

## WALTER COSTA

Visual artist with an interdisciplinary practice that investigates power imbalances

Combining my background as a political scientist with artistic research methods and interdisciplinary approaches, I develop projects that focus on the visual investigation of power imbalances. Understanding photography as a multifaceted medium, I use different visual strategies according to the nature of each project: from appropriation of existing imagery to experimentation with new technologies such as thermal imaging and tridimensional modelling. Interested in how images change their meaning depending on their sequence and context, I have developed a long-term research on editing, sequencing, and narrative hybridisms which I implement and expand in my personal projects and commissioned works. While photography guides my practice, my fascination for tangibility and the way in which time is captured in matter influences the outcomes, which gravitate around the book form. When I am working with others, I help authors to edit and materialise their photography books. It is an expertise which I combine with pedagogy and I share through lectures, workshops and courses, having realised that teaching is a key practice whose collaborative processes and outcomes define me as a visual artist. Acknowledging that books and exhibitions cannot be the only displays for my photographic projects, I am currently expanding my repertoire through new technologies such as 3D printed sculptures, while actively finding ways to engage with new audiences outside the photography world.

### WEBSITES

personal website

[www.waltercosta.site](http://www.waltercosta.site)

### SOCIAL MEDIA

[www.instagram.com/wallywalter/](https://www.instagram.com/wallywalter/)

### MEMBER OF ARTISTS' INITIATIVE/COLLECTIVE/INCUBATOR

Havaiana Papers - Distribution Platform for Brazilian Independent Photobooks

### EDUCATION

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 2018 -<br>2018 | Course on Art Crime (online) University of Glasgow   |
| 2018 -<br>2020 | MA Photography&Society Den Haag, Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten diploma                      |
| 2012 -<br>2013 | Postgraduate in Documentary Photography Blank Paper Photography School (Madrid/Spain)                    |
| 2006 -<br>2010 | Bachelor in Political Sciences and International Studies alma mater studiorum/Bologna University diploma |

### EXHIBITIONS

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2020 | graduation show KABK The Hague, Netherlands Friction Atlas is the graduation show of the first cohort of the new MA Photography&Society. Using different approaches to tackle diverse topics, the projects exhibited share the same quest for identifying and revealing frictions that affect contemporary societies, from environment to history, from market to colonialism, from local communities to the photographic medium itself.<br><a href="#">Group</a> |
| 2018 | The gap, the train, the platform VÃO Art Space São Paulo, Brazil In the case of VÃO, a collective space, located in the district of Pinheiros, in São Paulo, we found eight talents, from varied backgrounds and formations, all of them inserted in the questions of our time, dealing with specific materials, achieving singular results. The  |

title, ironic for sure, is provoked by the new baptismal name of the space, making mention of the care and attention we need to have when venturing into minefields, dodging doubts, traps and storms that, analogically, we find in our paths.  
[vaospacodearte.wordpress.com/2018/04/03/28!](http://vaospacodearte.wordpress.com/2018/04/03/28!)  
 Group

2016 Bureau for Public Insecurities VÃO Art Space São Paulo, Brazil What if the government fails and my passport locks me within a certain territory? What if the money become worth less than a paper it is printed on? What if my company goes bankrupt and/or my job become obsolete? Have you ever been thinking about the institution where you can freely discuss the insecurities of life within society without fearful self-restraint? The nomadic Bureau for Public Insecurities is set to create a context in which the definition of borders between 'public' and 'private' and the rules of the social game themselves that define the notion of 'normal' can be challenged".  
 Group

## PROJECTS

2020 Riders of the lost Self-initiated The Hague, Netherlands  
[www.waltercosta.site/projects/riders-of-the-lost-ongoing/](http://www.waltercosta.site/projects/riders-of-the-lost-ongoing/) To what extent can photography be both complicit and a tool for revealing the trafficking in looted antiquities? How is the traceability of the movements between illegal and legal markets through physical and virtual realms affected by photography? How can the imagery and other materials produced by both legal and illegal markets help to show the loss of material culture provoked by looting and trafficking? Riders of the lost deals with the looting and trafficking of antiquities, a transnational crime that bargains our ancestors' traces for billions of Euro while contributing to their very destruction, bending history and public access in favour of commodification and private ownership. This research-based project made use of the key role that photography plays in facilitating, concealing and eventually revealing the

## INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES/RESIDENCIES

2014 Estudio Madalena São Paulo, Brazil Estudio Madalena offers a residency program that allows the participants to expand their practice while connecting them with the most important members of the Latin-American photographic scene

2014 Valparaíso International Photography Festival Valparaíso, Chile The festival hosts emergent photographers and foster their development of socially engaged projects that aim at collaborating with the local communities [www.fifv.cl/](http://www.fifv.cl/)

trafficking mechanisms and routes, bringing to light the hidden flow of artefacts streaming from the global south rich in archaeological sites to the global north rich in the means to purchase them. "Follow the money". Disguised as a fake persona, I entered the physical and virtual realms where trafficking and open trade take place, embodying their concealing tactics in order to expose them. While doing this, I understood that raising awareness and generating an impact necessarily involves addressing the collectors whose demand for antiquities is often unaware of this illegal and destructive supply chain. I thus started investigating the psychological reasons to collect antiquities with the aim of exploiting the archetypal drives behind these modern hunters and gatherers. For this purpose, I've created 3D models of still missing and previously unknown artefacts by using images of looted antiquities posted by traffickers on Facebook private groups. What if the 3D printed antiquities could become a new way to own the past without endangering it?

2018      Ourobureau Self-initiated São Paulo, Brazil  
[www.waltercosta.site/projects/ourobureau/](http://www.waltercosta.site/projects/ourobureau/)

Brazilian bureaucracy is an ouroboros of countless rules inherited from their colonial past. The complete distrust of the citizens by the authorities - considered liars a priori - forces people to spend hours queuing and jumping from office to office, collecting stamps just to prove they're telling the truth. Combined with inequality and a poor education system, the result is a vicious circle in which people are more likely to be treated as servants than citizens.

2018      Wastage of uncounted fruits rolled on the ground Self-initiated São Paulo, Brazil  
[www.waltercosta.site/projects/wastage-of-uncounted-fruits-rolled-on-the-hot-ground-ongoing/](http://www.waltercosta.site/projects/wastage-of-uncounted-fruits-rolled-on-the-hot-ground-ongoing/) If temperature relates to how fast atoms jiggle, what about the simultaneous shaking of 21 million people and their machines? São Paulo's tropical sun constantly heats a seemingly endless expanse of concrete and asphalt. Buildings' shadows, air

conditioners and social inequalities make thermal equilibrium inconceivable, meaning that heat is constantly exchanged, sometimes flawlessly, often violently. Armed with an IR camera, I've chased these energy interactions and contrasts, with the political crisis and economic uncertainty as independent variables of this equation whose result is hard to guess.

- 2013      Diagenesis Self-initiated Madrid, Spain  
[www.waltercosta.site/projects/diagenesis/](http://www.waltercosta.site/projects/diagenesis/)  
After the US financial crack of 2008, Spain experienced the hardest crisis of its recent history. As the economic growth was pushed up mainly by the building industry, its sudden stop triggered a cascading effect from which the country still struggles to recover. Tetuán, a lower class neighbourhood located in Madrid's northern outskirts, was the target of a big construction company in 2003. Chosen as the site for a huge building scheme, the company backed up by municipal authorities started expropriating old houses in order to build new luxury flats. They promised to take care of the expropriated residents through a public housing project nearby. It seemed a win-win resolution. As the crisis struck, the company which already owned  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the houses to be demolished, declared bankrupt and left the project paralyzed. Residents were still living in their houses when the company who had the obligation to do maintenance works left them alone while the houses were slowly falling apart. Most of the people sought refuge at friends' living in other areas, but some had no choice but to remain in this ghost and decaying neighbourhood.

## COMMISSIONS

- 2019      EnCMYK Photobook Meeting  
Montevideo Centre of Photography  
Montevideo, Uruguay Curatorship of  
the 2019 edition of the biannual  
photobook festival which included  
exhibitions, conferences, street actions  
and workshops

## SALES/WORKS IN COLLECTIONS

- 2018      Ourobureau IMS Foundation Photography  
Library São Paulo, Brazil book
- 2015      "El Fuego Cruel" FOAM Museum Library  
Amsterdam, Nederland book

[cdf.montevideo.gub.uy/actividad/en-cmyk-2019](http://cdf.montevideo.gub.uy/actividad/en-cmyk-2019) finished

- 2018 "Ela vai ficar" Sabrina Pestana (private person/visual artist) São Paulo, Brazil Editing and design of Sabrina Pestana's photobook "Ela vai ficar" (she's going to stay) [hydra.lat/products/ela-vai-ficar-sabrina-pestana](http://hydra.lat/products/ela-vai-ficar-sabrina-pestana) finished
- 2018 "Vira-livros" SOLAR Photofestival Fortaleza, Brazil Curatorship of a series of performative lectures involving photography books, projections and music, which took place inside the planetary at the Dragão Do Mar Cultural Centre [www.solarfotofestival.com/pt/programacao](http://www.solarfotofestival.com/pt/programacao) finished
- 2016 Arte Serrinha art festival Arte Serrinha São Paulo, Brazil commissioned photographic coverage of the multidisciplinary art festival "Arte Serrinha" at Fazenda Serrinha (Bragança Paulista/São Paulo/Brazil) [arteserrinha.com.br/programacao/](http://arteserrinha.com.br/programacao/) finished
- 2014 Up around the Bend Christian Lagata (private person/visual artist) Madrid, Spain Editing and design of Christian Lagata's photobook "Up around the bend" [christianlagata.com/PUBLICATIONS](http://christianlagata.com/PUBLICATIONS) finished

## PUBLICATIONS

- 2018 Ourobureau Monograph self-published Walter Costa São Paulo, Brazil [www.waltercosta.site/projects/ourobureau/](http://www.waltercosta.site/projects/ourobureau/) Brazilian bureaucracy is an ouroboros of countless rules inherited from their colonial past. The complete distrust of the citizens by the authorities - considered liars a priori - forces people to spend hours queuing and jumping from office to office, collecting stamps just to prove they're telling the truth. Combined with inequality and a poor education system, the result is a vicious circle in which people are more likely to be treated as servants than citizens. These complicated procedures and long queues fostered the raising of a

## AWARDS AND GRANTS

- 2020 Lighthouse 2020-21 FotoDok Utrecht, Netherlands Lighthouse is a program that support and inspire documentary photographers or image makers that graduated from a Dutch academy to develop a new project proposal. The program helps new talent develop exceptional ideas into a valuable and convincing project proposal.

peculiar figure: the “despachante”. Roughly translated as “expeditor”, they are usually former state workers who quit their jobs and started offering their knowledge of the bureaucratic maze to citizens. For despachantes it’s a more profitable way of making a living, but their work has an important side effect: it helps institutionalizing inequality since only a few people can afford their services. Images and videos are appropriated from social media, originally shared by people in order to describe their experiences with bureaucracy: from queues posted by normal citizens to videos related to shortcuts posted by despachantes. A series of interventions in public spaces was made near the most crowded bureaucratic centres in São Paulo, consisting of posters and flyers that included pictures of long queues along with popular proverbs related to the act of waiting.

2018 This is the story of a man marked by an image from his childhood Book self-published Walter Costa São Paulo, Brazil  
[www.waltercosta.site/projects/this-is-the-story-of-a-man-marked-by-an-image-from-his-childhood/](http://www.waltercosta.site/projects/this-is-the-story-of-a-man-marked-by-an-image-from-his-childhood/) A photobook tribute to Chris Marker's masterpiece La Jetée, a study on the use of montage techniques in the book form.

2014 "El Fuego Cruel" Monograph self-published Walter Costa São Paulo, Brazil  
[www.waltercosta.site/projects/el-fuego-cruel-the-cruel-fire/](http://www.waltercosta.site/projects/el-fuego-cruel-the-cruel-fire/) On the 12th April 2014 fire flames invaded Valparaíso (Chile). 12 of the 43 neighborhoods were burnt to the ground during four of the worst days of the city's history. Seven months later I expected to find a still destroyed and abandoned area, but what I found instead was a hard working community decided to recover from the tragedy as soon as possible. Helped by students of the local university, they had rebuilt their wooden houses almost entirely, and the hilly terrain made fertile by the fire was already covered by new plants and spring flowers. But the marks of the great fire were still evident in small

details, and above all in people's memory. After talking to the residents I knew I needed a way to visually bring back those remembrances, so I went to the public library and made reproductions of pictures that appeared in local newspapers during those troubled days. Together with the photographs I took in the affected neighbourhoods, they created a visual tribute in the form of a photobook, whose title is inspired by a Pablo Neruda's poem.

## SECONDARY ART-RELATED ACTIVITIES

2019 - -- curator On-going

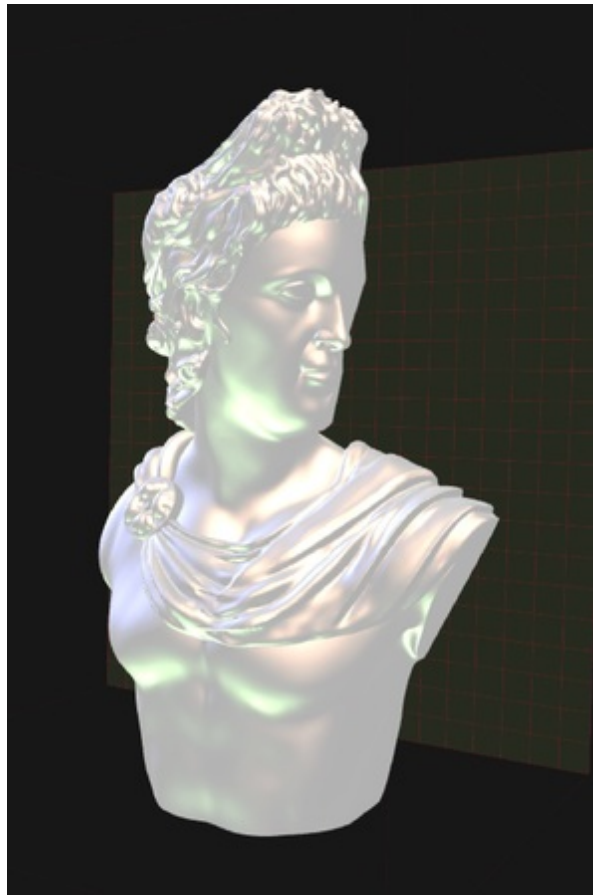
2017 - -- publisher On-going

2013 - -- independent editor On-going

2010 - -- teacher On-going



untitled (exhibition view), 2020

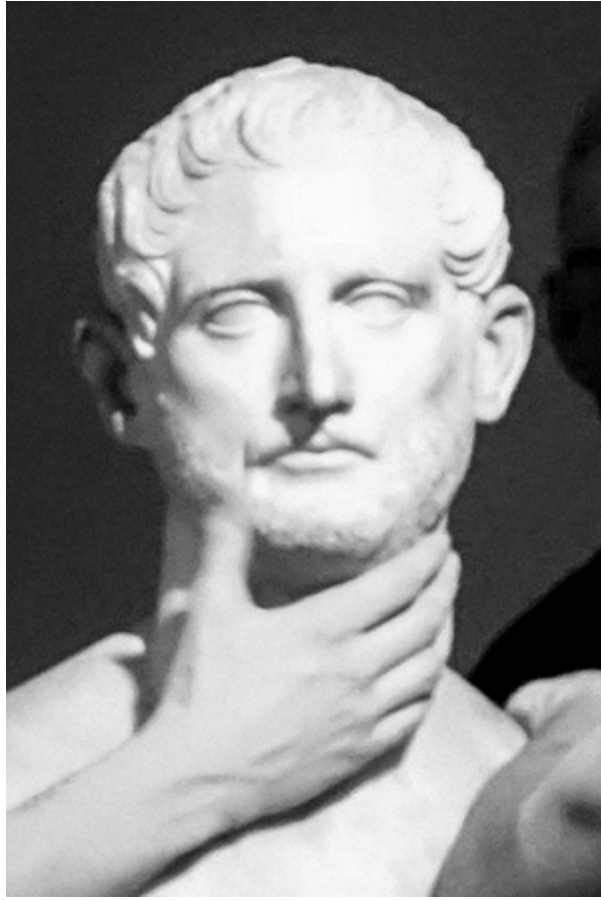




looted and missing Roman bust (reconstruction from  
traffickers' images), 2020  
3d printed PLA resin, 40x21x18cm



archaeological excavation (Italy), 2020  
c-print, 36x24cm



auction house, 2019  
inkjet print on raw paper, 150x110cm





peak hour (Luz station), 2018  
thermal toner on black cardboard, 126x175cm



untitled, 2018  
thermal toner on black cardboard, 42x30cm



vicious circle, 2018



street action view, 2018



This is the story of a man marked by an image from his  
childhood, 2018  
digital print, 15,5x18,5cm



The father of lightnings, 2017  
digital offset print, 18,5x28cm