



org is an online platform, collecting, describing, presenting and generating documents of all sorts. It documents documents.

**Your path through the collection lead along** Nap, A Dead Insect on the Trunk of a Cedrus Atlantica Glauca, Index, Une étoile est-elle un document?, Dust, Bent Concrete, Block, Nap, A Dead Insect on the Trunk of a Cedrus Atlantica Glauca, Aggressive mimicry, Pretending to be an artichoke, Mushroom Picking Prohibited, Negative sheet 02, negative 5, negative 6, A Dead Insect on the Trunk of a Cedrus Atlantica Glauca, Lemon, Nap, Lemon, Mushroom Picking Prohibited

## What constitutes a 'document' and how does it function?

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the etymological origin is the Latin 'documentum', meaning 'lesson, proof, instance, specimen'. As a verb, it is 'to prove or support (something) by documentary evidence', and 'to provide with documents'. The online version of the *OED* includes a draft addition, whereby a document (as a noun) is 'a collection of data in digital form that is considered a single item and typically has a unique filename by which it can be stored, retrieved, or transmitted (as a file, a spreadsheet, or a graphic)'. The current use of the noun 'document' is defined as '*something* written, inscribed, etc., which furnishes evidence or information upon any subject, as a manuscript, title-deed, tomb-stone, coin, picture, etc.' (emphasis added).

Both 'something' and that first 'etc.' leave ample room for discussion. A document doubts whether it functions as something unique, or as something reproducible. A passport is a document, but a flyer equally so. Moreover, there is a circular reasoning: to document is 'to provide with documents'. Defining (the functioning of) a document most likely involves ideas of communication, information, evidence, inscriptions, and implies notions of objectivity and neutrality – but the document is neither reducible to one of them, nor is it equal to their sum. It is hard to pinpoint it, as it disperses into and is affected by other fields: it is intrinsically tied to the history of media and to important currents in literature, photography and art; it is linked to epistemic and power structures. However ubiquitous it is, as an often tangible thing in our environment, and as a concept, a document *deranges*.

the-documents.org continuously gathers documents and provides them with a short textual description, explanation, or digression, written by multiple authors. In *Paper Knowledge*, Lisa Gitelman paraphrases ‘documentalist’ Suzanne Briet, stating that ‘an antelope running wild would not be a document, but an antelope taken into a zoo would be one, presumably because it would then be framed – or reframed – as an example, specimen, or instance’.

The gathered files are all documents – if they weren’t before publication, they now are. That is what the-documents.org, irreversibly, *does*. It is a zoo turning an antelope into an ‘antelope’.

As you made your way through the collection, the-documents.org tracked the entries you viewed.

It documented your path through the website.

As such, the time spent on the-documents.org turned into this – a new document.

This document was compiled by \_\_\_\_\_ on 28.02.2025 19:35, printed on \_\_\_\_\_ and contains 18 documents on 41 pages. (<https://the-documents.org/log/28-02-2025-6519/>)

the-documents.org is a project created and edited by De Cleene De Cleene; design & development by atelier Haegeman Temmerman.

the-documents.org has been online since 23.05.2021.

#### Notes

- De Cleene De Cleene is Michiel De Cleene and Arnout De Cleene. Together they form a research group that focusses on novel ways of approaching the everyday, by artistic means and from a cultural and critical perspective.  
[www.decleenedecline.be](http://www.decleenedecline.be) / [info@decleenedecline.be](mailto:info@decleenedecline.be)
- This project was made possible with the support of the Flemish Government and KASK & Conservatorium, the school of arts of HOGENT and Howest. It is part of the research project *Documenting Objects*, financed by the HOGENT Arts Research Fund.

#### Sources

- Briet, S. *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?* Paris: Edit, 1951.
- Gitelman, L. *Paper Knowledge. Toward a Media History of Documents.* Durham/ London: Duke University Press, 2014.
- *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Accessed on 13.05.2021.



Flanders  
State of the Art



It's time to have a nap. I tilt the window over its middle axis to let the butterfly out. A breeze ruffles the drapes. Now, it sits on the glass and throws an enormous shadow on the yellow cloth.



type  
photograph

date  
06.01.2025

filename  
\_MG\_9406.JPG; \_MG\_9429.JPG

size  
6,1 MB; 10,2 MB

author  
Arnout De Cleene

category  
animal, cloth, decoration, encounter, family, scale, wind

**19:33:57**





It's early spring. The pool is covered with a sheet of plastic. The deciduous trees are just leafing out. A tree stump serves as a placeholder for the diving board's foot – it was customary to take it indoors for winter – and keeps people from kicking its threaded rods sticking up from the silex tiles that line the pool.

The upper right corner of the plastic frame is missing. It's probably where the insect – now dead, dry and yellowish – got in. The frame was left behind in the laundry room overlooking the garden, the pool and the pool house. At the time it hadn't been used for quite a while. Half empty, the water green.

In summer, when the wind dropped, horse-flies came. You could shake them off temporarily by swimming a few meters underwater.



type  
scan

date  
22.07.2021

filename  
pool.jpg

size  
38,87 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
animal, botany, cloth, decoration, family, tree

**19:34:09**

In John Berger and Jean Mohr's groundbreaking book *Another Way of Telling*, the index at the end gives information on the images printed throughout the book. Most of them are Jean Mohr's. In the section 'If each time...' – a wordless sequence of images which aims to develop an alternative way of telling a story – some images are referenced as 'documents'. The information is sparse. On page 138, the index states, there is a 'Document, detail'. It features a closeup of a knitted piece of fabric. It appears to be the same picture as seen on the first page of the section (p. 135), where it is printed beneath another image – a photo by Mohr of hands knitting. On this occasion, the image is indexed as 'Document'.

**Sources**

Berger, J. & J. Mohr. *Another Way of Telling*. London / New York: Writers and Readers, 1982.

- 113 Baby at breast (photo: Saul Landau)  
 123 Boy sleeping, May 25, 1912, Budapest (photo: André Kertesz)  
 125 Friends, September 3, 1917, Esztergan (photo: André Kertesz)  
 127 Lovers, May 15, 1915, Budapest (photo: André Kertesz)

*If each time . . .*

(All photos are by Jean Mohr unless otherwise indicated.)

- 135 J.'s hands  
 135 Document  
 136 A spring, Haute-Savoie  
 137 A spring in the *alpage*, Haute-Savoie  
 138 Document, detail  
 139 In a meadow, Val d'Aoste  
 139 Document, Russian painting  
 140 Village in the Tatry Mountains, Poland  
 141 Poland  
 142 Mother and child's hand, Great Britain  
 143 Poland  
 144 Document  
 145 A spring  
 146 J.'s hands  
 147 Paris  
 148 Tunisia  
 149 Geneva, bird tracks  
 150 School in the Township of Mieussy  
 151 Rabbit skeletons, Haute-Savoie  
 152 *Ibid*  
 153 Katya (photo: John Berger)  
 154 School  
 156 Foundation of a chalet, Norway  
 157 Document  
 158 Children going to the dairy, Fribourg, Switzerland  
 158 On the road to Sommand, Haute-Savoie  
 159 *Ibid*  
 160 Six in the morning at the dairy, Haute-Savoie

type	date	filename	size	author
scan	18.02.2021	Document_2021-02-18_092842.jpg	541KB	Arnout De Cleene

category  
 book, cloth

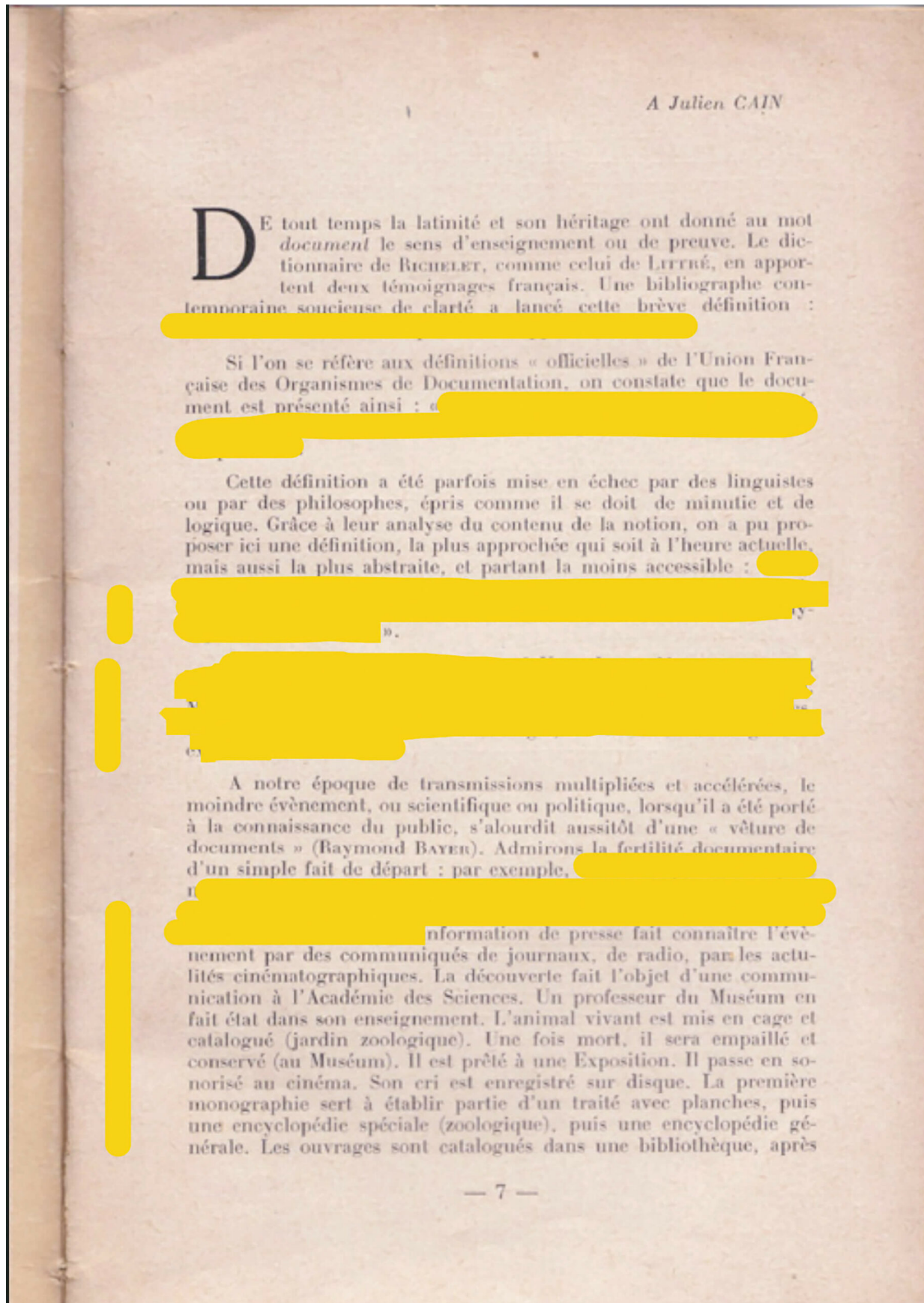
In the introduction to her book *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?*, French 'documentalist' Suzanne Briet asks what a document is. In a scrappy scan of her book I found online I am highlighting almost everything she writes. Is a star a document? Briet says it isn't. But the catalogues and photographs of stars are. When I quickly opened the file with Apple's 'Preview' application to check the above paraphrase, the highlighted sentences were illegible.

**Notes**

Briet is cited in Lisa Gitelman's *Paper Knowledge* (2014).

**Sources**

Briet, S. *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?* Paris: Edit, 1951. Online: <http://martinetl.free.fr/suzannebriet/questcequeladocumentation/briet.pdf>



type	date	filename	size	author
screenshot	17.05.2021	Schermafbeelding 2021-05-13 om 11.41.58.png	201KB	De Cleene De Cleene

category  
astronomy, book, mistake, replica/copy

19:34:28

Ten years ago, in November, I drove up to Frisia – the northernmost province of The Netherlands. I was there to document the remains of air watchtowers: a network of 276 towers that were built in the fifties and sixties to warn the troops and population of possible aerial danger coming from the Soviet Union. It was very windy. The camera shook heavily. The poplars surrounding the concrete tower leaned heavily to one side.

I drove up to the seaside, a few kilometers farther. The wind was still strong when I reached the grassy dike that overlooked the kite-filled beach. I exposed the last piece of film left on the roll. Strong gusts of wind blew landwards.

Months later I didn't bother to blow off the dust that had settled on the film before scanning it. A photograph without use, with low resolution, made for the sake of the archive's completeness.

The dust on the film appears to be carried landwards, by the same gust of wind lifting the kites.



type  
photograph

date  
06.09.2021

filename  
LWT-Oudemirdum0002.tif

size  
28,17 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
architecture, archive, data storage, landscape, sea, wind

**19:34:31**

A block of concrete. Fissures are showing and rebar is sticking out from all sides. If it were still straight, the block would measure approximately 130 x 15 x 40cm.

It is lying by the side of the road, a few hundred meters from a construction site. It appears to be shaped by impact. Maybe the block plummeted to the ground from a great height. Perhaps, something heavy hit it. For all one knows, it served as a column and was exposed to an unforeseen amount of pressure, causing it to buckle.

According to Eyal Weizman '[a]rchitecture emerges as a documentary form, not because photographs of it circulate in the public domain but rather because it performs variations on the following three things: it *registers* the effect of force fields, it contains or *stores* these forces in material deformations, and, with the help of other mediating technologies and the forum, it *transmits* this information further.'

<sup>1</sup>

#### Sources

- 1 Weizman, E. 'Introduction', in: Forensic Architecture. *Forensis. The Architecture of Public Truth*. London/Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	02.06.2021	_44A7339.dng	42,54MB	Michiel De Cleene

category  
archaeology, architecture, crash, impact, mistake, sand

**19:34:36**

‘The masons in training pour a concrete slab and build four walls upon it in a stretcher bond. Then the block comes to our department and the students in the course *Electrical installer (residential)* can grind channels and drill cavities in it.’

[...]

‘It’s not always a success from the outset, but they learn quickly.’

[...]

‘Never grind horizontally, always vertically. Diagonally if there is no other way.’

[...]

‘Two fingers wide.’

[...]

‘After this it goes to the sanitary department. After the bell drilling, the demolition hammer follows and the masons make us a new block.’

Competentiecentrum VDAB, Wondelgem,  
July 2019.

#### Notes

First published in A+ Architecture in Belgium, A+ 279, Schools (August, September 2019), <https://www.a-plus.be/nl/tijdschrift/schools>



type  
photograph

date  
04.05.2021

filename  
\_44a7269.jpg

size  
27,17MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
architecture, brick, fissure, house, mistake, parking

**19:34:40**

It's time to have a nap. I tilt the window over its middle axis to let the butterfly out. A breeze ruffles the drapes. Now, it sits on the glass and throws an enormous shadow on the yellow cloth.



type  
photograph

date  
06.01.2025

filename  
\_MG\_9406.JPG; \_MG\_9429.JPG

size  
6,1 MB; 10,2 MB

author  
Arnout De Cleene

category  
animal, cloth, decoration, encounter, family, scale, wind

**19:34:43**





It's early spring. The pool is covered with a sheet of plastic. The deciduous trees are just leafing out. A tree stump serves as a placeholder for the diving board's foot – it was customary to take it indoors for winter – and keeps people from kicking its threaded rods sticking up from the silex tiles that line the pool.

The upper right corner of the plastic frame is missing. It's probably where the insect – now dead, dry and yellowish – got in. The frame was left behind in the laundry room overlooking the garden, the pool and the pool house. At the time it hadn't been used for quite a while. Half empty, the water green.

In summer, when the wind dropped, horse-flies came. You could shake them off temporarily by swimming a few meters underwater.



type  
scan

date  
22.07.2021

filename  
pool.jpg

size  
38,87 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
animal, botany, cloth, decoration, family, tree

**19:34:56**

The *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri* is commonly known as the mealybug destroyer. This species of ladybird gets its nickname from its capacity to battle mealybugs in plantations and greenhouses.

The website *waarnemingen.be* that gathers observations of plants and animals in Belgium lists multiple observations in the wild of the *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri*. The website explains that ‘in (northern) Europe, the species is widely traded and used in greenhouses and will regularly escape from them. But this ladybird cannot survive our winters (yet?). Sightings within the Benelux must therefore be entered into the register as “escape”. However, the species is already established in the Mediterranean area.’ (our translation)

The larvae have a waxy covering that makes them look like the mealybugs they prey upon, allowing them to avoid being correctly identified by the ones they are about to devour.

In an attempt to get rid of the mealybugs on my plants, I ordered 25 adult ladybirds. They were dead on arrival.

#### Sources

- <https://waarnemingen.be/species/600135/>
- <https://waarnemingen.be/observation/244840499/>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aggressive\\_mimicry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aggressive_mimicry)



type  
photograph

date  
21.08.2022

filename  
\_44A3849.dng

size  
50,83 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
animal, botany, replica/copy, trompe l'oeil

**19:35:00**

The *Sedum reflexum* grows on rocky soils and in crevices of walls. In *L'herbier classique*, it is depicted in two ways, just like the other plants in the book. This double portraiture is important, the author states in the introduction: 'one consists of the reproductions of the photographs taken by the author of this book [...]; the other, drawings made by excellent artists who observed the plants themselves, showing details photography can't reproduce, highlighting aspects the photographs leave untouched. [...] From this double representation, interesting comparisons can be made, highly enlightening from an artistic point of view, between the realistic aspect of nature's "productions" and the interpretation thereof by the draftsman' (5).

A detail not covered by the drawing of the *sedum reflexum*, is the presence of other species in the vicinity of the plant, a detail shown in the photograph and described in the caption: 'The Common houseleek grows on the same rocks, with its rosette of leaves pretending to be an artichoke' (59).

CRASSULACÉES

Orpin

16. — L'Orpin réfléchi (*Sedum reflexum* — *Sedum*, du latin *sedere*, s'asseoir, parce que beaucoup de ces plantes ont des tiges rampantes qui se redressent dans leur partie supérieure, formant un angle droit; elles sont comme assises sur le sol).



Fig. 75. — ORPIN BRÛLANT.  
a. Fleur.

Herbe vivace, de 10 à 40 centimètres de haut, à feuilles épaisses (plante grasse), renfermant une provision d'eau qui permet à la plante de supporter longtemps la sécheresse sur les rochers ou dans les fentes des murs. Certaines tiges ne portent pas de fleurs et se terminent en cône renversé.

Fleurs élégantes, délicates, pédonculées, groupées en cymes dont les rameaux sont d'abord recourbés, réfléchis, vers le bas, puis se redressent plus tard. Calice ayant de 6 à 8 sépales libres. Corolle d'un jaune sauphé formée de 6 à 8 pétales égaux, libres. 12 à 16 étamines. Ovaire libre formé d'autant de carpelles séparés qu'il y a de pétales. Chaque carpelle se transforme en un fruit sec s'ouvrant par une seule fente (follicide). L'Orpin réfléchi fleurit de juillet en août dans les lieux secs, sur les rochers, sur les toits, entre les fentes des murs et à leur sommet.

Usages. Sert en horticulture pour orner les rochers artificiels, les vases des jardins, pour garnir les poteries suspendues. Comme tous les Orpins, il renferme un principe âcre qui l'a fait longtemps employer, en médecine populaire, comme vomitif. Il est peu recommandable pour cet usage.

Espèces voisines. Très nombreuses; toutes fleurissent, comme la précédente, au cœur de l'été. L'Orpin brûlant ou Poivre de maraîche (*S. acre*) [fig. 75], à fleurs jaunes à 5 pétales, à feuilles cylindriques, courtes, rapprochées. L'Orpin blanc ou Baisin-de-rat (*S. album*) a des fleurs blanches à 5 pétales, des feuilles allongées, écartées. Ces deux espèces vivent sur les rochers. L'Orpin reprise (*S. telephium*) vit dans les bois humides et atteint 60 centimètres. Il a des racines renflées, des feuilles dentées, de jolies fleurs roses très nombreuses. A jout autrefois d'une grande réputation pour la reprise des plaies.



Fig. 76. — L'ORPIN  
RÉFLÉCHI.

(Sur les mêmes rochers croît la Joubarbe des toits, dont la rosette de feuilles simule un artichaut.)

type	date	filename	size	author
scan	15.08.2021	Document_2021-07-19_111850.jpg	10MB	Arnout De Cleene

category  
book, botany, encyclopaedia, fissure

I must have driven past this rocky landscape about sixteen times, going back and forth between viewpoints and the house the parents of a friend let me stay in. On the last day, I left early for the airport, pulled into a lay-by, took my tripod and camera out of the trunk of the red Volkswagen Polo rental car and made two photographs.<sup>1</sup> It was only when I got home, had the film developed, scanned it and was removing dust particles from the file, that I discovered the hand painted text on the rock: 'PROIBIDO BUSCAR SETAS'.

**Notes**

1.



# Mushroom Picking Prohibited



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	19.05.2021	Untitled99993-dustfree-nosharpen-crop2.psd	365,37MB	Michiel De Cleene

category  
automobile, dusk, food, landscape, parking, sign, tree

**19:35:09**

The architect's photographic archive contains seven images that can be labelled as panoramic pictures. However, they only appear as such when the photographs are viewed in the archive, as strips of negatives. In order to see the panoramic construct, the viewer needs to be presented with two consecutive negatives.

There are two kinds of panorama in the archive: the kind that can only be attributed to a kind of laziness or a need for efficiency on behalf of the architect, and another that originates from frugality.

The former type of panorama is created when the architect is documenting the situation as it is: it is compulsory to document the context of the building or lot, as part of a building application. He simply pivots from left to right, capturing the first and second photograph consecutively. On the filmstrip a panorama appears.

The other kind of panoramic picture only appears at the end of the film role. The last negative on the film has been exposed (the twenty-fourth or thirty-sixth), after which he exerts force onto the lever to move the film forward anyway. Some films are known to have, by accident, a twenty-fifth or a thirty-seventh negative. The plastic between the sprocket holes tears and the film does not advance enough. The result differs fundamentally from the other kind of panorama: there is no separation, no void between the negatives. Rather, there is a slight overlap. A thin, vertical strip of film that has been exposed twice, suggesting contiguity that might not be there. The two exposures might be from altogether different sites, creating a new situation.

#### Notes

- Based on De Cleene, M. & De Cleene, A. *The Situation as it Is. A Photonovel in Three Movements*. Gent: APE, 2022



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	27.04.2023	002_17.jpg	1,45 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category  
architecture, archive, house, mistake, precipitation, family, panorama

19:35:13

It's early spring. The pool is covered with a sheet of plastic. The deciduous trees are just leafing out. A tree stump serves as a placeholder for the diving board's foot – it was customary to take it indoors for winter – and keeps people from kicking its threaded rods sticking up from the silex tiles that line the pool.

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In summer, when the wind dropped, horse-flies came. You could shake them off temporarily by swimming a few meters underwater.



type  
scan

date  
22.07.2021

filename  
pool.jpg

size  
38,87 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
animal, botany, cloth, decoration, family, tree

19:35:15

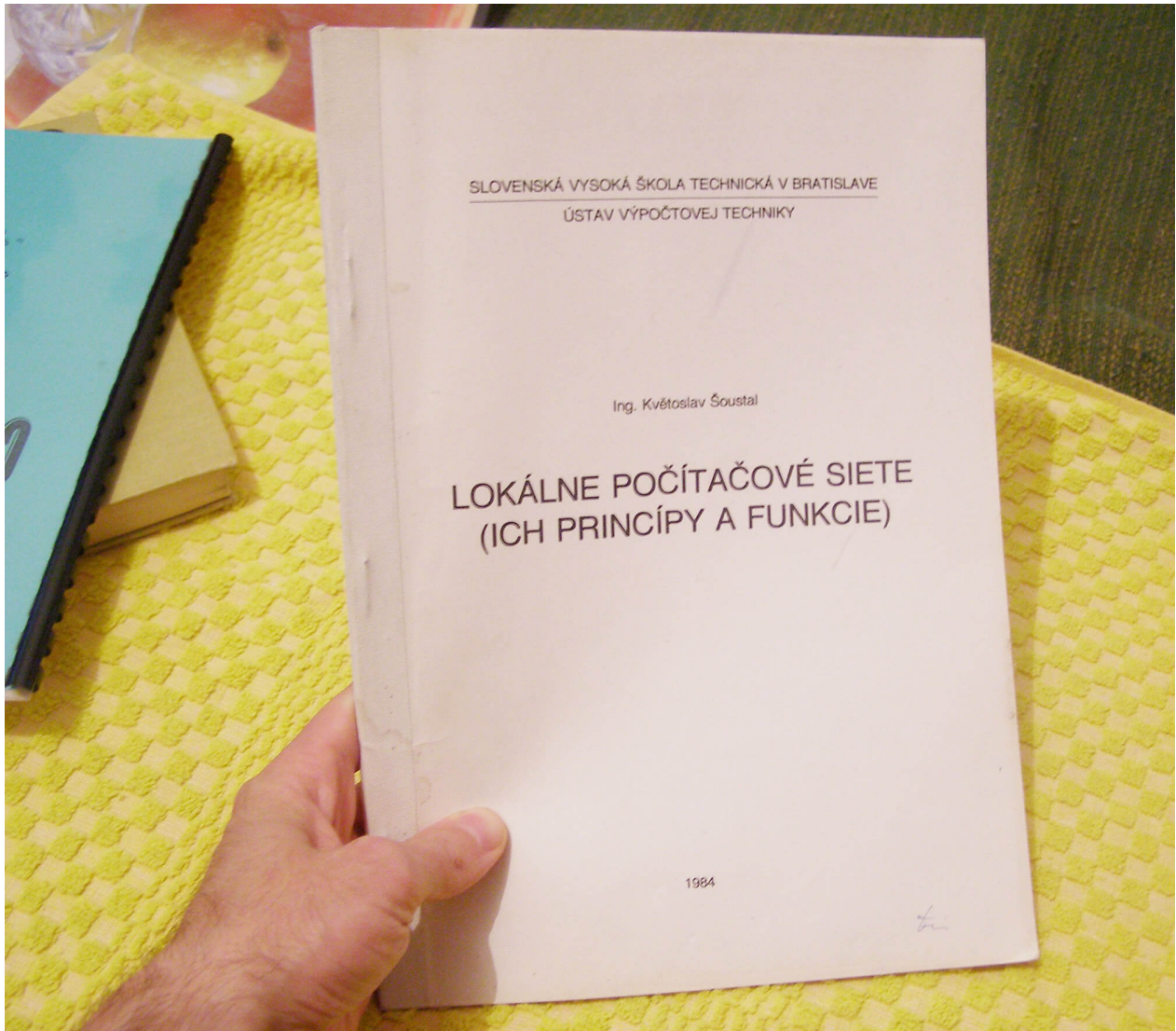
Depending on the language one chooses, the Wikipedia entry for 'document' shows a different picture. The French-language page shows what appears to be a Slovenian thesis written in 1984. The caption states it is a 'book of Czechoslovak computer science author Květoslav Šoustal about computer networks'. The image was uploaded by Kelovy, a Slovakian mushroom-picker.

The anonymous hand rests on a lemon-yellow tablecloth, on which a yellow book and a blue binded file lie. The top left corner is the most intriguing, however: the tablecloth seems to be draped over a lemon, alongside a drinking glass. The cloth, however, does not get shaped by the lemon. Nor does the shadow-side of the lemon coincide with the shadow the other documents throw on the tablecloth. A closer look seems to indicate that the lemon is in fact an image of a lemon, printed on a plastic napkin.

The Russian wikipedia shows the image of a lease agreement. The German wikipedia for 'document' is text only.

#### Sources

[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Document#/media/Fichier:KVETOSLAV\\_SOUSTAL\\_BOOK.JPG](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Document#/media/Fichier:KVETOSLAV_SOUSTAL_BOOK.JPG), created October 3, 2006 / original in original: paper, 1984



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	23.12.2020	KVETOSLAV_SOUSTAL_BOOK.JPG	956KB	Arnout De Cleene

category  
book, encyclopaedia, fruit, food, trompe l'oeil, cloth, manual, technology

19:35:16

It's time to have a nap. I tilt the window over its middle axis to let the butterfly out. A breeze ruffles the drapes. Now, it sits on the glass and throws an enormous shadow on the yellow cloth.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	06.01.2025	_MG_9406.JPG; _MG_9429.JPG	6,1 MB; 10,2 MB	Arnout De Cleene

category  
animal, cloth, decoration, encounter, family, scale, wind

**19:35:17**





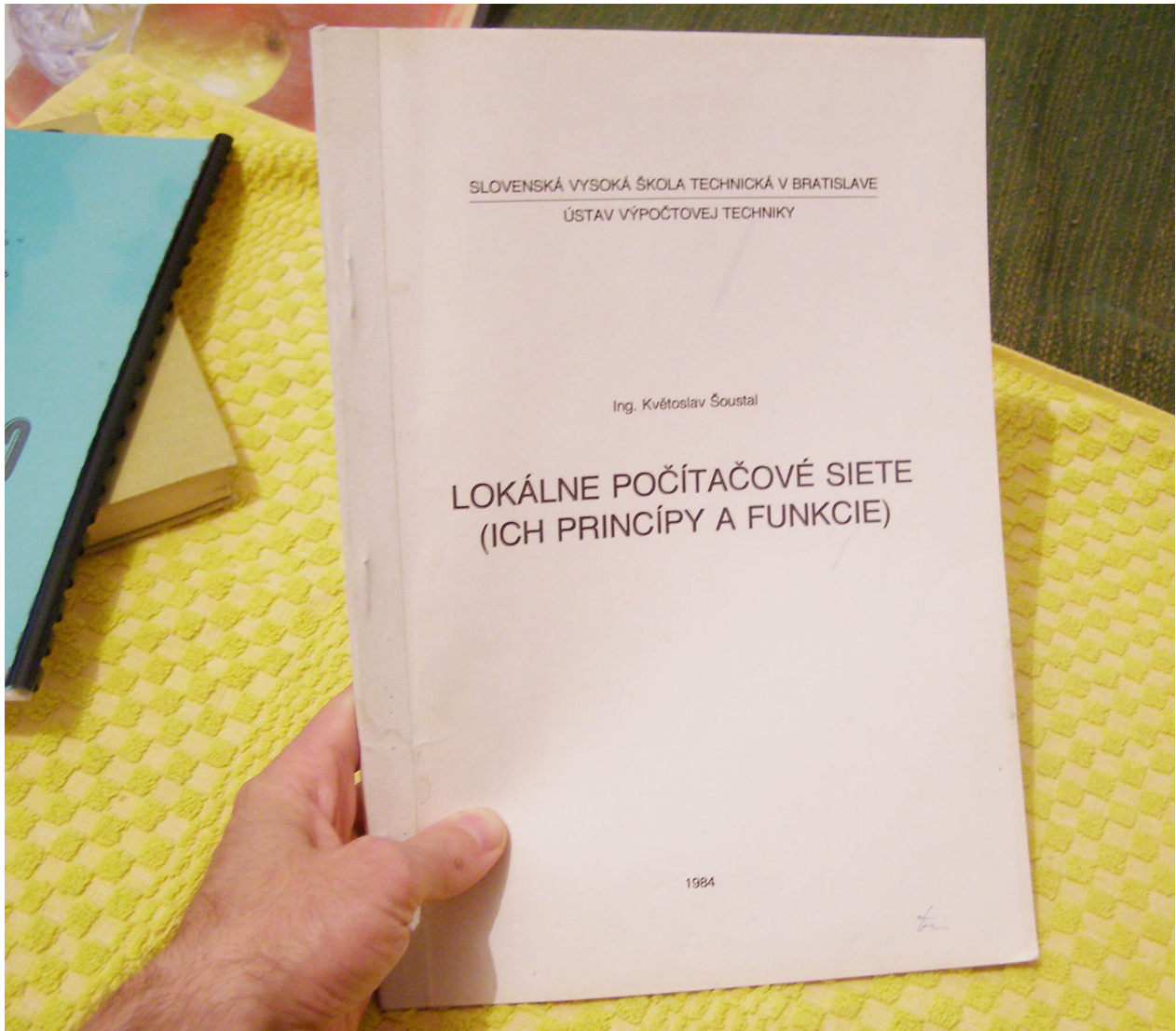
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[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Document#/media/Fichier:KVETOSLAV\\_SOUSTAL\\_BOOK.JPG](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Document#/media/Fichier:KVETOSLAV_SOUSTAL_BOOK.JPG), created October 3, 2006 / original in original: paper, 1984



type  
photograph

date  
23.12.2020

filename  
KVETOSLAV\_SOUSTAL\_BOOK.JPG

size  
956KB

author  
Arnout De Cleene

category  
book, encyclopaedia, fruit, food, trompe l'oeil, cloth, manual, technology

19:35:20

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**Notes**

1.



# Mushroom Picking Prohibited



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	19.05.2021	Untitled99993-dustfree-nosharpen-crop2.psd	365,37MB	Michiel De Cleene

category  
automobile, dusk, food, landscape, parking, sign, tree

**19:35:23**

