectural photography are close to each other, it is possible to say that there are fundamental differences between them. One contemporary photographer, Iwan Baan, approaches architectural photography with a documentary sensibility, emphasizing the relationship between buildings, their surroundings, and the people who inhabit them in a more traditional, human-centered way. Baan's artistic character can be summarized as a contemporary interpretation intertwined with commercial, documentary, and architectural photography (Bilss, 2015). Another contemporary architectural photographer, Helene Binet, can be said to be contemporary but operating from the poststructuralist approach, similar to Baan. For Rosengarten (2015), the shadowy and romantic approach of Binet's photographs is largely based on Lucien Herve's photographic style. Rosengarten's interpretation suggests that Binet's architectural photographic style can be regarded as a more contemporary interpretation of Lucien's structural and modernist style of architecture, tied to surface and space. Likewise, Luisa Lambri deals with the relationship between photographic abstractions and the spatial space, light and details of the architectural structure in a minimal context. Lambri can be seen in this context as a contemporary interpreter of modernism. Therefore, it would be wrong to generally evaluate the approaches of contemporary architectural photographers under the same conceptual framework in postmodernism and post-structuralism. In this sense, it can be seen that contemporary architectural photographers continue the modernist trend or deal with contemporary architecture and the city with a documentarist attitude.

Murat Germen is selected for analysis in this section due to his direct association of poststructuralist and deconstructivist methods with architectural photography, as evidenced in his artistic statements. Germen's connection with the city, who generally bases his works on Istanbul, is that he sees the city and architecture not only as a form but also as a field of study: "They are air anthropology/ethnography museums where you can observe the "real" soul, in other words the "genius loci" (Germen, 2022). This main statement not only distinguishes the artist from contemporary architectural photographers, but also positions his work in a

different place technically and content-wise. The artist focuses on the relationship and analysis of the city, personal memory and community memory, and produces titles concerning the impacts of over-urbanization and gentrification, dis/possession, new forms/tools/methods of imperialism. While both architecture and photography as a form of representation constitute a field of study in their own contexts, architectural photography also takes place as a visual research and expression tool in this intricate structure. Therefore, Germen's understanding of architectural photography is far from the concrete structure of modernist photography. Structural elements such as light, surface, and form are secondary in his photographs. The artist first de-(constructs) pieces of architectural photography and then re-edits these pieces as re-(constructions). Therefore, the concept of reconstruction stands out as an important concept in all the works of the artist (Germen, 2008). In order to analyze all the concepts related to the city and architecture related to the building and structure, the artist first breaks them apart and then combines them again in another context. Thus, Germen's architectural photography method questions the possibilities of both architecture and within these concepts.

Istanbul holds a special place in the works of the artist, and as a cosmopolitan city, it has been the main theme of many of the artist's works. The acceleration of the migration process from the village to the city with the neoliberal policies in the 1980s ultimately manifested in the different architectural representations of the new social layers that emerged in the city. Since the 1990s, urban transformation projects and gentrification and the standardization of urban structuring in terms of integration with globalization accelerated the orientation of the city's narrative as a consumption-oriented commodity (Elicin, 2014). Istanbul is particularly involved in Germen's work as a study area where the new urban narrative that emerges with its fragmented and stratified structure can best be observed and thought about. While the works of the artist deconstruct the system peculiar to the unplanned urbanization of Istanbul, the postmodern urban structure of Istanbul attracts the artist to himself and enters into a mutual communication.

As a result, critical approaches—such as those informed by deconstruction—that challenge the stability of visual meaning remain largely underexplored within mainstream architectural photography. In this context, the deconstructivist examples of architectural photography are generally intertwined with postmodern and contemporary photography, leading to a confusion of meaning. This study examines the works of Murat Germen, who employs the strategy of deconstruction in architectural photography through a broad and unconventional approach. To reveal the artist's relationship with deconstruction, Deleuze's concepts of the body without organs, flow, and lines of escape are associated with his works. The works to be examined are Germen's photo projects Muta-morphosis, Re-construct, and Facsimile. This study also aims to reveal the artist's comments and critiques on the memory, political, economic, and cultural representation of the city through this strategy. Consequently, within the context of this study, an examination was undertaken to explore the interrelationship between Murat Germen's artistic works and the concept of deconstruction. This exploration was conducted through an analysis of the artist's statements, artistic creations, as well as the pertinent sources that underpin the concept of deconstruction, including academic texts on architectural history and architectural photography.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, integrating document analysis with conceptual and formal analysis to comprehensively examine Murat Germen's photographic works within the framework of deconstructivist architectural photography. The qualitative approach is particularly suited for exploring the intricate and multi-layered meanings embedded in Germen's artistic and thematic choices, providing a nuanced understanding of his critique of urbanization and architectural norms.

Document/text analysis was a key component of this methodology, providing a systematic approach to exploring the connection between Germen's work and deconstruction (Creswell, 2012). This method involved the thorough examination of written materials relevant to the research phenomenon and synthesizing the findings into a cohesive understanding. By analyzing diverse sources—including reports, books, archival documents, video and audio recordings, and visual materials—this approach enabled the transformation of these varied datasets into valuable insights that informed the study's conceptual and formal analyses (Merriam,

1998). Data sources included Germen's artist statements, exhibition materials, academic texts on deconstruction and architectural photography, and visual artifacts such as his *Muta-morphosis*, *Reconstruct*, and *Facsimile* series. The document analysis process encompassed a literature review and the examination of diverse materials, including reports, books, archive files, and even video and audio recordings. This broad-based analysis contextualized Germen's visual strategies within a wider theoretical framework, forming the foundation for conceptual and formal analyses. Conceptual analysis focused on recurring motifs in Germen's works, such as incompleteness, resistance to gentrification, and the interplay between urban memory and identity. These themes were critically examined as responses to neoliberal urbanism, drawing upon Deleuze's philosophical concepts, including the "body without organs" and "lines of flight". This phase of the research aimed to uncover the underlying messages and critiques embedded in Germen's work, linking them to broader discussions of deconstruction. In tandem, formal analysis investigated the compositional elements of Germen's photographs. This included studying his use of light and shadow, perspective manipulation, and fragmentation techniques. By deconstructing these visual strategies, the study revealed how Germen's approach challenges traditional ideals of architectural photography, which often emphasize perfection, order, and control. His techniques were interpreted as symbolic acts of resistance to hierarchical and capitalist structuring within urban spaces.

Grounding these analyses, the study employs a poststructuralist and deconstructivist theoretical framework, with Gilles Deleuze's concepts serving as a pivotal lens. Deleuze's ideas of flow, deterritorialization, and abstract lines were instrumental in understanding how Germen's works disrupt traditional semiotics, emphasizing the fluidity and instability of urban environments. Together, these methodological approaches—document/text analysis, conceptual analysis, and formal analysis—offer a comprehensive lens to understand Germen's deconstructivist philosophy and its manifestation in his unique critique of architecture and urbanization.

FINDINGS

Reconstruction as The Dynamism of Incompleteness

The Construction exhibition, which Germen held jointly with Nazlı Sanberk at the French Institute (İstanbul) in 2007, in parallel with the 10th International Istanbul Biennial event, mainly focuses on incompleteness. The reason why the artist refers to construction as incompleteness is because he defines construction as a temporary process that exists for a while and eventually turns into a finished "product" (Germen, 2007). Therefore, the interim period of construction can actually be seen as a temporal gap that emerges in order to be reconsidered and reconstructed. During this in-between period, construction can be reconstructed, disassembled, or mapped onto other construction processes Germen's choice of this vulnerable in-between process seems to be an important strategy as it brings construction's destructive effect on the city to a critical point. The dynamism of incompleteness speaks to the lack of continuity in the construction process that emerged in Istanbul's urban setting. The city is constructed on an incomplete dynamism. Istanbul, where vertical urbanization has accelerated ceaselessly since the 1990s, glorifies the "construction act". The main thrust that ensures the continuity of the construction is the gentrification and rehabilitation of the 'other' in the city determined by the new urban trends supported by the global market (Keyder, 2005).

The main problem here is the uncontrolled continuation of the construction action. According to Tekeli (1999), after the 1980s, modernization became a spontaneous dynamic that changed shape unplanned. In addition, as Ekinci (1994) adds, especially in the 10-year period between 1983-1993, Istanbul was turned upside down by looting plans and was deprived of planning discipline. Kuban (1994), who wrote the foreword to Ekinci's work, handles this situation in a different way, referring to the state of affairs created by Istanbul's construction as a schizophrenic passion for construction—an impulsive and irrational compulsion to build that disregards long-term spatial coherence and planning logic. The mobility of construction and reconstruction is similar to the double movement of capitalism in the relationship between capitalism and schizophrenia. According to Deleuze (1983: 337), while flows (flux) are deterritorialized on the one hand, on the other, territorialization continues in the dual movement of capitalism. This double movement expresses an economic schizophrenic structure produced by late capitalism. For example, monetary flows are of a schizophrenic nature, and only the

axiomatic principle must be present for their functioning. This situation creates an insatiable capitalist axiomatic process that constantly tries to merge with the previous one. The areas drawn by the axioms are first of all deterritorialized, but then the axioms make things territorialized again according to their own category. Capitalism's need to ensure continuous continuity with a dynamic line arises from the need to adapt to changing conditions. For this reason, the capitalist axiom moves with the flow and creates new homelands in order to be able to exist (Deleuze, 1983: 240-262). Thus, what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as *schizos* are not clinical subjects but conceptual figures—outcomes of capitalism's processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization—who embody the fragmented, fluid, and unstable identities and spaces produced by homogenizing capitalist mechanisms across physical, spatial, and temporal dimensions.

Figure 1. Murat Germen, *Re-Construct #01*, 2006-2007

Construction moves with a structure parallel to the insatiable continuity of capitalist axioms. Germen's (2022) description of construction as marked by "incomplete dynamism" directly reflects the ongoing articulation of capitalist axioms within the built environment. In the *Re-Construct* series (Germen, 2006-2007), the artist fragments and reconstructs the structure of architectural photography and construction through techniques such as fragmentation, repetition, and reproduction. Of course, the fragmentation and reconfiguration here is different from the double action of capitalism. Germen does not repeat the territorialization of the structure. Thus, it interrupts the fluidity of capitalist axioms. In contrast, Germen's use of repetition resists the functionalist and industrial logic found in modernist architecture. Le Corbusier (1929/1987: 220) saw repetition in "On Repetition or Mass Production" as a capitalist part of construction: "Repetition dominates everything. We are unable to produce industrially at normal prices without it; it is impossible to solve the housing problem without it". Smith (2001: 36) makes clear Le Corbusier's connection between the state and capitalism: "Thus according to Lefebvre, "Le Corbusier ideologizes as he rationalizes". His architecture "turned out to be in the service of the state...despite the fact its advent was hailed as a revolution...Le Corbusier, expressed (formulated and met) the architectural requirements of state capitalism." Far from being "natural", modernism's abstract and Cartesian conception of space was an "ideology in action".

While dealing with the fragmentation and repetition process in the horizontal and vertical axes of construction in Re-construct #1, Germen follows a different strategy in Re-construct #2. The repetition used in *Re-construct #2* ironically expresses the dynamism that will not be completed. Here, the fragmentation of the architectural structure and its putting into the rebuilding process is not immediately noticeable because it is placed in the same plane. As a result, the work subtly reflects the illusion of construction's continuity through an ironic formal strategy.
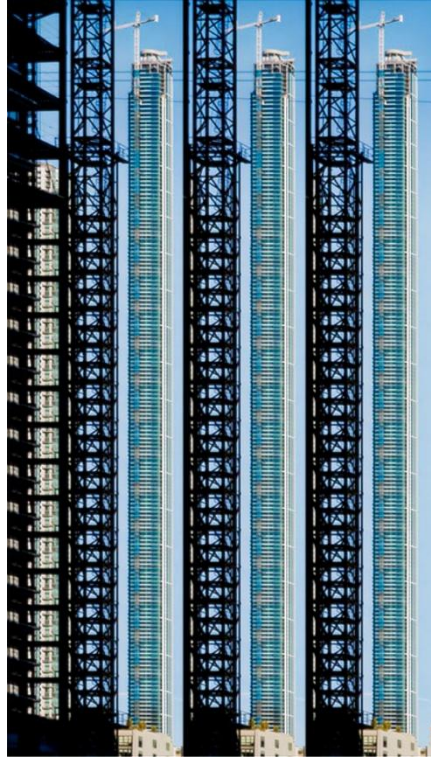
Figure 2. Murat Germen, *Re-Construct #02,* 2006-2007

As Resistance to Capitalist Gentrification: Muta-Morphosis

Muta-Morphosis work of Germen basically intends to present a panoramic critical image against the in-depth and relentless change of urban space. It tries to show the collapses and oppositions of architectural structures by considering them on a wider surface, instead of tearing them apart as in Re-construct. In the series, hierarchy between layers, power balances, architectural differences, and global trends emerge with the compression of the elements. The concept of *Muta-Morphosis*, which derives from the words mutation and metamorphosis, expresses both a formal change of form and a more evolutionary change such as character and content. Germen deals with a problem in which the capitalist global trend gentrifies urban growth or forces the historical fabric to constantly change the identity of architecture, subjects and the city. In the continuation of this deterritorialization, it provides a territory for subjects again and codes them by actually decoding them: "Capitalism differs from the despotic power society in that it is an economic power society: it deterritorializes not by overcoding through representation, but by completely decoding representation" (Arnott, 2005:33).

Figure 3. Murat Germen, *Muta-morphosis - İstanbul, Sishane #4*, 2022

In his strategy applied to the texture and architecture of the city at this stage, the artist basically compresses them horizontally and adapts them to a non-hierarchical, rhizome (Deleuze, 1987: 6-7) spread on a flatter surface. This is actually the artist's way of transforming the urban elements into a body without organs (1987: 149-166). Because bodies without organs are necessary for a strong struggle against gentrification and uniformization as the artist aims. As with change and transformation, bodies without organs break down coding processes and machines. Thus, unlike organic bodies, they do not have organs with a specific function, and can thus resist all the pleasures of capitalism. Therefore, the artist's transformation of the city and architectural elements into a body without organs is actually going beyond the concept or thought and putting the body into an active form of action as a practical experience. When the city enters into such an active formation, architectural structures enter into an evolutionary struggle against capital gentrification and deterritorialization. For Germen (2022), a struggle begins between architectural dynamics: "The image compression on the horizontal level points to the dynamics between the urban components that can persist and the ones that give up, vanish in the various historical, residential and business urban districts". The artist's form of action creates a fluidity in the city, and while the architectural structures actually evolve on this slippery smooth ground, he creates a form of rhizomatic distancing from hierarchy. The borders drawn by capitalism between urban axes become fluid in Muta-morphosis, making hereditary similarities, classifications, uniformizations, and the tree model open-ended. In the rhizomatic action revealed by Muta-morphosis on this smooth slippery surface, architectural structures become an assembly machine that creates new action, new body, and new thoughts by connecting with one another. The architectural photography and urban panorama created by muta-morphosis thus, in a more nomadic manner, threaten the capitalist, as Parr (2005: 35) points out: "the capitalist war machine is always being threatened by mobile nomadic war machines that use technologies to form new rhizomes and open up to becoming."

As Lines of Flight: Facsimile

In parallel with his two previous works, Germen once again focuses on the transformation of the city in *Facsimile*. However, unlike *Muta-morphosis*, which presents the city on a continuous surface, *Facsimile* emphasizes the vertical stratification of urban space, highlighting its hierarchical structure. The artist describes the 'upper land' (*Überland*) as the part of the city that is most experienced, inhabited, and visible, while the 'lower land' (*Unterland*) refers to marginal, often hidden zones—spaces where existence is temporary, diminished, and overlooked. The Facsimile series establishes the relationship between the upper world and the lower world in the city with abstract lines drawn near the horizon and extended towards the bottom. The dense lines that emerge reveal the stratified connection and disconnection between the superstructure created by gentrification and the marginalized and invisible infrastructure. The lines depict communication between the two regions in the form of a fault aesthetic. The lines used here are different lines of escape from single or polycentric lines of escape from a Cartesian perspective. It is a line of escape that resists the traditional, authoritarian, and semiotic structure of architecture, the city, and architectural photography. The structure of the resistance makes the lines slippery, smooth, and abstract. In fact, this is an area that cannot be semiotic: a space against image, capitalism, gentrification, and hierarchical structuring in the city. These lines of flight are both deterritorialization, which separates from the hierarchically organized sign system, and also abstraction, which creates heterogeneous lines of becoming.

Figure 4. Murat Germen, *Facsimile, Istanbul, Kuzguncuk #8,* 2012

Deleuze (1987: 11) explains the lines of escape that will occur as follows: "… form a rhizome, increase your territory by deterritorialization, extend the line of flight to the point where it becomes an abstract machine covering the entire plane of consistency." The abstract lines of escape created by the artist between the lower world and the upper land are Deleuze's movements of becoming a nomad, which cannot be coded and captured by systems such as capitalism. While the nomadic lines of flight resisting the coded area determined in the upper land seem to disappear, they gain visibility in a state of continuous formation. The nomad is constantly moving, its space smooth and slippery. There are differences in the use of space between the superstructure and the infrastructure: "…there is a significant difference between the spaces: sedentary space is striated, by walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures, while nomad space is smooth, marked only by 'traits' that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory" (1987: 387). State, capitalism, and market dynamics, which fix and force predetermined forms such as housing, consumption, and travel, appear in the architecture and urban structuring of large metropolitan cities, and Istanbul in particular, and in this way construct certain regions. The lines of flight against these institutions and systems, which Deleuze (1987: 201-202) defines as the apparatus of capture, aim to get rid of it: "I am now no more than a line. (…) Now one is no more than an abstract line, like an arrow crossing the void. Absolute deterritorialization. One has become like everybody/the whole world (tout le monde), but in a way that can become like everybody/the whole world." The artist tries to make invisible lines of flight visible in his work. For Deleuze (1997: 45), there is always a "line of flight" but it is difficult to see because it is the least perceived.

The analysis reveals several critical insights into Murat Germen's work and its alignment with deconstructivist architectural photography. Germen's photographs challenge the static, organized vision of cities characteristic of modernist architectural photography by exposing the disorder and fragmentation inherent in rapidly urbanizing landscapes like Istanbul. Through fragmentation and recomposition, his work critiques the optimistic ideologies of architectural modernism, emphasizing the socio-economic forces driving urban transformation. Employing deconstructivist strategies, Germen disrupts architectural norms by emphasizing incompleteness and fluidity, as exemplified in his *Reconstruct* series, where repetition and fragmentation critique the relentless continuity of capitalist-driven urban development. His visual approach redefines the city as a dynamic site of flux and contestation, interrupting the ideological stability often associated with modernist photography. In *Muta-morphosis*, Germen critiques neoliberal urbanism's commodification and standardization of architectural spaces by compressing urban elements into rhizomatic structures, symbolizing a "body without organs" that resists the hierarchical order imposed by global capitalism. This strategy dismantles rigid spatial hierarchies, emphasizing the transient and fluid nature of urban architecture. Similarly, in the *Facsimile* series, Germen explores the layered relationships between the visible and invisible forces shaping urban environments. Through abstract lines symbolizing Deleuzian "lines of flight," he highlights the tensions between the city's upper, visible layers and its marginalized understructures, creating a fault aesthetic that embodies both rupture and connection. Finally, Germen's works address the erasure and transformation of urban memory through gentrification and unplanned urbanization. By re-contextualizing architectural elements, his photography invites viewers to engage with the socio-political narratives embedded in urban spaces, offering a profound critique of the histories and identities often obscured by modern development.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study set out to analyze how Murat Germen incorporates the principles of deconstruction into his architectural photography, shedding light on the unique ways in which his works align with and expand upon the deconstructivist framework. Through the exploration of his visual strategies and thematic concerns, this research underscores Germen's role as a pivotal figure in redefining the boundaries of architectural photography. His approach transcends the traditional purposes of the medium—documentation, expression, and propaganda—and positions photography as a critical tool for interrogating urbanization, architectural ideologies, and socio-political dynamics. Germen's work boldly challenges traditional paradigms in architectural photography. While many contemporary urban photographers often focus on the "creative destructiveness" (Schumpeter, 1994 [1949]: 83) of the city's order and cleanliness—seemingly embracing a liberal and neoliberal commerce-first ethos—Germen seeks to emphasize the "dismantling and collapse of the optimistic ideologies that sustained architectural modernism" (Rosengarten, 2015: 365). He dismantles the

ideals that celebrate urban progress and architectural perfection, instead exposing the contradictions, flaws, and inequities that define urban environments. By employing strategies rooted in deconstructivist philosophy, Germen's works not only disrupt traditional representations of architecture but also question the social and economic forces that shape urban landscapes. Visually, Germen's photographs diverge sharply from conventional approaches to architectural photography, which often prioritize pristine aesthetics, geometric precision, and static representations of built forms. Instead, Germen embraces fragmentation, repetition, and distortion to deconstruct photographic realism and challenge the sublimation of concrete as a symbol of permanence and order. His works invite viewers to reimagine urban spaces as dynamic, layered, and contested terrains, bringing into focus the unseen substructures and socio-political realities that underpin architectural forms. The implications of Germen's work extend beyond aesthetics and technique; they open architectural photography to broader political and artistic discussions. His images critique the commodification and standardization of urban spaces driven by global capitalism and neoliberal policies. By emphasizing incompleteness, fluidity, and the interplay of memory and identity, Germen invites a deeper engagement with the histories and struggles embedded within urban environments. His works resonate as powerful visual critiques of unplanned urbanization, gentrification, and the erasure of cultural and historical contexts in the pursuit of global urban homogeneity. Prospectively, Germen's deconstructivist approach presents significant opportunities for further research. Future studies could investigate the broader implications of his photographic practices for contemporary architectural discourse, particularly in relation to their potential as tools for activism and social critique. Additionally, Germen's work invites exploration into the intersections of photography, philosophy, and urban studies, offering fresh perspectives on the evolving role of architectural photography in a rapidly urbanizing world. In sum, Murat Germen's architectural photography provides a transformative lens through which to view the complexities of urban environments. His deconstructivist strategies challenge viewers to confront the socio-political underpinnings of architectural forms, fostering a critical understanding of the intricate relationships between architecture, society, and power. By reimagining the possibilities of architectural photography, Germen's work not only disrupts established norms but also paves the way for innovative approaches to visualizing and understanding the urban landscape in all its layered, contested, and dynamic forms.

Author's Contributions

The author contributed 100% to the study.

Competing Interests

There is no potential conflict of interest.

Ethics Committee Declaration

This study does not require ethics committee approval.

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Figure References

Figure 1: Germen, M. (t.y.). *Construct.* Murat Germen. https://muratgermen.com/artworks/insa/#image-3 (10.11.2023).

Figure 2: Germen, M. (t.y.). *Construct.* Murat Germen. https://muratgermen.com/artworks/insa/#image-6 (10.09.2023).

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Figure 4: Germen, M. (2012). *Facsimile.* Murat Germen. https://muratgermen.com/artworks/facsimile/#image-15 (04.02.2024).

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