

[Frederico Câmara](#), Independent Researcher

“Views of Paradise: A Photographic Atlas of the Artificial Environments of Zoological Gardens and Aquariums in Oceania”

Abstract:

*Views of Paradise: A Photographic Atlas of the Artificial Environments of Zoological Gardens and Aquariums in Oceania* (2014–2017) is a practice-based artistic research project photographed in 82 sites in Australia, Fiji, New Caledonia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea, identifying aspects of zoo landscape representations in relation to local natural and cultural environments; situating zoos within the conceptual spaces of paradise, utopia, dystopia, and heterotopia; and promoting the book as the ideal output for photographic research.

Zoos occupy an ambiguous position in society, as both places of imprisonment and protection. They are changing into institutions committed to conservation, research, and education. However, zoos still reflect our need to care for our natural environments against our inability to re-create them, or to preserve them in the wild.

The atlas highlights the importance of photography in the collection of visual information and production of a criticism on environmental practices that disregard the rights of non-humans. Its artistic visions of zoos and Nature, utopian or dystopian, are born from the transformative effect of photography on perception: by photographing zoos without animals, they are transformed, to signal the possibility of a meaningful existence for empty zoos, either as images or as actual sites.

<https://fredericocamara.wixsite.com/portfolio/vp-oceania>

<http://hdl.handle.net/2123/17552>

Bio:

I am a Brazilian artist whose research practices are informed by my personal experiences of migration and travelling, and my fascination for Nature, Science, and sites of knowledge like museums, libraries, and archives. In my work, I revisit the role of the travelling artist and explorer, decolonizing its historical antecedents with a contemporary approach to discovery, questioning the ideas of the familiar and the exotic, and promoting environmental awareness and sustainability.

My research intersects with the Natural Sciences, Environmental Humanities, Visual Anthropology, and Museum and Heritage Studies. My research interests include the representation of Nature, migration, photography and travel as research methods, ethnographic methods, collecting and archiving in Art, vernacular design, and the preservation of heritage.

My research outputs are in the form of photographic and video installations, artist’s books, drawings, and text. I studied for a PhD in Fine Art at the University of Sydney, Australia; MA in Fine Art at the University of the Arts London, UK; and BFA in Fine Art at UFMG Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil. My work has taken me around the world as a visiting professor at various universities, and I have held research fellowships, artist residencies, and exhibitions. I am also a recipient of various prestigious awards.