AUTOPSYA

Nicolas Bonilla & **Matt Terrington**

Autopsya

Autopsya Etymology

(ENG) Autopsy + Autopsia (ESP)

autopsia - GREEK - act of seeing with one's own eyes

autos - 'self'

opsis - 'sight'

Autopsya is the beginning of an experiment into the power of the image.

The project was conceived by **Nicolas Bonilla** and **Matt Terrington** whilst they were students on the MA Curating Latin American Art programme at the **University of Essex**. **Autopsya**'s starting point is a concern with expanding methods of communication within art history as a discipline.

Before **Autopsya** had been named, the project started life as a idea to translate, and provide a repository of and access to, academic papers in written in English, Spanish and Portuguese. However through continued discussions around the project, it quickly moved away from this towards an investigation into the creation of knowledge and perception with images. We feel it is problematic that within the study of visual culture, the default method for academic exploration is textual. At Autopsya we intend to explore alternative ways of communicating information within the fields of art practice, visual culture, art history, art theory, and their related subjects. Our intention is to bridge the operational gap between the creation of visual culture and the study of it, by commissioning academic studies constructed primarily through images. We hope that by emphasising the image as the

main medium of discourse, we can explore new relationships and encourage alternative approaches to the investigation of the visual universe.

'**We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice.**'[1]

<u>John Berger</u>, '<u>Ways of Seeing</u>'

The project takes the form of an online journal at **Autopsya.com**. The format of the journal is to publish quarterly, three commissioned studies by invited expert contributors and through an open call for papers directed to the artistic and academic communities. Each issue of the journal will have a topic or question posed for that topic. The directions that we gave the contributors for the first issue topic were:

> **Through Autopsya we want to explore how the medium in which an idea is transmitted can affect its meaning and interpretation. Following this; How does the construction and reception of a discourse change when it is produced primarily with images rather than text? What is the difference between seeing (image) and reading (text)?**

The studies are created using a specially developed, <u>**Visual Study**</u> structure. The structure is itself very simple; the concept of compare and contrast is at its core. Anyone who has sat in an art history lecture that makes use of two slide projectors will see some similarities between the two. Pairs of images are linked in a vertical chain (<u>Fig.1.</u>), that can be read by scrolling up and down the page. Each pair hopefully communicating with each other pair, and in turn combining to form concepts, thoughts and feelings in the mind of the viewer.

[1] Berger, John. 'Ways of Seeing'. London, BBC. 1972. Print. p.7.
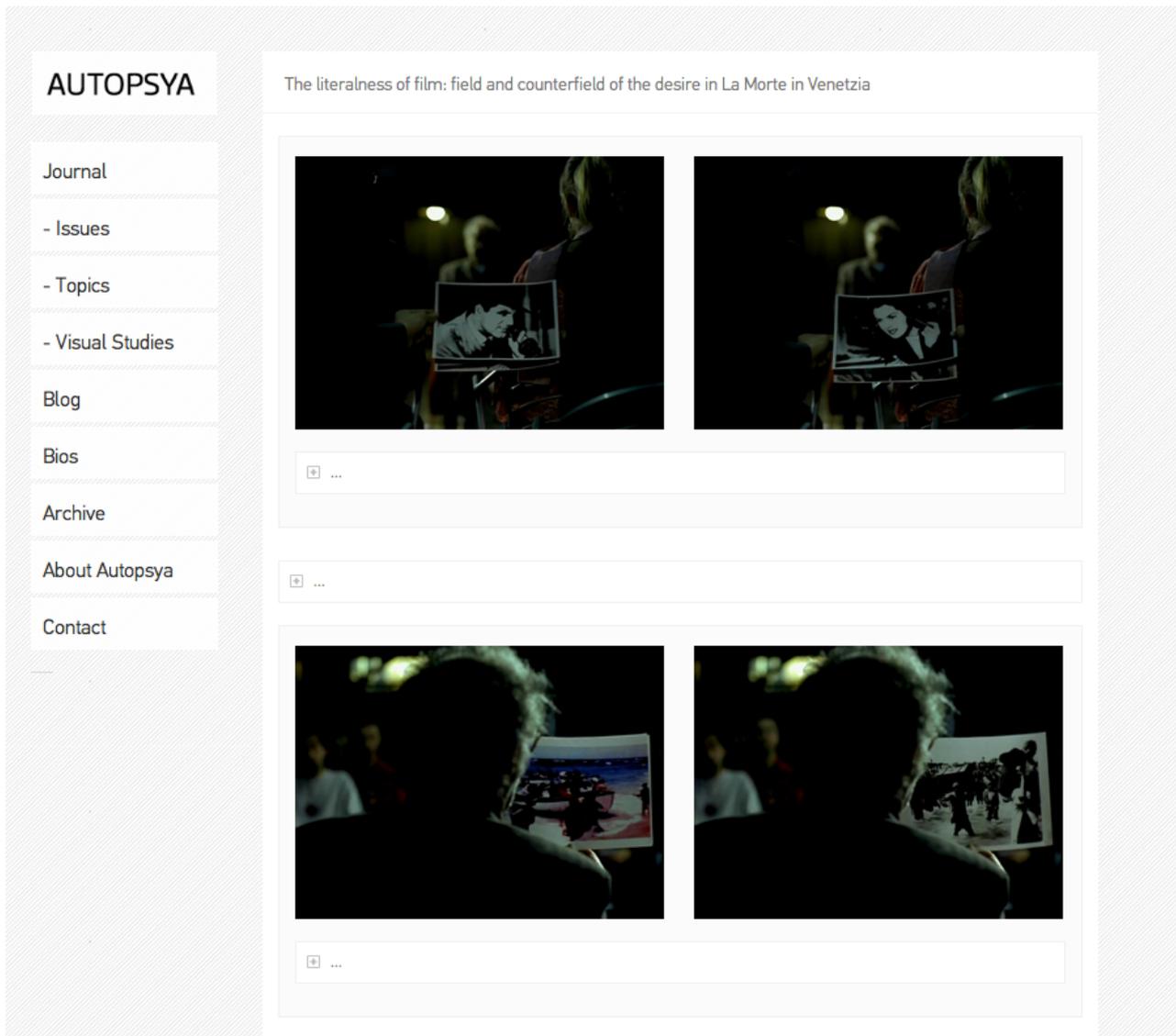
Fig.1. Two image pairs.

To aid the communication of each image pair, and combination of pairs, we have included a second layer to the **Visual Study** (Fig.2.). This second layer allows for the contributor of the study to include small amounts of complementary information in the form of text, symbols or colour. The complementary information allows the contributor to supplement the image group. There is opportunity for one of these linking spaces between each pair of images, and pair of pairs.
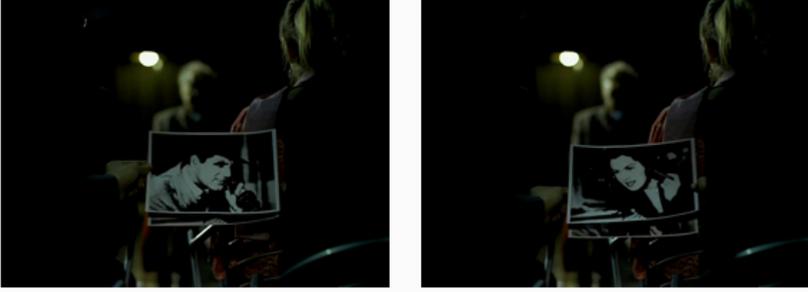
Fig.2. Two image pairs, with linking space text showing.

Alongside each **Visual Study** published on the site sits a facility allowing for discussion of the study. This discussion aspect of the project is important to us as we hope that interesting conversations will grow from the interpretive aspect of the studies.

Our secondary concern is to rethink the distribution methods of academic research. The usual ways of circulating academic knowledge is through papers, articles, books, reviews, etc. These are then mainly consumed by the same academic peers and scholars. By using image as the language of communication and the internet as the form of distribution we hope to engage with a wider audience, including ones that wouldn't usually consume the academic production of information.

In order for us to try to do this we will be using social networks to further the discussions. The site includes a **Blog** so that we may keep our community up to date with the progress of the project and discuss other topics that around the project. We have an **Archive** of resources that we hope will help to further peoples interest in topics that **Autopsya** touches on. There is also a **Bios** section so that we can display information and contact details for those involved in the project.

Thank you very much for taking time to read this, we hope you will visit us soon. Please **contact us** if you are interested in being involved with **Autopsya**, or would like to know more about the journal and the team. If you would like to be kept up to date with the project you can sign up to our **mailing list**, subscribe to the **Blog RSS** or follow us on **Facebook** or **Twitter**.

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