Why Exhibit? Positions on Exhibiting Photographies

Edited by Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger and Iris Sikking

Cover collage: Opening of Jens S. Jensen's exhibition *Hammarkullen*, installation view at the local school, 1974 (photo: Jens S. Jensen); and SITUATION #128, Lauren McCarthy, *Follower*, installation view at Fotomuseum Winterthur, 2018 (photo © Philipp Ottendörfer)

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Introduction

How to Deal with Liquidity?

What's Been Viewed?

How to Frame?

Who's Narrating the Space?

Where to Meet?

This publication is the outcome of many conversations, shared thoughts, and discussions with photographers, artists, curators, critics, and writers. In the twenty-first century, "photography" has morphed so many times over that it has become necessary to describe it with adjectives connoting a medium in constant flux: liquid, fluid, flexible, unstable. However, in all of its formats, modes, and approaches, it is important to question how we see photographic images—and to ask why, by whom, and for what purposes they were produced in the first place. In what context are we taking note of them? What is their provenance? Why has someone made the conscious decision to exhibit them? The digital age has accelerated and subverted the processes of producing, sharing, and consuming photographies to such an extent that it is now abundantly clear that the institutional conventions of exhibiting photographs need to be reconsidered, redefined, and re-engineered. There is less and less need to wax nostalgic about the era when photography secured its place on gallery walls by submitting itself to the enforced ideals of modern art and the spatial strictures of the white cube.

While working on this book, we encountered the many ways actors in the contemporary photographic field engage with the medium's multiplicity of uses and forms. Reflections on the multifaceted roles played by curators and curatorial work became one of the underlying themes of the book. The range of photographic uses and practices means that the work

of curators is as diverse and dynamic as ever. That's why positing and situating curatorial work and the knowledge that is associated with it feels especially important in the context of photography-based images. It means sensitivity to different contexts and ways of producing knowledge is a precondition to working as a curator in dialogue with artists, representations, and materials. It can mean reforming—and radically disrupting—the conditions and terms of engaging with and viewing images. We might even say that curating by individuals making unilateral decisions is a thing of the past, in the process of being phased out by collective brainstorming; that information owned will be replaced by information sourced through sharing; and that an authoritative "me" will be replaced by a dialoguing "we."

But still, what are we talking about when we talk about curating photographies? Why do we experience an urgent need to talk specifically about this practice?

Because there is no primary format for displaying photographs. People engage with photographs in a variety of ways: through physical exhibitions, magazines, and books, and via online platforms and social media networks. Exhibiting photographies can be a multi-form practice that emphasizes the fact that photographs are created as a union of action and representation and shaped by materials and social conditions.

Because any answers to the questions of "Why and how do we exhibit photographs?" must come with an acknowledgement of the power of, and responsibility entailed by, display. The change from representation

to action, amplified by social media, has not rendered irrelevant the ethical questions associated with the display of photographs, and has in fact provoked new questions and confronted curators with new quandaries.

Because by exhibiting photography, we challenge viewers to pay attention to who and what is made visible through photographs in certain societies, and how this visibility is contextualized. As well as to ask who and what is simultaneously relegated to invisibility—either because they were unthinkingly overlooked or deliberately ignored—in those same societies.

Because we can choose which canon of photographic exhibitions we partake in. Do we still believe that photographs record the world or do we fix our attention on how the making of photographs corresponds to our idea of them and how they are used to shape and organize our subjective understanding of the world?

These considerations illustrate the urgency and necessity of taking positions around the question "WHY EXHIBIT?"

This volume provides different perspectives on this question while also opening new lines of inquiry. It offers a spectrum of views on how the myriad forms of exhibiting photographies can increase our understanding of how images operate today and what they do to us when we interact with them.

The book is constructed in five chapters which function as subsidiary questions, posed from the perspective of both theory and praxis, about why and how we exhibit photographs in today's world.

How to Deal with Liquidity?

Krzysztof Pijarski proposes embracing the liquid nature of images to expand the editorial and technological possibilities for disseminating and participating with photography via the screen. Tuomo Rainio considers the merging of virtual and physical space as a means for the visual arts to effect societal impact. In our visually orientated day-to-day environment, Doris Gassert urges institutions to critically address the unstable nature of the image. Suvi Lehtinen sketches the young history of artists tapping social media and content-sharing platforms and environments as a source for material to appropriate and replicate. Penelope Umbrico discusses unintentionally produced images on the web as auto portraits of our visual culture. Susan Schuppli opts for a certain "photographic intelligence" to make sense of the world differently. And Natasha Caruana explores virtual reality as a way to engage an audience via the creation of verisimilar interior "sets" within which to narrate a story.

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What's Been Viewed?

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger discusses exhibiting photographies as a dialogue between action and representation, underlining the urgency to situate the one who is looking *at* and the one who is *being looked at*. In an age of hyper-documentation, Taco Hidde Bakker decided to "visit" an exhibition via digital media instead of going in person. Marko Karo investigates the potential of archival objects in a location-specific setting and assigns the museum the role of contact zone. Marina Paulenka speaks about the necessity of taking a feminist approach in her curatorial work. And Mark Curran reflects on the use of an ethnographically informed research method to position himself in his long-term projects.

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How to Frame?

Niclas Östlind traces the influence of the history of art on the display and (literal) framing of photographic work in Swedish museums from the 1960s to the present. Karolina Puchała-Rojek reanimates archival material by commissioning collaborations of a sort between deceased artists and their fixed oeuvres and the dynamic practice of living photographers. Kim Knoppers delves into the archives of private photo studios from yesteryear to reveal visual narratives that otherwise would be overlooked and forgotten. Jules Spinatsch creates complex visual tapestries out of thousands of captures recorded by networks of automated cameras, and argues that images aren't innocent—and neither are we as viewers. Anni Wallenius addresses the need for curators to cede some control to Information Age audiences, especially when collecting and exhibiting social media images. And Bettina Leidl proposes a curatorial program focused on environmental issues and underpinned by sustainable production practices.

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Who's Narrating the Space?

Iris Sikking reflects on her curatorial approach for Krakow Photomonth 2018 by analyzing the narrative and spatial-design decisions she made while laying out exhibitions. Nicòlo Degiorgis describes photobook-making as a combination of conceptual vision and tactile craftsmanship. Anna Tellgren details matters both theoretical and logistical pertaining to curating exhibitions from a storage-based collection. Lisa Barnard talks about the fragmentary structure of today's societies. And Robert Knoth breaks down the process of editing Internet footage and distilling data into a coherent narrative that is both accessible and challenging at the same time.

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Where to Meet?

Tanvi Mishra emphasizes the necessity of seeing an exhibition as an encounter between the original context of images and a contemporary audience informed of the motives behind their production. Lars Willumeit proposes assembling curatorial communities to catalyze a collective process of exhibiting that allows for collaborative agency. Gigi Argyropoulou makes us aware of the turbulent, transitional times we live in, and urges us to find each other. Ahmed Alalousi discusses the humanizing potential for personal photos to help promote empathy and understanding between refugees and residents. And Rune Peitersen expresses optimism about the unique potential fearless artists have to imagine new utopias and support alternative perspectives that counter the hegemonic narratives of the status quo.

Whichever chapter you begin with, we hope that this book will provide a foundation for a wider discourse about exhibiting photographies.

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger and Iris Sikking
Helsinki and Amsterdam,
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How to Deal with Liquidity?

Krzysztof Pijarski

On Photography's Liquidity, or, (New) Spaces for (New) Publics?

A public is poetic world-making.
— Michael Warner[1]

The echo of water in photography evokes its prehistory.
— Jeff Wall[2]

"Thus far, I am underwhelmed by photography's presence online and the lack of innovative explorations of the new medium," Jason Evans wrote, back in 2008, in his contribution to *Words Without Pictures*, an online project that for one year became a vital platform for discussing the current state of photographic culture.[3] Most interestingly, this statement came from a photographer who has embraced the possibilities of the new medium, vis-à-vis the analogue media of exhibition and print, for expanding our horizon of understanding what photography *can* be. And while Evans is careful to frame his position as one of either/and, distancing himself from qualitative judgments ("all photographs can work given the right context"[4]) as well as from championing the Internet as "the only new frontier for serious and independent photography," he does put forward the belief—one I share profoundly—that "complementary versions of *photographic thinking* can be played out at this interesting moment in the medium's history and that it's time for *any photographer with public, discursive ambitions* to shape our online context."[5] What I will have to say here is an attempt at explaining why I would be inclined to submit that the same diagnosis still holds true today, a decade later. I will also develop the notions of photographic thinking and publicness Evans was hinting at.

The Real Thing

The period since 2010, the year of the so-called digital turn—meaning that more content was published online than in print that year[6]—seems to be important with respect to thinking about photography with artistic claims on the Internet. Around that time, Jörg Colberg, the influential photography educator and champion of photobooks, claimed that while the Internet is important for disseminating ambitious photographic work, it is not the best place to view it.[7] The art-field respondents to the *Words Without Pictures* questionnaire provide some arguments as to why that might be so. Photographer Eileen Quinlan, for instance, in response to the question about whether she enjoyed looking at photographs online, said she is "dismayed by the fact that [her] work is often consumed, at least upon first encounter, in JPEG form. The *real thing* sometimes disappoints. The illuminated screen offers a punchier image, a sexier image. And as the first image, it sets an impossible precedent. They are apples masquerading as oranges."[8] Here, the Internet, lending things a glossy sheen they might not actually possess, appears as a medium of disingenuousness; we never really know what we are looking at. The response of curator Rebecca Morse goes along similar lines: "When I look at any work online it is with the understanding that the image I am viewing is only a *reference for the real work* out in the world. Nothing compares to viewing an artwork *in person*."[9] The prevailing idea here is that of the secondary character of work presented online, which is treated rather like documentation. The *real thing* is somewhere else, in physical, not virtual, space.

This rejection of the Internet as a legitimate site for the presentation of photographic work (as opposed to merely the dissemination of its documentation) was reasserted a couple of years later by Kate Bush, currently Adjunct Curator of Photography at Tate Britain, in a feature dedicated to Michael Mack, one of the most acclaimed publishers in the photography world and the founder of MACK Books. "It's a contemporary recognition," Bush states, "that photography exists in two creative spaces—in exhibition form and in book and magazine form."[10] There is no reason to dispute this assertion. At the same time, it throws into relief another distinction—that between an exhibition and a photobook—where the question of primary and secondary, original and copy, is much harder, if not impossible, to answer.

Where Is the Work?

In light of this confusion, perhaps it is time to ask again a modernist question: What is it that is unique and irreducible in the experience of a photography exhibition, as opposed to digital or printed forms of presentation? In his *Understanding Photobooks: The Form and Content of the Photographic Book*, Colberg defines this distinction primarily in temporal terms: while an exhibition has a limited lifespan—when the exhibition ends, it ends—a photobook, if properly stored, will be around for decades, maybe even centuries.[11] By the same

1 Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics (Abbreviated Version)," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (2002), 422.

2 Jeff Wall, "Photography and Liquid Intelligence," *Jeff Wall: Selected Essays and Interviews* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007), 109.

3 The project, which was initiated by curator Charlotte Cotton and artist/curator Alex Klein, was later published in book form as *Words Without Pictures*, eds. Charlotte Cotton and Alex Klein (New York: Aperture, 2010). Subsequent web-based endeavors such as Either/And (eitherand.org) and, especially, Fotomuseum Winterthur's *Still Searching…* (fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/still-searching/) might be seen as rejoinders to this effort.

4 Jason Evans, "Online Photographic Thinking," *Words Without Pictures*, op. cit., 46.

5 Ibid., 47–48 [emphases mine].

6 Whether it's possible to quantify this is another matter. The claim is made by Carola Zwick in *The Digital Turn: Design in the Era of Interactive Technologies*, eds. Barbara Junge, Zane Berzina, Walter Scheiffele, Wim Westerveld, and Carola Zwick (Berlin: eLab, Weißensee Academy of Art, 2012).

7 The archives of his *Conscientious* blog, and now magazine, do not see that far back, but his statement was preserved in a discussion featuring, among others, Marvin Heiferman, Carol Squiers, and Susan Meiselas, with the telling title "Has Facebook Killed the Photo?", *Art in America* 99, no. 4 (April 2011), 60.

8 "Questionnaire / Eileen Quinlan," *Words Without Pictures*, op. cit., 82.

9 "Questionnaire / Rebecca Morse," ibid., 153.

10 Tom Seymour, "First Things First," *British Journal of Photography* (June 2015), 51.

11 Jörg Colberg, *Understanding Photobooks: The Form and Content of the Photographic Book* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 2.

token, compared to exhibitions, books are relatively small and cheap to produce, and hence can easily travel great distances to find their audiences. This characteristic has made the printed form a central medium for the dissemination of ambitious photographic work, and thus a catalyst for photographic culture at large. And while the experience of a (photographic) exhibition, at least since the 1970s, is marked by what Jean-François Chevrier termed the restoration of the "distance to the object-image necessary for the confrontational experience" of the tableau form (although without, he insisted, implying a "nostalgia for painting" or any "specifically 'reactionary' impulse"[12]), the experience of the photobook is a much more private affair: direct, affective, immersive. This double point is made by Darius Himes, again in *Words Without Pictures*, to keep true to my point of departure. "Most photographers, curators, and gallerists (and especially those of a certain age and older), learned of, and fell in love with, photography through books. Ultimately," Himes concludes, "books are far more accessible than exhibitions of important work. One can return to them repeatedly and absorb the accompanying texts at will; a lap, two hands, a few hours, and some sunlight are all that is required."[13] Bill Jay described the development of photographic culture in 1960s Britain in exactly these terms, singling out books as "major sources of knowledge and inspiration."[14] Another argument in favor of the photobook is delivered by Jason Fulford, who, echoing Himes, asserts the "subtlety of control it offers in terms of context. The book form sets up all the intended relationships and fixes them in place."[15] Yet I am not rehearsing these arguments to claim the photobook as the "ultimate venue" for photographic work, as Richard Benson did on behalf of Lee Friedlander's photographs. Colberg argues that a photography project "can usually exist as both an exhibition and a photobook," although both modalities will, and in fact should, be different, because the photobook is not a catalogue, but an autonomous medium of expression unto itself. If this is true, and both forms of presentation, even if different in character, are equal in status, then where does this leave us with respect to the question of the real thing? *Where*, precisely, is the work?

12 Jean-François Chevrier, "The Adventures of the Picture Form in the History of Photography," *The Last Picture Show: Artists Using Photography, 1960–1982*, ed. Douglas Fogle (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2003), 116.

13 Roland Barthes would make a similar point in *Camera Lucida* about cocooned aloneness: "Further, photographs, except for an embarrassed ceremonial of a few boring evenings, are looked at when one is alone. I am uncomfortable during the private projection of a film (not enough of a public, not enough anonymity), but I need to be alone with the photographs I am looking at." Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 97.

14 Bill Jay, "Magazine Memoirs: Creative Camera and Album, 1968–1972," written for the conference, "What Happened Here?: Photography in Britain since 1968," held at the National Media Museum, Bradford, England, October 14, 2004.

15 Jason Fulford, "Subtlety of Control," *Words Without Pictures*, op. cit., 169.

Liquidity

What if such a conviction—that photography is underpinned by a stable ontology—is misguided? What if, instead of asking what photography *is*, we should instead be asking about, in the words of Joanna Zylinska, photography's "acts, affects, and temporal effects," and accept what she calls the medium's inherent liquidity?[16] What changes via such an approach is not the cultural object as such, but rather our way of framing, understanding, and mediating it. If we think about the fact that a photograph is never born as a gallery print or printed page, but that at its inception there is always a latent, i.e. virtual, image, and that the final form of the photograph or photographic work is always a matter of a choice that can be made over and over again (notwithstanding examples to the contrary, such as the daguerreotype or Polaroid), a different picture, and different possibilities, emerge. Acknowledging this liquidity also forces us to change the way we think about photography as a medium, a concept traditionally based on notions of support, or material, that in the visual arts often acquire metaphorical status. It is not by chance that Rosalind Krauss developed her idea of reinventing the medium as "a *set of conventions*" in response to the intervention of photography introducing the paradigm of mechanical reproduction, concomitant with the idea of the ready-made, as well as the commodification of subsequent forms of support.[17] Hence, I would surmise, it seems much more constructive to think of photography in terms of a practice of seeing and thinking—*photographic thinking*—than one of producing predetermined classes of objects. Such a definition, sidelining the question of ownership, emphasizes the direct relationship between photography and what Jürgen Habermas termed "the public sphere"—"the sphere of private people come together as a public"[18]—defined as a space of contestation vis-à-vis the public authorities. Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge defined the public sphere as "the only form of expression that links the members of society to one another by integrating their developing social characteristics"; which is to say, as a space for the mediation of social experience.[19]

16 Joanna Zylinska, "On Bad Archives, Unruly Snappers and Liquid Photographs," *Photographies* 3, no. 2 (August 23, 2010), 139–153.

17 Krauss speaks of the idea "of a medium as such, a medium as a *set of conventions* [emphasis mine] derived from (but not identical with) the material conditions of a given technical support, conventions out of which to develop a form of expressiveness that can be both projective and mnemonic." Rosalind E. Krauss, "Reinventing the Medium," *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 2 (1999), 296.

18 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 27.

19 Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 2.

The Visual Public Sphere

As has recently been demonstrated by Emily Cram, Melanie Loehwing, and John Louis Lucaites, the existing theories of the public sphere, from Habermas, Negt, and Kluge to Nancy Fraser and Michael Warner, have focused on "the speaking citizen, largely limiting civic action to written and oral forms of deliberation, while ignoring—or worse, distrusting—all forms of visuality."[20] In an attempt at challenging speech's primacy as an emancipatory force, the authors propose the concept of the visual public sphere, a theory that involves recasting the civic spectator as equal with the civic actor, using the metaphor of the public screen as complementary to that of the public sphere, and submitting the concept of critical spectatorship. Susan Buck-Morss has hinted at exactly this dimension of the photographic image, stating that, "The image is frozen perception. It provides the armature for ideas. Images, no longer viewed as copies of a privately owned original, move into public space as their own reality, where their assembly is an act of the production of meaning. Collectively perceived, collectively exchanged, they are the building blocks of culture."[21] Considering the frame proposed by the editors of this book—to concentrate on practices reacting to and considering major social phenomena and exhibition spaces, understood in the broadest sense and defined as "discursive space in which photographic-based art and images are the starting points for intellectual and emotional knowledge production"—we should pose the question as to whether contemporary advanced (or ambitious) photographic practice fully participates in a thusly defined visual public sphere. Among compelling examples of practices that combine vernacular and professional imagery while trying to address urgent political and social issues, one could enumerate such endeavors as the 2012 exhibition *Cairo. Open City. New Testimonies from an Ongoing Revolution*, curated by Florian Ebner and Constanze Wicke[22]; Michael Taussig's essay "I'm So Angry I Made a Sign,"[23] his attempt at introducing visual thinking into cultural criticism; or Wolfgang Tillmans' engagement in the anti-Brexit campaign, with downloadable posters and by way of his Instagram account.[24] But bear with me; this is not where I would like to conclude.

20 Emily Cram, Melanie Loehwing, and John Louis Lucaites, "Civic Sights: Theorizing Deliberative and Photographic Publicity in the Visual Public Sphere," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 49, no. 3 (2016), 228.

21 Susan Buck-Morss, "Visual Studies and Global Imagination," *Papers of Surrealism* 2 (2004), 21.

22 *Cairo. Open City. New Testimonies from an Ongoing Revolution*, Museum für Photographie, Braunschweig, Germany, September 28–December 23, 2012.

23 Michael Taussig, "I'm So Angry I Made a Sign," *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 1 (September 2012), 56–88.

24 See, for example, Jonathan Jones, "These Anti-Brexit Posters Show Just What We Lose by Leaving the EU," *The Guardian* (April 26, 2016), theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2016/apr/26/anti-brexit-posters-wolfgang-tillmans-eu-referendum [all URLs in this essay accessed September 16, 2018]; and "Wolfgang Tillmans Voices His Concerns (via Instagram) about the State of Germany," *The Art Newspaper* (January 22, 2018), theartnewspaper.com/blog/wolfgang-tillmans-voices-his-concerns-via-instagram-about-the-state-of-germany.

Beyond Insularity

A curious coincidence. Toward the end of the 1970s, in the wake of the intense but short-lived intervention of critical postmodernism, which, as has been asserted, came to "pervert" modernism by way of the "presence" of the photographic image[25]—thus defining art in terms of photography instead of photography in terms of art, and in the same move realigning art with the surrounding world—photography went on to claim for itself, in Michael Fried's now-famous formulation, "the scale and so to speak the address of abstract painting,"[26] initiating photography's current exhibitionary order (that of Chevrier's "confrontational experience"), and firmly entrenching the medium in the paradigm of high art. Although this is much too synoptic a formulation, alluding to more than can be unpacked in a short essay, one could see this development as an irony of sorts, with photography coming full circle: in the process of becoming a peer among the arts, it had forfeited its claim to being a form of expression with universal, and also political, appeal. One should not forget that, as a parallel development, the market for illustrated weeklies had begun to founder, a turn of events that, as it worsened, pushed photographers working in the tradition of the documentary closer to the art field and its galleries and museums. According to Jorge Ribalta, one of the foremost historians of this tradition, "Photography's triumph as art means its complete defeat as document."[27] By which he means that total absorption into the art field, concomitant with the rise of an anti-realist discourse about photography, destroys "the political potential to link art to transformative radical politics."[28]

While I don't consider any of these developments to be adverse per se, it is difficult not to recognize the risk of ambitious photography, with the potential to interpret, deconstruct, and even change the world, devolving not so much into mere ornament as into a state of ineffectuality. The (re)discovery of the photobook (and other printed-matter forms such as zines) as a medium in its own right, could be seen as having come in reaction to such developments, with the promise of quick production, immediate dissemination, and more democratic accessibility serving as an antidote to the exclusivity of the gallery circuit. To be perfectly clear, this is not an argument against exhibitions, which, as one possible format for presenting "liquid" media, are uniquely capable

25 Douglas Crimp, "The Museum's Old, The Library's New Subject," *Parachute* 22 (1981), 35.

26 Michael Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 112.

27 Guy Lane, "Jorge Ribalta on Documentary and Democracy," *FOTO8* (July 2, 2009), foto8.com/live/jorge-ribalta-on-documentary-and-democracy.

28 Ibid.

of enabling collective, embodied reception: at an exhibition, we look at and absorb images together. And while there is no need to stress the importance of the development of such public sites of knowledge production, collective (aesthetic) experience, and exchange, they remain invisible to, and exclusionary toward, publics that, owing to social, geopolitical, and/or economic conditions, are denied access to this social world.[29] Nevertheless, it quickly became apparent that the photobook revival, while an important development for the medium and (self-)understanding of photography, remained an inbred phenomenon. As early as 2012, Markus Schaden, the founder of the PhotoBookMuseum, described photobook publishing as threatened by its becoming "just a circle where different photographers copy each other's work," and a "ghetto" in which young photographers "focus on style not content, and all buy books from each other." Urged Schaden, "We need to go beyond that."[30]

Digital Publicity

This is precisely why, in 2011, recognizing the same threat, Michael Mack founded MAPP Editions, an experimental publishing house for digital books. While the orienting of photobook publishing toward collectible books was exciting, providing as it did a business model for the publishing of ambitious work, it simultaneously undermined what had inspired Mack to become a publisher in the first place: "making that nexus between ideas and artists available to as wide an audience as possible."[31] Digital publications presented a path forward for the publisher: one, because they seemed to make good on the promise of universal accessibility at a minimal cost; and two, because, unlike photobooks and exhibitions, they allowed (at least in theory) the supplementary inclusion of scholarly content, external links, and further contextual material, without cluttering up the work itself.[32] In other words, they allowed for the mediation of sometimes difficult, complex, or highly formalized content. To achieve his goal of becoming an international "hub that is seen as one of the leading places for this kind of work," Mack managed to secure funding from investors and to develop a three-and-a-half-year business plan. The reason for his enthusiasm was Apple's iPad, originally released to the public in April 2010, which, according to Mack, "was going to change everything."

29
This recognition brings us back to what Jorge Ribalta termed "public photographic spaces," in reference to the tradition of photography-based propaganda exhibitions, from the Russian avant-garde to Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man*, which was later appropriated by visual advertising. If we were to insist on the photography exhibition as a space for a public (and, further, for public reception, public thought, public debate), it is impossible to do so without acknowledging the fact of the public's participating in a propagandistic culture, and drawing conclusions from the fact that the documentary, as public rhetoric, is "a form of public persuasion, it is propaganda"; "Jorge Ribalta on Documentary and Democracy," op. cit. See, too, *Public Photographic Spaces: Propaganda Exhibitions from Pressa to The Family of Man, 1928–55*, ed. Jorge Ribalta (Barcelona: Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009).

30
Colin Pantall, "Doing It by the Book," *British Journal of Photography* (January 2012), 71.

31
Diane Smyth, "The Work of Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction," *British Journal of Photography* (August 2011), 90. Also, Smyth, quoting Mack (ibid.): "You look at our Steidl list and there are a huge number of items that are three volumes, 10 volumes or more, and we can't sell enough of them to be honest. We always limit the numbers to at least 1200 and they sell out; it doesn't really matter what price we put on them. That's great, but then they're in libraries or in collections, and nobody actually gets to see the bloody things. That's not what publishing is about."

32
Ibid.

Fast forward to 2015, and Mack, acknowledging that his initiative was trying "to push a market that wasn't quite there, and […] wasn't able to carry us, or even justify the investment," was no longer "as ambitious" editorially regarding digital publishing. Mack saw the reason for this in the need for a publisher to put a lot of resources into developing for different platforms, concluding that ambitious digital publishing will not be viable until the emergence of "a hybrid system […] through which content, and illustrated content, can be uploaded and relayed easily, without the need to write code for each separate platform."[33]

While this is a perfectly valid argument from a business perspective, I am not convinced that this is what we should in fact be waiting for. What Mack is envisioning is a cross-platform ecosystem of proprietary applications, enabling the synchronization of content across all important development platforms (both desktop and mobile), which will allow for the seamless publishing of well-designed interactive multimedia content. At this point in time, there are isolated initiatives such as MAPP or Musebook,[34] a digital publisher specializing in art books that was recently endorsed by Colberg;[35] but they come nowhere close to attaining the status of the photobook, understood to be a carefully designed and autonomous entity. The digital equivalents remain mere supplementary replications, never *the real thing*. This is because—at least until now—all such initiatives are restrained by the governing framework they adopt. Protocols in the space of the Internet tend to evolve at a rapid pace, rendering such frameworks quickly obsolete and forcing their creators to be constantly updating them, resulting in onerous overheads.

To return to this text's opening, when Jason Evans asserted that it was "simply a matter of time before a generation not weaned on paper and chemicals sees the manufactured bubble of 'art photography' for what it is, and begins to explore the potential of an inclusive, affordable distribution network and its inherently interesting formal qualities for presentation and distribution,"[36] he was both right and wrong at the same time. He was right in the sense that many photographers and other practitioners working with photography have indeed produced intellectually and aesthetically engaging work, very often allowing them to reach a significant audience at a

33
Tom Seymour, op. cit., 57.

34
Offering, for example, the latest Stephen Shore catalogue (musebooks.world/world/stephen-shore-1391.html).

35
See, Jörg Colberg, "Book Reviews W16/2018," *Conscientious Photography Magazine* (April 16, 2018), cphmag.com/reviews162018.

36
Jason Evans, op. cit.

fraction of the costs of publishing a book or staging a well-produced exhibition. But Evans already knew this in 2008. He was mistaken in the sense that to even discover the current "interesting formal qualities for presentation and distribution," and put them to creative, let alone critical, use, requires significant resources, not to mention the creative as well as intellectual collaboration of graphic designers (as in the case of a photobook), and technically-minded practitioners such as programmers, interaction designers, and so on.

Critical Design

Our biggest fallacy lies in our treatment of the computer as a tool—one that may be structurally complex but relatively easy to functionally operate. It is exactly for this reason that Vilém Flusser would call the computer a toy.[37] And playing the toy by the rules does not help us to understand its underlying programs and how they condition the ways we interact and express ourselves through them. Needless to say, much of this has been happening in the world of electronic and Internet art for a long time; but we need more of that knowledge, thought, and work to seep through into the mainstream of ambitious photographic practice if it is to participate meaningfully in the visual public sphere. Some ideas put forward by the Digital Bauhaus, a movement within the design community, initiated, in 1998, by Pelle Ehn with his *Manifesto for a Digital Bauhaus*, can be useful in unpacking what is at stake here. According to Colin Beardon, a truly radical digital aesthetic will only emerge "when the skills and abilities in the fields of creative practice are combined with a deep intellectual understanding of digital technologies to the point where they can be seriously challenged from an alternative standpoint."[38] And this will only be possible with the participation of other creative fields, especially that of theory and the arts. This kind of collaboration and dialogue can be seen as one possible definition of critical design.

In Beardon's view, the main inspiration and model for this aesthetic will come from theater, which could become "a virtual laboratory for the exploration of actions to 'shape the activities of life.'" Theater as a model for computing is of double importance to Beardon. "Firstly," he writes, "because in theater the performative act, with or without words, is a highly refined form of action. Secondly, because theater is

37 See, Vilém Flusser, *Into the Universe of Technical Images*, trans. Nancy Ann Roth (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

38 Colin Beardon, "The Digital Bauhaus: Aesthetics, Politics, and Technology," *Digital Creativity* 14, no. 3 (September 1, 2003), 177.

virtual in the sense that it is purely hypothetical action. This does not mean, however, that it cannot be effective in the larger world outside of theater." As I understand it, this claim is derived from the centrality of interaction as a paradigm for the digital world, hence the importance of exploring and departing from the performative element as a way of building relationships across the digital constituency.

One highly convincing use of theatricality in constructing a cross-media documentary project, which for all its whimsicality amounts to a pointed commentary and reflection on the current refugee crisis and the ways Old Europe is (not) dealing with it, is Anaïs López's *The Migrant* (2012–2018).[39] This story of a bird, the Javan myna, which the artist became familiar with in Singapore, and by extension our relationship to animals and our modern ways of striving to engineer the ideal society, exists in the form of a book comprised of photographs, pop-ups, illustrations, and comic strips; as a web documentary; is exhibited; and is presented during performative storytelling sessions staged by the artist. López's example is the more pertinent here because she makes use of playfulness, of play as an immersive force. As Bill Gaver convincingly laid out in his argument for utilizing *Homo Ludens* (*Ludens* is derived, in part, from the Latin for "play") as a model for digital design, "pleasure comes before understanding, and engagement before clarity."[40] This realm is still very much open for exploration.

For Experimentation

Jorge Ribalta's view that "experimentation and innovation on the document side cannot be dissociated from experimentation in the radicalization of democracy," has never been more true. Clinging to received notions of publicity and a literal realism (for example, the one enforced by the World Press Photo) is no countermeasure to what has been called the politics of post-truth, and the recent revelations about how the big players in the Internet have been playing their constituencies.[41] One could argue that in spite of all the "information" we have access to, the world has reached a new level of unfathomableness. In the face of this evident crisis, we need to find new ways to create and disseminate reflexive, thoughtful, and critical content, especially in visual form. And while these days even relative photographic neophytes are able to

39 See, migrant.nu/en and anaislopez.nl/the_migrant_the_app/in/what_is_going_on_now. *The Migrant* was a Krakow Photomonth 2018 project.

40 Bill Gaver, "Designing for *Homo Ludens*," *(Re) Searching the Digital Bauhaus*, eds. Thomas Binder, Jonas Löwgren, and Lone Malmborg (London: Springer, 2009), 176. Gaver's argument stems from the recognition that "the real revolution is that computing is leaving the confines of task-oriented, focused, rational work, and joining us in our homes, on the street, at parties, on lonely mountaintops—everywhere, in short, where we leave work behind to do the things we really want to do"; ibid., 164.

41 Of course, I am referring to the Cambridge Analytica scandal, but also to the ongoing debate about (the need for) censorship, and the difficulty of pinpointing hate speech, in relation to outlets such as Alex Jones' Infowars (see, Jason Wilson, "A 'Political Hit Job'? Why the Alt-right is Accusing Big Tech of Censorship," *The Guardian* [March 4, 2018], theguardian.com/the-chain/2018/mar/04/alt-right-big-tech-censorship-law-suits); as well as recent revelations about the weaponization of Facebook to incite violent attacks against immigrants in Germany; see, Casey Newton, "Facebook Should Help Us Understand the Link Between Political Speech and Violence," *The Verge* (August 23, 2018), theverge.com/2018/8/23/17771460/facebook-germany-refugee-violence-study-criticism.

hold court on the importance of format, paper stock, and printing technique to the overall effect of their photobook, we still know comparatively little about what makes a great Internet publication, what works and what doesn't, and why. For this, we need the big institutions in the field to set aside the resources for, and commit to, conducting more active research in digital interaction design specifically geared toward lens-based media, with the goal of creating frameworks and tools and making them more readily available to a wider community of practitioners, including photographers, artists, designers, programmers, and journalists.[42] If such a laboratory were to come into existence, it might give birth to a new medium: that of the, for lack of a better term, digital photoapp ("digital photobook" causes a misunderstanding right from the start).

Having said this, it would be remiss of me not to highlight the compelling and important work that has already been done in this field. To start with, some producers, like Paradox, the National Film Board of Canada, and the IDFA DocLab;[43] the *New York Times* and *The Guardian*; and mediators such as the Docubase or Ydoc foundations,[44] have been at the forefront of such pursuits in the field of photography for some time now. Additionally, notable projects include Geert van Kesteren's *Why Mister, Why?*—launched as a multi-screen exhibition, book, and dedicated website, in 2005, and as an extended iApp edition, in 2013[45]—which deals with the aftermath of the Bush administration's Iraq War; Kadir van Lohuizen's *Via PanAm* (iPad app and online blog, 2011; book and exhibition, 2013),[46] which, while focusing on the Americas, attempts to reflect on worldwide issues of migration; Lisa Barnard's *The Canary and the Hammer: The Gold Depository* (2017), the artist's response to the 2008 global financial crisis, and her attempt at exposing via elucidation the global north's drive to accumulate wealth[47]; and Robert Knoth and Antoinette de Jong's *Poppy Interactive*,[48] the interactive documentary follow-up to the duo's acclaimed book, *Poppy: Trails of Afghan Heroin*,[49] and corresponding video installation[50] unraveling transcontinental networks of violence and chaos wrought along international heroin trading routes by insurgents, criminal organizations, and corrupt or ineffectual governments. Also of great importance is Rob Hornstra and Arnold van Bruggen's *Sochi Project* (2009–2013), an epic story about the site of the 2014 Winter Olympics that deconstructs

42
The existing platforms for digital storytelling either don't allow for responsive design (klynt.net, korsakow.com), are better suited for branding (racontr.com, studio.helloeko.com), or are geared more toward reading (atavist.com). Then there are tools like Readymag (readymag.com) or Webflow (webflow.com) making responsive web design more easily available, but they force their users into a closed, subscription-based ecosystem, making the future of the content dependent on the future of the provider—and many have faltered in the process; see, Gannon Burgett, "Visual Storytelling Platform Storehouse Announces It's Shutting Down," *Digital Trends* (June 15, 2016), digitaltrends.com/photography/storyhouse-storytelling-platform-shutting-down-square—and generating constant maintenance costs. Atavist's trajectory seems to provide the best point of reference: in 2015, *The Atavist* (the magazine built on the Atavist framework) decided to ditch its mobile apps in favor of one unified web app (for exactly the reasons Michael Mack withdrew from trying to spearhead "photoapp" development), realizing that on the web, they were able to reach "a readership often 50 to 100 times larger [...] than what [they] could in the app"; see, Evan Ratliff and Jefferson Rabb, "Goodbye, Native Mobile Apps," *Atavist Insider* (September 18, 2015), atavistinsider.atavist.com/goodbye-native-mobile-apps. It remains to be seen what happens after the framework's acquisition by WordPress owner Automattic.

43
See, paradox.nl, nfb.ca/interactive, and doclab.org/category/projects.

44
See, docubase.mit.edu and ydocfoundation.org.

Vladimir Putin's neo-imperialist political ambitions while unearthing the (post-)Soviet legacy of the region.[51] The project was notable not only because its web version, unveiled in 2013, manages to balance a readerly vertical format (for van Bruggen's writing) with a focus on (Hornstra's) photography, but also because in their attempt to find a way to practice what they call "slow journalism," the duo managed to actively seek out and sustain their own public, which helped them finance their work via crowdfunding, and to share their progress by annually publishing the ongoing project in various printed formats. Wider publicity—and attendant discussion of the subject of their work—followed on the heels of the project's completion, which included the launch of the website and the publication of a photobook.

When the iPad version of *Why Mister, Why?* was made available, Jörg Colberg described it in his review as demonstrating that "photojournalism does have a very good electronic future. Photojournalism [...] should be about well-produced stories first and then about trying to reach audiences with those stories. In a day and age where some people confuse taking Instagram pictures with photojournalism, *Why Mister, Why?*, the app, demonstrates what can be done with new media without sacrificing what made the profession in the first place."[52] Meanwhile, a lot has changed across the media landscape.[53] Current estimates suggest that for most people, especially if we are to take into consideration the digital divide, the smartphone will eventually be (if it isn't already) their primary, if not only, means of connecting to the Internet, making it the natural primary development platform. What will become of the tablet, taking into account the fact that laptops continue to become smaller and, in the case of 2-in-1 laptops, functionally convertible, remains to be seen. Also, the inclusion of other visual media (moving images, drawing) seems both desired and needed. From among the aforementioned projects, only *Poppy* and *The Migrant* are responsive web apps, and only *The Migrant* can be added to the Home Screen as an autonomous, full-screen app. Surely they can be regarded as signposts toward what ambitious photographic work on the Internet can look and feel like going forward. Consider this my plea for research into the current potential of the Internet—a shared public visual space, accessible to many more people than traditional print-based media

45
See, whymisterwhy.com. While the iPad app is still available, the web-based Flash version (whymisterwhy.com/webedition.html) is no longer working. The project was shown at Krakow Photomonth 2007 as part of *Theaters of War*, curated by Mark Power.

46
See, viapanam.org/viapanam/about.

47
See, thegolddepository.com/home.html.

48
See, poppy.submarinechannel.com and, for more information on the project, paradox.nl/project/poppy/#work.

49
Robert Knoth and Antoinette de Jong, *Poppy: Trails of Afghan Heroin* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012).

50
The installation was shown in *A New Display: Visual Storytelling at a Crossroads*, Krakow Photomonth group exhibition curated by Iris Sikking, Tytonie, Krakow, Poland, May 14–June 12, 2016.

51
See, thesochiproject.org. The project, as with many of the works mentioned here, also functions as a book and an exhibition, with the subtitle *An Atlas of War and Tourism in the Caucasus*.

52
See, Jörg Colberg, "*Why Mister, Why?* by Geert van Kesteren," *Conscientious Photography Magazine* (September 5, 2018), cphmag.com/why-mister-why.

53
While in 2013, Internet usage in the EU reached 75 percent of households (ranging from as high as 90 percent in the UK to as low as 58 percent in Italy), it is estimated that, by 2020, the European Commission's Digital Agenda to achieve 100 percent population coverage with 30 Mbps broadband will be a fact, and smartphone subscriptions relative to the population will reach 95 percent. See, Olaf

sources—as a publishing platform for accomplished, reflexive, critical photographic work, not in the walled gardens of specialized applications (even if cross-platform), but as autonomous web apps. Featuring responsive design, so that they read well (that is, differently) on differing screen sizes, from smartphone to laptop to large desktop display, these publications should offer a focused and immersive, if not necessarily seamless, experience of the work in question, at the same time subtly providing contextual information that would allow audiences less versed in contemporary photographic parlance to find their way into the work, be touched by it, and maybe develop a desire to experience it as a photobook or, *in person*, as an exhibition.

Coda

Most importantly, though, let these attempts *slow down* the Internet,[54] strategically and critically so, and participate in the visual public sphere, hopefully inviting more and more people into our small photographic realm, making it maybe a little less airtight and self-sufficient. At the same time, we might come up with new grammars of visual expression, and new tools for critical understanding. It is important to remember that the public sphere is a phantom, as difficult to pin down and characterize as photography itself, and that its structure is thus performative, always ready to reconfigure itself. "Public discourse," Michael Warner reminds us, "is poetic. By this I mean not just that it is self-organizing, a kind of entity created by its own discourse, nor even that this space of circulation is taken to be a social entity, but that in order for this to happen all discourse or performance addressed to a public *must characterize the world in which it attempts to circulate*, and it must attempt to realize that world through address."[55] So remember, this is not about creating new business models, but about the opportunity to participate in the visual public sphere as actors and as critical, conscious spectators. It is about accepting no less significant a responsibility than that of playing at poetic world-making.

Acker, Florian Gröne, et al., "The Digital Future of Creative Europe: The Economic Impact of Digitization and the Internet on the Creative Sector in Europe," Strategy& report, 2013, PDF, 9; the full report is available online at: strategyand.pwc.com/media/file/The-digital-future-of-creative-Europe.pdf.
The year 2020 is also expected to mark a new digital turn, with mobile data consumption overtaking fixed broadband, even considering that both are growing at a staggering rate. See, "Perspectives from the Global Entertainment & Media Outlook 2018–2022," PwC report, 2018, PDF, 10; the full report is available online at: pwc.com/gx/en/entertainment-media/outlook/perspectives-from-the-global-entertainment-and-media-outlook-2018-2022.pdf.
With 5G connectivity around the corner, and the expectation that VR and AR technology will mature enough to be made widely—and affordably—available, the space for, and possibilities of, digital publishing in visual media seem once again wide open, and this is why, in my opinion, we have again arrived at a watershed moment that might be compared to that of the releases of the iPhone and iPad, in 2007 and 2010 respectively.

54
This was the point of departure for Triple Canopy, an intriguing initiative aiming to provide a digitally native, but intellectually rigorous, reading experience. For the editors' account of their attempts at slowing down the Internet, and of their battles with protocols, see, Triple Canopy, "The Binder and the Server," *Art Journal* 70, no. 4 (December 1, 2011), 40–59, artjournal.collegeart.org/?p=2644.

55
Michael Warner, op. cit., 422.

Tuomo Rainio

Interfaces for Artistic Thinking: Redefining Visual and Spatial Metaphors in a Post-Digital Condition

The hybrid form of contemporary art exhibitions today seems to promote more profound changes in material and political reading of the artistic practice than simple social media shares might lead us to believe. Both online and offline spaces open up concepts of exhibiting and rereading of the space that further define and formulate the language of political discourse. As the virtual and physical spaces merge together, exhibiting becomes once again substantial enough for the reformulation of spatial metaphors. In this essay, I would like to pinpoint some of the intersections between online and offline spaces, and to analyze some pivotal artistic works and exhibitions that portray the shifting role of photography in the Post-Internet era. I suggest that understanding exhibition through the concept of an interface allows more thorough analyses of the structure and accessibility of the work. This also makes the use of spatial elements visible in a way that further redefines the spatial metaphors so essential to our everyday language.

Reflections

In the years 2015–2017, when Instagram was filling up with selfies taken at Yayoi Kusama's exhibitions, inside the *Infinity Mirror Room* and in front of the dotted surfaces, I could not help but think of a virus that was spreading uncontrollably and causing this epidemic. This was, as I later learned, if not the express purpose of the artist's endeavor, at the very least strongly in parallel with the artist's intention when she first started to work with dots. As Kusama stated in an interview with *BOMB* magazine, "Polka dots symbolize disease."[1]

The renaissance of Kusama's oeuvre is a result of many different pursuits for which the role of the Internet cannot be underestimated. It is almost as if the "infinity web" and the Internet were simultaneously interwoven with the endless mesh of electric nodes in which the digitally reproduced versions of the dotted works are now living and being replicated. If selfies are "mirrors that we can freeze,"[2] what kind of place then is the *Infinity Mirror Room*, which not only mirrors the viewer but is itself endlessly mirrored in exponentially increasing multitudes of photographs?

What is the role of an exhibition in this all-encompassing sharing culture? Among the different social media platforms, on which images define the conditions of participation, the exhibition apparatus remains the meta-structure of visibility

1
Yayoi Kusama interviewed by Grady T. Turner, *BOMB Magazine* 66 (January 1, 1999), bombmagazine.org/articles/yayoi-kusama [accessed July 13, 2018].

2
Douglas Coupland, *#artselfie* (Paris: Jean Boîte Éditions, 2014).

wherein objects, things, and beings are put under the spotlight. The Kusama phenomenon clearly illustrates the difference between an offline and online exhibition experience. In the Post-Internet age, when an exhibition becomes viral, it feels like a blunt marketing strategy. Still, it is worth noting that this spectacle originates from an exhibition or even from inside a work of art such as *Infinity Mirror Room*.

This displacement from offline exhibition to online representation gives rise to some interesting consequences. Mediated or reproduced artwork sets up a horizon of expectations, and it is no longer the concrete work of art or a visit to an exhibition that provides the most genuine experience. On the contrary, the *Infinity Mirror Room* seems more infinite and more spectacular when seen in the photographs than when actually visiting it. The firsthand experience is not quite the same when visiting the cramped, shaky box with a limited viewing time. But is it really possible to replace a visit to an exhibition or the actual viewing of a work of art with mediated attendance? It already seems to be possible to replace the viewer with a camera and the act of looking with the act of photographing.

Reproduction Apparatus

When a retrospective of Yayoi Kusama's career arrived in Helsinki, in October 2016,[3] the experience of visiting the exhibition was surprisingly different from my expectations. Although it was not the first nor the last time that an exhibition turns out to be a disappointment, it was indeed a very special kind of disappointment. My intention here is not to evaluate the exhibition itself but to outline an experience where the mediated *representation* of the artwork defeated the *original*. Furthermore, I do not believe that this ultimately had anything to do with the work of Yayoi Kusama per se, but rather was a reflection of a more general shift toward these strange times of post-truth experience. And yet this seems like a new formulation of the very old question about the truthfulness of imagery.

When social media platforms rest on the use of photographs, the photography turns out to be a condition of participation. In this kind of inclusion of technology there is scant opportunity for critical analysis of the photographic condition itself. As these platforms have gained success on a scale be-

3
Yayoi Kusama, *Yayoi Kusama: In Infinity*, Helsinki Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland, October 7, 2016–January 22, 2017.

yond comprehension, the practices they naturalize are reflected in ways of seeing in general. The question is, does there remain a possibility for confronting a work of art without the all-encompassing reproduction apparatus? What does it mean to participate in artwork by photographing it? The reproduction of such work has more profound consequences than just playing a supporting role in *My Story*™.

Digital networks provide a platform for the constant circulation of images. In this repetitive movement, old images are copied, downloaded, edited, and uploaded again. The circulation process unfolds beyond the appropriations or quotations that would merely generate new versions from an original source, instead evolving toward micro structures that make it unnecessary to question originality in the first place.[4] Physical spaces take part in this process as one of its many nodes. But although physical location, e.g. an exhibition space, adds a layer of real-world randomness to the work, it does not mean that the work's telos is time-bound physical presentation.

It is this seemingly immaterial fluidity of digital images that makes it sometimes difficult for institutions—and I refer not only to museums but legislative institutions as well—to keep up with the changing roles of reproduction and its relation to works of art. Because a work of art is not limited by its physical form but rather extends through a symbolic dimension, there is no clear line demarcating where a work starts and where it ends. Because an installation can be localized both offline and online, the whole structure appears more like a constellation instead of an installation. Exhibiting has become an unlimited ensemble of connections.

The Being-in-the-Virtual/Hybrid Space

If an exhibition is a composition to be reproduced, what does this tell us about the position of the viewer? Mediated perception and the reduction of the spatial experience into the two-dimensional photographic plane is no minor shift. Quite the opposite—it should be considered as a part of the more general capacity of the visual arts to produce and consider visual and spatial metaphors a priori to conceptualization. Through this process, one defines the foundation for the concepts of the world view, politics, and structures of knowledge.

Estonian artist Katja Novitskova works in this intersection of surface and space. The flatness of her photography-based

4
See, for example, "What Do You Meme?", an open-ended virtual exhibition of memes curated by Maisie Post, whatdoyoumeme.maisieflorencepost.com and instagram.com/whatdoyoumeme94 [both accessed July 13, 2018].

works is not a result of a lack of spatial hints. Novitskova's sculpture-like photo-objects are made by cutting the subject of the image out of its background. When exhibited, the irregularly shaped cut-outs appear even flatter than one would expect.

Photographs of Novitskova's installation open a hybrid space wherein the layers of the virtual and the physical seamlessly merge into a collage. The exhibition alone does not express this hybrid quality but rather resembles theatrical stage props in storage. The installation is made for the camera and comes alive "afterwards" in photographs taken of it. The disappointment the viewer experiences at the exhibition is not a result of any failure of the work but rather owes to the virtuosity of the artist. Novitskova inverts the physical exhibition space into a virtual space and thus manages to represent the sphere of "being-in-the-virtual" within which the apparent flatness of images is revealed. Behind appearances, there is nothing.

The manifestation of flatness demonstrates the artifice of images. The question remains: Are we prepared to confront the experience of disappointment, and are we capable of resisting the immersive seductions of imagery? The question is ancient but needs to be answered repeatedly. Ubiquitous digital surfaces persuade us to immerse ourselves in them. They direct the potentiality of attentiveness to the depths that open via screens. When sitting on a bus in the morning rush hour it is difficult to avoid the feeling of returning back to Plato's cave, inside of which we explain the world and ourselves with mesmerizing silhouettes.

And yet, there are no people in the photographs of Novitskova's installations. One might consider Thomas Struth's *Museum Photographs* as some kind of predecessor for such installation shots: from Struth's critical observations about the stage of culturally-defined gazes, we are transmitted to the post-human space of the virtual wherein the exhibition space starts to seem alien to us. The collective nature of looking at a work of art is reduced to the single viewpoint of the camera; and the additional dimension—the looking at the action of looking included in Struth's photographs—is transformed into a relation between the experience of being within and a part of the installation and the photographic reproduction of the installation itself.

Entangled Spaces

Artistic works thematized under the title Post-Internet not only reformulate the relationship between a reproduction and its original, but also activate another logic of image relations. Without an origin or a final form, the images are interconnected in endless circulation. In the age of digital reproduction, images assume the role of simulacra, and the call for originality seems day by day more absurd and irrelevant.

In Artie Vierkant's body of work *Image Objects*, the photographs interconnect virtual and physical spaces and circulate in the interstices between them. The spatial qualities of exhibition spaces are projected repeatedly on the photographs and then returned to the digital process of circulation. The artifacts of the physical space are incorporated in the image and the image is grounded in the continuous entanglement of different spaces. When looking at *Image Objects*, one can see the discrete fabric of interwoven threads of space and time. The work consists of a chain of photographic moments being superimposed onto a feedback loop. Both the cause and effect of the art object, exhibiting becomes a form of exposing. These works of art locate themselves in the focal point of this interchange. Writes Vierkant, "[…] if an object before us in a gallery is only one of an infinite multitude of possible forms that object could take, its value to the viewer becomes little more than [that of] a curiosity."[5]

Expectations for Immediacy

Today, even during the most ordinary of moments, we confront a world of images in constant flow. Images come and go, they lose their bodies and travel around without an origin, bereft of the seriousness that marked them before. Communication technologies and applications such as Snapchat are fueled by images, which serve not only as the content of a message, but as the technical precondition for sending that message in the first place. Images can even be shared while bearing no relation whatsoever to the written message they accompany. Any old image will do.

Given this culture of disposable imagery, it is difficult to maintain the state of thoughtfulness that images ideally deserve. Images as consumer goods are not based on any evaluation of what we might learn from them, but rather on what we want to get out of them and how fast we can get it.

5
Artie Vierkant, "The Image Object Post-Internet," PDF, 10; the full PDF is available online at: jstchillin.org/artie/pdf/The_Image_Object_Post-Internet_a4.pdf [accessed July 18, 2018].

Instead of attempting to understand images, we now expect them to serve us.

Technology changes the way we look at images and at the same time it changes the way we face the world. Works of art act as indicators of this process. In the current culture of restlessness, images are instantaneous and viewers grow ever more demanding for immediate effect. We demand of images immediacy and effectiveness, but at the same time we fail to require of ourselves concentration and thoughtfulness when absorbing them.

The question could be formulated in yet another way: How might we change our relationship toward surfaces so that instead of opaqueness we produce transparency and instead of reinforcing hierarchies we support apposition? In other words, to reference the media philosopher Sybille Krämer, who calls for a politics of the superficial, we should think about the political consequences of visual metaphors.[6]

Political Space

The question of spatiality is at the core of exhibiting. Still, it should be emphasized that considerations of spatiality take into account not only aesthetic and artistic choices but also how spatiality itself is constructed through a work of art. As a matter of fact, the term "exhibition" itself suggests a process of disclosure and exposure. The etymology of the word underlines the *holding out* of something, and thus already sets up a spatial metaphor.

A scene's stage or an exhibition's gallery both constitute spaces for placing something on display. This *holding out* is not only a condition for showing something but also for making it public, for creating a public space around it. Exhibiting is about taking part in the public, that is to say in the social and political, space. Exhibiting is about opening a space for the political.

From the materiality of a single work of art to the whole of an installation, every decision builds upon a foundation for metaphoric expressions to be created and reformulated. The room covered with mirrors in Kusama's installation is not merely a playful space of reflections but a challenge for the act of looking. The evident complexity of this challenge forces the viewer to rely on the supportive help of the camera apparatus enabling two-dimensional projection. It is precisely

6
See, "The Weaponization of Language," panel discussion featuring Sybille Krämer, Transmediale festival, Berlin, Germany, February 3, 2018; an audio recording of the discussion is available at: transmediale.de/content/the-weaponization-of-language [accessed July 18, 2018].

this denial of the complexity that makes the relation between the original and the reproduction such a problematic one. In the case of Katja Novitskova's work, it is the manifestation of flatness that produces political potentiality. It is the contradiction between the two different perspectives that allows us to critically think about illusory space.

Political art—that based on explicitly political subject matter—is in constant danger of failing by rendering itself too easy to read, and write off, as mere political argument. When adopting a political position, a work of art loses its true capacity for having a political impact. In fact, it is the very structure of a work of art that formulates the visual metaphors and concepts capable of influencing political discourse in general. It is through these metaphors that art interferes with the public and the political.

Visual arts have a very particular capacity for dealing directly with spatial metaphors by manipulating them prior to their conceptualization. It is this capacity of the visual arts that defines its societal impact. When taking a political standpoint in the center, or when discussing the transparency of decision-making or accessibility to information, we adapt spatial metaphors to organize our arguments better. It is the formulating of such concepts, which lie at the very heart of exhibiting, that the visual arts occupy themselves with when at their most political.

Functional Images

How are spatial experiences such as reflection, mirroring, or projection translated into cognitive skills? Can an exhibition function as an interface for structuring these experiences?

Thinking beyond static representations, images now play a double role by being both representational and functional. In the post-digital era, we have witnessed a massive rise in visual information, as well as a growing number of visual interfaces.

American philosopher Benjamin H. Bratton has discussed the fusion of image and interface in the context of digital technology. Graphical interfaces have come to be extensively used in a range of digital devices, and thus they seem to represent a peculiar form of an image that does not merely display information but is itself functional.[7]

Different interfaces play a central role in human–machine relations. Although the interface is rarely essential for

7
Benjamin H. Bratton, "Remarks on the Hole of Representation in Computer 'Vision,'" lecture delivered at the European Graduate School, Saas-Fee, Switzerland, June 22, 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=VSAaGcP-sim0&t=135s [accessed April 8, 2018].

the functionality of the machine, it is indispensable for the human user. Some machines are basically in their entirety understood as surface interfaces. Without an interface, the machine withdraws into itself, a mere mute black box, unreachable—a process akin to a tool breaking.

If the visual quality of an earlier technological era's interfaces was relatively unnoticeable because of the apparent functionality that it represented, graphical interfaces have since become a recognizable element in contemporary visual arts.

Artist Trevor Paglen has written of operational images, "Instead of simply representing things in the world, the machines and their images were starting to 'do' things in the world."[8] He refers to the filmmaker Harun Farocki, whose films, in the early 2000s, dealt with operational images in relation to warfare. As images are produced by machines and for machines, an entire genus of images, existing only in a calculable form and not meant for human interpretation, never even becomes visual in the first place. Through computer vision, technology images themselves have become interfaces for machines.

Interface to Information

Instead of thinking about interactivity as a relationship between the viewer and the interface, I will instead focus on the experience of the interaction and the constant process of information unfolding.

Within the context of the moving image, graphical interfaces and functional images have slipped into mainstream video art. One of the most notable examples of the use of interface as a central element of a narrative is the film *Grosse Fatigue* by French artist Camille Henrot. This fifteen-minute film is composed of a large collection of video clips that are presented in a layered and overlapping manner. This manner of editing shows the constant opening and closing of files, making it a perfect example of media theorist Laura U. Marks' notion of unfolding/enfolding aesthetics. Marks states that "[t]he new image is a window not out to the perceptible but to the legible."[9] The constant opening and closing of different access points to *information* seems also to reflect the contemporary experience of the Internet, and especially the way in which knowledge is organized via that experience.

8
Trevor Paglen, "Operational Images," *e-flux* 59 (November 2014), e-flux.com/journal/59/61130/operational-images [accessed April 8, 2018].

9
Laura U. Marks, *Enfoldment and Infinity: An Islamic Genealogy of New Media Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 3.

Henrot's image material, in combination with a powerful soundtrack of recitations by the spoken-word artist Akwetey Orraca-Tetteh, creates a kind of mixed mythology of genesis. Image combinations and the associations between the images and the soundtrack broaden our conceptual understanding of the world in the direction of non-lingual meanings. The world of contemporary science and the world of different belief systems are presented in parallel and without conflict between them.

In Henrot's video work, the whole sphere of human knowledge is spread across the computer desktop. Montage comprised of multiple windows overlapping each other provides a constant flow of information and interpretation of sciences, religions, and various creation myths. Henrot concretely illustrates the relationship between surface and depth in the context of an interface. The surface (visible images on the screen) enables access to the depths of the interface (data, hard drive), but at the same time it hides everything that is happening beneath the surface.

In her book *Enfoldment and Infinity*, Laura U. Marks analyzes new media art with a three-layered model, which she refers to as an aesthetics of unfolding, that brings together three concepts. Image, information, and infinity are connected by a bilateral transition of unfolding and enfolding. For Marks, the visible (image) is always seen in relation to what is invisible, though not immaterial: information. The visible (image) is unfolded from the invisible information and, in turn, the information is unfolded from infinity.[10]

When thinking about the relation between information and the infinite, Marks states that "noise" is what remains outside of information.[11] She writes, in reference to the French philosopher Michel Serres, "Noise sounds a lot like the infinite: it cannot be detected in itself, but everything we perceive arises from it."[12] Noise remains as an unformed background.

It is worth mentioning that although digitality as a concept might seem immaterial, its implementations are actually never as clean as its binary logic might lead us to assume. Digitized information is always tethered to the physical, and thus noise is always present in relation to information.

10
Laura U. Marks, op. cit.

11
Laura U. Marks, "A Noisy Brush with the Infinite," *The Oxford Handbook of Sound and Image in Digital Media*, eds. Carol Vernallis, Amy Herzog, and John Richardson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 106.

12
Ibid., 104.

Exhibition As an Interface

Could an exhibition be translated into an interface that allows access to both its surface and its depths? How does the relation between the two-dimensionality of an image and the spatial qualities of an exhibition formulate this question and create visual metaphors to restore transparency?

Two-dimensional images, maps, and even diagrams provide visibility in a non-hierarchical form: everything is presented at once and it is up to the viewer to interpret what they see. At the same time, one cannot help but think of the old belief that everything that is on the surface is somehow superficial.[13] The immediate appearance makes us long for unseen *depths*. Sybille Krämer states that it is the visual interface that makes the depths functionally available to the user, but at the same time renders them uncontrollable and opaque.[14] Algorithms behind the interfaces are mostly hidden from the viewer and cloaked in functionality. Interfaces provide us surfaces, but while simultaneously blocking access to what is behind them. Since visual interfaces are still a very recent development, it might be too early to say how exactly we should interact with them. The more advanced the algorithms get, the more valuable the data of the user interaction becomes. As the viewer interacts with the surface of the interface, data is being collected and structured in the depths.

If we consider an exhibition as an interface, and curatorial practice as a programming of that space, the viewer is then placed in the position of the user. To be able to deal with the contradiction between surface and depth, the viewer should become a programmer, or at least be familiar enough with the "programming" of the exhibition.

From the perspective of an artist, the exhibition apparatus is indeed a way to reveal the latent meanings embedded in his or her artwork. In practice, this is achieved via the method of associating different works of art to emphasize their different qualities. This is the true potentiality of the exhibition apparatus, and also the very logic of exhibition programming (i.e. the curatorial practice). To bring forth the problematic relationship between surface and depth, the viewer should gain access to the *source code* of the exhibition *program*.

What are the possible points of intersection between digital and physical space? Is it not the technologies of presentation that create points of contact between those two realms?

13
Sybille Krämer, panel discussion, op. cit.

14
Ibid.

Technology can easily be used to produce powerful sensory experiences and thus should be critically handled in relation to works of art. Technological standardizations may easily overwhelm the more delicate material qualities of digital artwork.

Japanese artist and electronic musician Ryoji Ikeda works on the border between digital surfaces and bodily experience. In his exhibition *Supersymmetry*, at the Kumu Art Museum, in Estonia,[15] Ikeda brought the spectacle of an electronic music concert into an art museum context. In the exhibition, the viewer encountered an immersive technological system and immediately felt her/himself to be a single subatomic particle in a particle collider or a bit in a massive data center. This mixture of installation and concert setup emphasizes the performative quality of the multi-sensory experience, and makes it difficult or almost impossible to create a representation that would replace the on-site experience.

In Ikeda's works, the visualizations of statistics, simulations, and graphical elements all refer to data. In the referential structure of a visualization, an abstract phenomenon is translated into a visual form. The abstract subject of *Supersymmetry* justifies this approach. It turns the viewer into a reader of the visual, spatial, and sonic language that the work is composed of.

Ikeda opens the exhibition *program* to the viewer by inviting the viewer to become a fellow researcher. This shift emphasizes the difference between visiting an art museum and visiting a science center, the latter at which a visitor is provided with a collection of touchable objects and interfaces to help explain natural phenomena. Such tangible examples aren't there to be admired as aesthetic products of fine craftsmanship, but rather to serve as substitutes meant to represent and illustrate the wonders and workings of nature. In the context of art, as opposed to elucidating a scientific explanation, installations serve not to convey structured knowledge but rather to deliver an experience of pure astonishment. Ikeda's installations resemble a laboratory-like setup, and stimulate viewers to wonder what exactly it is they are looking at. The work of art provides no answers but directs the inquisitive look on toward an abstraction.

Exhibiting artwork in a manner that challenges structured ways of seeing creates an interruption within the programmed exhibition apparatus. The interruption, a gash in the surface, reveals the depths to be explored within.

15
Ryoji Ikeda, *Supersymmetry*, Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn, Estonia, December 11, 2015–February 28, 2016.

Doris Gassert

Curating Un/Stable Images: SITUATIONS at Fotomuseum Winterthur

The performance of Michael Riedel's *One and Three Chairs [Winterthur]*, as part of Fotomuseum Winterthur's SITUATIONS program, took, for some, an unexpected turn. Part of Riedel's ongoing artistic dialogue with Joseph Kosuth's seminal 1965 piece with the same title, it included four participants from the field of the arts and media who were invited to discuss *One and Three Chairs* in its historical, theoretical, and spatial contexts. Seated with the others on four chairs placed in a row, facing the audience, and with only a loose set of directives from the artist, media scholar Ute Holl was quick to introduce a loophole in the work's hermetic circle with one simple yet far-reaching gesture. "If we think about the fact that we have to describe a spatial situation from where we are placed," Holl suggested, "the chair as an arrangement or dispositif has a lot to do with photography. It creates, in a way, a similar act of framing. It was actually just in the last minute that I understood that the chair is a camera."[1] Cameras, of course, while having a fixed viewpoint, do not have a fixed position. So, eventually, Holl took her chair and relocated herself within the exhibition space.

With her gaze now shifted away from the audience toward Lynn Hershman Leeson's *Roberta Construction Chart #2* (1975) and Morehshin Allahyari's *Material Speculation: ISIS* (2015–2016)—works which comprised, together with Omer Fast's *Continuity* (2012), SITUATIONS: Re-enactment, a thematic cluster dedicated to artistic strategies of re-enactment from the premise of photographic representation—Holl refused to re-enact the self-referential system of Western art discourse. Instead, she proposed to break open the frame (of the often safe and confined space of the museum) to consider the much wider epistemological, political, and social implications of how our visual field is organized—as well as our institutional, curatorial, and personal responsibilities of positioning our perspectives (and ourselves) within the highly contested and politically charged field of representation. "I am trying to perceive and describe a certain moment as it surrounds us […], things that I wasn't able to bring together when I first entered the room. For me, *the space becomes increasingly tense*; […] it felt much emptier in the beginning, but in the meantime *certain forces have come into play that affect me*. […] How many forces can you allow to be at play in a museum, how much irritation is accepted? […] Is it about enhancing the tension or about organizing it in a way so as to make it bearable?"[2] Mere minutes into the performance, Holl had turned the chairs into "hot seats."

The moment I describe here points to a set of questions and issues that I consider crucial for a discussion of why and how we exhibit photography today, in a time when photography is rapidly circulating and expanding, and its frames are becoming increasingly "fuzzy." How can we bring forces into play, through a curatorial arrangement, that provoke a shift in perspective (*Blickverschiebung*); one that enables us to perceive *what images do to us when we engage with them?* How can we establish methods and strategies that (re)direct the visitor's attention from what they see to the *conditions* of what they see—from the surface of the photographic image to its dispositif—and thus devise photography exhibitions where photography itself is no longer the blind spot, but the medium that allows us to think *from and through* questions of representation (and their social, cultural, and political realities)? And why is the "bigger picture" of how photography's frame(work)s *organize* the in/visible, our visual field or episteme, and how these in turn *produce* their subjects, of importance for how we deal with photography and devise photography exhibitions in the twenty-first century?[3]

It is against this conceptual backdrop that I wish to discuss the potential of SITUATIONS, a fast-paced and dynamic exhibition format and research laboratory launched at Fotomuseum Winterthur, in April 2015, that reacts decisively to the dramatic shift in photographic images and visual culture we are experiencing today. The format is an ongoing investigation into the increasingly computational, distributed, networked, and expanded constitution of photography—sometimes referred to as post-photography[4]—as well as its conditions, cultural effects, visual politics, and social realities. SITUATIONS includes a hybrid mix from an expanded field of post-photographic practices: from the Instagram images, memes, and GIFs circulating online to Google Street View images, CGI, screenshots, or 3D-printed artifacts. A SITUATION can be a photograph, video, performance, installation, game, or online work. It can be a work of art or stem from a vernacular, applied, or academic context. The photographic must not be the final product or shape, but can be the premise, mode of inquiry, or subject of reflection. A SITUATION

1
Ute Holl, quoted (translation mine, from the German) from the performance transcript that was included in Michael Riedel's installation *One and Three Chairs [Winterthur]*, presented as *SITUATION #55* in SITUATIONS/Re-enactment, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland, December 3, 2016–February 5, 2017. See, fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/situations/clusters/30114 [all URLs in this essay accessed July 29, 2018].

2
Holl, performance transcript, op. cit. (Translation and emphasis mine.)

3
See, too, Nina Power, "Representation and Decapitation in the Gallery," unpublished. The essay will be published in Fotomuseum's forthcoming 25th Anniversary publication (2018).

4
The Post-Photographic Condition, ed. Joan Fontcuberta (Montreal: Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal; Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2015); this is also often referred to as the post-medium condition; see, for example, Peter Weibel, "The Post-Media Condition," *Mute* 19 (March 2012), metamute.org/editorial/lab/post-media-condition, in which Weibel writes, "There is no longer any photography outside and beyond the media experience."

can thus be of a more discursive nature, a contextualizing element like a quotation, a bibliography, a written/visual/experimental essay, a panel discussion, or an artist talk; it can be participatory or educative, like a workshop; or any form or format not mentioned here which enables a negotiation of the (post-)photographic that infiltrates and in/forms everything from our gazes to our cultural imaginaries and mentalities to how we see ourselves and the world. Favoring an interdisciplinary, intermedial, and experimental investigation, SITUATIONS tries to deconstruct the complexity of the abstractions, layers, and politics that form part of photographic representation yet are concealed from a field of vision that, in the teleological narrative of technological reproduction, claims to be an exact (and truthful) replicate of the world. By aiming further "to rethink the exhibition form in relation to the expansion of photographic media and the power of the digital algorithm,"[5] the format also proposes a critical engagement with our own (conceptual, curatorial, institutional) organization of photography by destabilizing the frame(work)s in which its images and objects circulate.

SITUATIONS was developed as part of a comprehensive repositioning process for Fotomuseum Winterthur, questioning and redefining what it means to be a photography institution in the twenty-first century. According to former director Duncan Forbes, who devised the institutional strategy and initiated the program together with co-director Thomas Seelig, SITUATIONS was "very deliberately a response to three things: the changing nature of photographic practice; the changing theoretical frame of 'photography' today; and a concern about our own position within an institutional field which, at the moment at least, still seems slow to respond to the pressures of photographic media in rapid transition."[6] Against the backdrop of what artist Trevor Paglen, on his much-cited blog series "Is Photography Over?",[7] has outlined as "a deep-seated uneasiness among photo-theorists and practitioners about the state of their field," Fotomuseum has taken a future-oriented approach within a field (or bubble) that I still experience otherwise as more traditionally-oriented, often nostalgic, and at times infuriatingly conservative.[8] This forward-looking approach fosters a critical engagement with what Joan Fontcuberta has termed the "post-photographic condition,"[9] in which images circulate as data across communications channels, mobile devices, and screens, challenging, undermining, and discrediting some of the most prevailing essentialist understandings of the medium on which many of the institutional narratives of photography historically have been built. It looks at algorithmically-driven (post-)photographic media, modes, logi(sti)cs, and modalities as part of intricate, global networks, shaping a visual culture that, as media theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff notes, has become "a capitalized circulation of data-sets, rendered into 'visual' form on the screens of our devices that enables and expands the circulation of commodities of all kinds," ultimately "extend[ing] the commodification of perception itself into a monetizable good."[10] Within this capitalist visual culture, photography is *not over*—it is the dominant visual mode of our time.

This situation, of course, has "little in common with prints in black frames—these coffins of photography," to add a little of Daniel Rubinstein's provocative spice; nor, as he suggests, with the curatorial and museal practices established around it. Twenty-first-century photography "will not be found in the 'sixty inches from the floor to the center of the image' rule that still passes for curating in some circles, nor in the 'eye level' arrangement of images on walls, that reinforces the rhetorical tropes of perspectival painting inherited from the Renaissance."[11] The shift is so fundamental that for different understandings and practices to emerge it might require taking a more theory-driven approach. Unlike art-historical or photo-theoretical discourse, resources from the interdisciplinary fields of media studies and visual and digital culture have offered exciting approaches to contemporary photographic practices and future scenarios, and simultaneously the opportunity to rethink the established theories and histories of photographic media by circumventing the impasse of a medium-specific approach.[12] Conceptual frameworks like Jonathan Beller's "programmable image," Jodi Dean's "images without viewers," or Hito Steyerl's "poor image"—some of them featured on our blog *Still Searching…*, the first of Fotomuseum's content to find a specifically digital-driven form and to inspire both the institutional repositioning, and development of, SITUATIONS—have helped us navigate through the networks and nodes of twenty-first-century photography and its expansive technological, social, cultural, and political complexities.[13] The SITUATIONS cluster *Seeing Machines*

5
Duncan Forbes, "Fotomuseum 2050," *What Kind of Museum of Photography Today?* (Milan: Museo Fotografia Contemporanea, 2015), 70–83, here 72; circulationexchange.org/assets/pdfs/Forbes_Fotomuseum_2050_2015.pdf.

6
Ibid.

7
Trevor Paglen, "Is Photography Over?", on *Still Searching…*, blog (March 3, 2014), fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/still-searching/articles/26977_is_photography_over.

8
Joan Fontcuberta, op. cit.

9
Les Rencontres d'Arles being a striking example; see, Sean O'Hagan, "Cyborgs Meet Spiritualists at Photography Festival," *The Guardian* (July 9, 2018), theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/jul/09/les-rencontres-darles-review-photography-festival. Among forward-looking approaches, see, too, the digital program at The Photographers' Gallery, London, curated by Katrina Sluis: unthinking.photography; the DONE platform run by Foto Colectania, Barcelona: done3.fotocolectania.org; and the BIP in Liège, Belgium, which, in 2007, after being renamed the "Biennial of the Possible Image," shifted its focus to "the systems of circulation of the contemporary image" and opened up to emergent forms: bip-liege.org/en/about/presentation.

10
Inês Beleza Barreiros, "'Theory is not just words on a page. It's also things that are made': Interview with Nicholas Mirzoeff," on *Buala*, blog (June 27, 2017), buala.org/en/face-to-face/theory-is-not-just-words-on-a-page-it-s-also-things-that-are-made-interview-with-nichol.

11
Daniel Rubinstein, "What is 21st Century Photography?", on The Photographers' Gallery blog (July 3, 2015), thephotographersgallery-blog.org.uk/2015/07/03/what-is-21st-century-photography.

12
Theoretical approaches in the wake of what came to be known as the pictorial, visual, or medial turn set out to confront the blind spots, omissions, and impasses of more traditional disciplines like art history, which has had considerable problems dealing with the paradigm shift brought about by the "digital turn" (or by photography in general, for that matter).

13
Jonathan Beller, "The Programmable Image," on *Still Searching…*, blog series (May 1–July 15, 2017), fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/still-searching/series/30561_the_programmable_image; Jodi Dean, "Images without Viewers," *Still Searching…* (January 5–February 29, 2016), fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/still-searching/series/26419_images_without_viewers; Hito Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image," *e-flux* 10 (November 2009), e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image.

(#9–#19), for example, took its title and cue from Paglen's blog series, in which he proposed "seeing machines" as "an expansive definition of photography" which provided the framework for what also became a historical investigation into machinic vision.[14] In our ongoing exploration over the past three years, we have looked into photography's changing social *Relations* (#1–#8); unraveled its complex *Infrastructure* (#111–#120), ranging from mines deep under the Earth's surface to satellites orbiting in space; explored the *Posthuman* (#129–#135) as a possibility for a photographic world where humans no longer stand in the center; and engaged with questions of visual politics that are deeply embedded in the networks, and inscribed in the technologies, of photographic representation in *Filter* (#42–#53), to name just a few of our thematic investigations.[15] To reference W. J. T. Mitchell, one could say that within all of these clusters, photographic "representation is not the answer to the question, be it political, ethical, or epistemological, but rather precisely the form in which the question is posed and worked through."[16]

In SITUATIONS, artists help us work through these questions. As opposed to those who consider themselves photographers following a more purist tradition, visual artists have a long history of exploring the tensions of photography's inherent in/stability by reflecting it in intermedial arrangements and as part of a wide range of image practices. Artists can "break the medium," and by doing so, bring the photographic operations that normally go unperceived to the forefront. This aesthetic practice is, as media philosopher Dieter Mersch and others have pointed out, the condition of all media reflection, as it can deconstruct the paradox of mediatization—the disappearance of the medium (as an organizing structure, a means of *stabilization*) to make something (a *stabilized* photographic image) emerge.[17] Such works that deconstruct the organization of the visual field *work against* the more conventional, established modes of presentation in photography exhibitions. They are not necessarily interested in aesthetics as a formal quality, in compositional elements or the beauty of an image, nor do they leave the "reality" that is represented on the image's surface unquestioned. Instead, such artistic strategies (re)direct the visitor's attention from what they see to the conditions and effects of what they see, creating aesthetic experiences that can be inspiring for devising curatorial strategies that wish to generate similar tensions in the exhibition space—the organization of which would profit from an interdisciplinary exploration between artistic, curatorial, and academic research. In SITUATIONS, we experiment with the creative potential of "curators as artists," devising single SITUATIONS and thematic clusters as intermedial arrangements that include and "appropriate" images from a wide range of post-photographic practices.[18] By confronting the artistic with the applied and the vernacular mass image, the still framed picture with the moving and the circulating screen image, the stable and fixed with the emergent and fluid, we try to create aesthetic tensions that induce different modes of spectatorship through which the inherent in/stability of the photographic comes into focus, while using strategies of hybridization and demystification to engage in a "curatorial practice as a potential space for critique."[19]

SITUATIONS are numbered consecutively and curated in three to five thematic clusters a year which are presented as temporal "exhibitions"—or rather constellations—in the physical space at Fotomuseum Winterthur. Yet what one experiences in the space is always just one version of a bigger conceptual, spatial, and temporal arrangement; one which exceeds the boundaries of the museum walls to an online space.[20] Every SITUATION is presented on situations.fotomuseum.ch, and the status of this presentation can vary between a documentation of the work presented in the physical space or an expansion of it (whereby the experience of the work changes depending on where one encounters it—in the physical space or online, or both), and sometimes it *is* the work. Moreover, the online presence as a growing archive offers methods of re/framing through a system of tags that allows for content to be re-approached and re-contextualized from new angles.

This multi-layered, enigmatic arrangement is challenging for visitors to navigate, and it may seem unnecessarily complex altogether to those who simply enjoy exhibitions as spaces for silent contemplation (and those who organize them as such). Yet it is questionable whether this (bourgeois and privileged) mode of Western art spectatorship[21] that grew out of the paradigm of Western art can (or should) sustain against the dynamics of digital culture, especially in the field of photography which has profoundly challenged, from its very beginning,

14
Trevor Paglen, "Seeing Machines," on *Still Searching…* (March 13, 2014), fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/still-searching/articles/26978_seeing_machines.

15
A growing archive of all SITUATIONS (#1–#135, as of this writing) is available at: situations.fotomuseum.ch.

16
"Was wollen Bilder?", W. J. T. Mitchell interviewed by Georg Schöllhammer, *Springerin* 2 (1998), 18–21. This specific rendering of the quotation was translated by Richard Watts.

17
Dieter Mersch, "Ausblick auf eine negative Medientheorie," in Dieter Mersch, *Medientheorien zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 2006), 219ff.

18
See, for example, the cluster SITUATIONS/Flesh, which confronted ORLAN's performance *Omnipresence* (1993) with an image collection from social media (SITUATION #59) and a blow-up from David Cronenberg's movie *Videodrome* (1983), demonstrating the inversion of body and image in a post-photographic world in which manipulation, modeling, and self-promotion are becoming an unspectacular part of everyday routine. Available at: fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/situations/clusters/30115.

19
None of these curatorial strategies are new, of course, having by now been established as traditions in the field of contemporary art. See, for example, Paul O'Neill, "The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse," *Issues in Curating Contemporary Art and Performance*, eds. Judith Rugg and Michèle Sedgwick (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2007), 13–28, here 14.

20
Some SITUATIONS also take place outside of the museum (for example at festivals, in public spaces, or at partner institutions) in an attempt to reach out to different audiences and to include a set of questions raised by yet another frame; e.g. SITUATION #58, COLL.EO, *The Fregoli Delusions*, 2016, fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/situations/30533; and SITUATION #100, Alan Bogana, *The Sensible Spectrum*, 2017, fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/situations/153909.

21
See, Wolfgang Kemp, "Die Kunst des Schweigens," *Laokoon und kein Ende: Der Wettstreit der Künste*, ed. Thomas Koebner (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1989), 96–119.

SITUATION #128, Lauren McCarthy, *Follower,* 2016–ongoing, installation view at Fotomuseum Winterthur, 2018 © Philipp Ottendörfer

the foundations of Western art;[22] and against the backdrop of a growing awareness of institutional, feminist, post-colonial/decolonizing critique in what seems to me a (hopefully) decisive rupture in our (Western cultural) visual episteme—one in which movements like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter are shifting into focus (on a larger scale) not only the things we did not see because we were looking *away*, but all the things we did not see even *when we were looking right at them*.[23]

What is still largely missing is a critical discussion of the processes of cultural neutralization and naturalization that leave misogynist and racist practices unquestioned even *in plain sight*; and in our field, specifically, how such practices are inscribed in representational technologies like photography, and how (and to what ends) photographic images are controlled, disseminated, and framed by those in power to *de/stabilize* "the experience and meaning of sight itself."[24] In how we take and select photographs, in how we distribute them, in how we frame and display them, and in how we assign values to them, we play an active role in defining the understanding of the medium and in either perpetuating or contesting the dominant visual episteme which establishes the conditions of what we see in the first place. I do not belong to those who believe that by visiting a "photography show on Africa" we can actually learn a lot "about Africa," as a speaker at a photography symposium recently claimed, if those shows do not question and discuss the intricate relationship between photography and colonialism, the dynamics of the colonial gaze, and the role photography has played in *producing* rather than representing (an image of) "Africa" (and the material effects and social realities thereof).[25] It worries me that this understanding of knowledge production just by *looking at photographs* still seems a prevailing (mis)conception, not only among a majority of our visitors, but also among many curators in the field of photography. How does photography filter what we see and how we see it? Who can claim the right to interpret, and who, to reference Nicholas Mirzoeff, has "the right to look"?[26] What kind of subjects does photographic vision produce? And how does it, as Jonathan Beller reminds us to ask, "perpetuate the patriarchal unconscious" relating to "bodies, space, time, narrative structure, all things visible and imaginary"?[27] If photography is a "racial and gendered formation,"[28] as Beller has recently suggested, and if racism, as according to Judith Butler, "has become a way of seeing,"[29] then what is at stake when representation remains the blind spot of our practices, when we perpetuate photography's neutralizing and naturalizing processes and the myth of its truthfulness and objectivity, even if only by leaving it unquestioned?[30] It is when confronting the invisible processes and politics embedded within photography and its institutions that some of the most crucial ethical questions of our time arise.

Despite all of its practical shortcomings—and there are quite a few, of course—a format like SITUATIONS can help stimulate such questions and be a testing ground for curatorial strategies that seek to integrate the tensions, forces, and affects of the inherent in/stability of photographic representation into their exhibition arrangements, in order to destabilize, and thus create awareness for, our "ways of seeing." Moreover, SITUATIONS presents a prototypical model for a modern-day institutional structure that stresses collaboration, knowledge exchange, and critical, self-reflective discussion over the individual practice, one-person narrative, and curatorial authorship that largely define the institutional exhibition history of photography—not least at Fotomuseum Winterthur. SITUATIONS fosters an ongoing critical analysis of the subject matter that is our daily business while providing a space for creative exploration "in the hope of generating utopian energies within the museum, from the heart of what is mostly a ruthlessly pragmatic machine."[31] Curated in a collaborative process by the entire Fotomuseum curatorial team, which was consciously composed to comprise interdisciplinary backgrounds—including the creation of the positions of a Digital Curator[32] and a Research Curator as part of the repositioning process—it favors the productive tensions between narrow expertise and more generalizing, speculative frameworks, between theory and practice, and between the different medial modes and temporalities of the photographic that constitute our present moment. After all, it is the "hybrid unions," as media theorist Marshall McLuhan once suggested, which not only enable a more profound reflection of the various components at play, but also entail the utopian potential to "breed furious release of energy and change."[33]

22
As most prominently discussed by Walter Benjamin in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1935), in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 217–251.

23
For recent examples in the gallery space, see the controversies surrounding Dana Schutz's *Open Casket*, presented at the Whitney Biennial, in 2017; Luke Willis Thompson's *Autoportrait* having been awarded the Deutsche Börse Prize, in 2018; and Romain Mader's *Ekaterina*, as debated in SITUATIONS #86, fotomuseum.ch/en/explore/situations/30767.

24
Jacqueline Goldsby, Professor of English and African American Studies, Yale University, on the social effects of lynching photographs, cited in Jonathan Beller, *The Message Is Murder: Substrates of Computational Capital* (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 100.

25
Last heard by a speaker at the symposium "Why Exhibit?" at Krakow Photomonth, in June 2018; the usage of the term "Africa" should in itself already be considered problematic.

26
Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

27
Jonathan Beller, "Imag(in)ing Sex in the Brain," lecture delivered at the Center for Science and Society at Columbia University, New York, March 21, 2016, youtube.com/watch?v=g80Z98p5I0Q.

28
See, Jonathan Beller, "Camera Obscura After All: The Racist Writing with Light," in Jonathan Beller, *The Message Is Murder*, op. cit.; see, too, Shawn Michelle Smith, *Photography and the Optical Unconscious* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

29
Judith Butler interviewed by George Yancy, "What's Wrong With 'All Lives Matter,'" *The Stone*, *New York Times* blog (January 12, 2015), opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/12/whats-wrong-with-all-lives-matter.

30
Moreover, what do these anxieties in our field point to on a larger scale, and shouldn't we be refuting a radical conservatism and any media-fetishist and purist attitude that wants to make photography great again?

31
Duncan Forbes, op. cit., 82.

32
Fotomuseum's Digital Curator, Marco de Mutiis, has been substantially involved in shaping the digital infrastructure and digital program of Fotomuseum Winterthur.

33
See Marshall McLuhan, "Hybrid Energy: Les Liaisons Dangereuses," *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 48–55, here 49.

SITUATIONS/Filter, installation view at Fotomuseum Winterthur, 2016
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Suvi Lehtinen

From Pro Surfer to #usermilitia

Recent discussions about online-based artwork, and the role of the artist as a user of social media and content-sharing platforms, has moved toward new understandings of the ethics involved in appropriating content.

From the photomontage to the found-photography-based works of the 2000s, there has been a shift, influenced by the emergence of social media, toward a rethinking of the artist as a social practitioner and of the user as someone with agency.

Thinking of online-based and Internet-influenced artworks in terms of earlier critiques of photography might be helpful in understanding a kind of paradigm shift that has occurred within this field in the past ten years. I am referring to the relationship between professional and amateur photography, and how the different networks in which photographs circulate have been viewed and curated.

Analyzing rapidly shifting and moving visual culture is difficult both because of dramatic technological lurches and corresponding cultural responses. This produces a kind of unpredictable feedback loop. This problem, of course, is not only one that makes tackling online-based art difficult so far as interpretation goes, but also presents a sizable problem for artists working on these platforms and with these technologies. To quote artist Jesse Darling, "Art about technology ends up being bad art and/or bad technology within a few years."[1]

Regardless, surveying the development and shift in online art remains meaningful to me because of the way it reflects on its contemporary moment. The very idea that thinking hard about something that is of such immense contemporary cultural and social importance is a "trendy" topic seems paradoxical, a kind of rehashing of the old high vs. low narrative of traditional art history. Furthermore, the shift also reflects heavily on questions around artistic identity, from a voyeuristic moment toward a kind of queer agency.

I will draw on texts by Marisa Olson and Jesse Darling, as well as use other artists' work and statements as examples. The concepts of "pro surfer" and "#usermilitia," as articulated by Olson and Darling respectively, will help to frame an aesthetic and ethical shift within artists and artworks engaging with the Internet and social media. Although the concepts introduced have a somewhat limited scope and temporality, they can be considered as conceptual snapshots without

1
Jesse Darling, Lunch Bytes Conference, "Panel 4: Life," Haus der Kulturen Der Welt, Berlin, Germany, March 21, 2015, youtube.com/watch?v=sMQVWqa-Kx6I&feature=youtu.be [accessed August 4, 2018].

thinking of them as genre-defining or as carrying too much theoretical weight. I find this is useful when approaching topics of such intense contemporaneity.

"Pro Surfers"

In a 2008 article, "Lost Not Found: The Circulation of Images in Digital Visual Culture," the artist and writer Marisa Olson began to form an art-historical discourse around what she recognized as, at the time, a newly emerging genre of online art. Her focus was on a group of artists who, amidst the novel Internet phenomenon of video- and photo-sharing networks, mined the web for images to appropriate for their own work. Forming so-called "surfing" clubs, the artists discussed by Olson shared found images on websites and blogs. Although the artists displayed evident fascination with this emerging cultural sphere, their attention to it could be detached and often ironic. Much of their work focused on image circulation. Photographs posted online were treated as found objects, and artists' work focused on user-generated trends or categorizations of content. Olson's examples include Oliver Laric's *50 50*, for which fifty videos of YouTube users performing 50 Cent's "In Da Club" were mashed together into a composite video by Laric.

"Characterized by a copy-and-paste aesthetic that revolves around the appropriation of web-based content in simultaneous celebration and critique of the Internet and contemporary visual culture," wrote Olson, "[…] the work of pro surfers transcends the art of found photography insofar as the act of finding is elevated to a performance in its own right, and the ways in which the images are appropriated distinguishes this practice from one of quotation by taking them out of circulation and reinscribing them with new meaning and authority."[2]

A similar fascination is displayed in the Second Life–based work of artist Jon Rafman. Second Life, which was launched in 2003, is an online virtual world within which users can create avatars, interact with each other, and build and develop often fantastical environments. Rafman's avatar, Kool-Aid Man, based on Kool-Aid's iconic smiling jug-of-juice mascot, offered video tours of Second Life between 2008–2011. In an interview Rafman gave inside the virtual world, he described Second Life as "the ultimate tourist destination." As opposed

2
Marisa Olson, "Lost Not Found: The Circulation of Images in Digital Visual Culture," *Words Without Pictures*, eds. Charlotte Cotton and Alex Klein (New York: Aperture, 2010), 1.

to the pro surfers of Olson's article, Rafman refers to Second Life content producers as amateurs and points toward a level of naivety in their productions.

"There's an aspect to Second Life that is grotesquely kitsch and I can't help but love this aspect. I think we've reached a point now, my generation, where we don't even know whether we are celebrating something, and saying it's great and affirming it, or we are engaging in an ironic critique and mocking it."

Another online-based project, Scandalishous, was created, in 2008, by artist Ann Hirsch. Hirsch, adopting the persona of "hipster college freshman" Caroline, began posting diaristic vlogs on YouTube. While channeling familiar tropes of teen online sexuality, Hirsch exposed herself to the commentary that inevitably followed.

"The women who self-represent," Hirsch has observed, "often portray conventions familiar from television, films, and magazines. The women watching those self-produced broadcasts in turn imitate those imitations, illustrating a cycle of identification and internalization of stereotypes, rather than subversion."[3]

Hirsch discusses the duality of the Internet's apparent openness to expressions of sexuality while at the same time relying on old tropes. Her project, although a kind of sympathetic parody or performative homage to "amateur" users' content, posited questions of identity while making her own body available on the same platform as those amateurs.

Instagram

Instagram's appearance pushed things further. The photo- and video-sharing social networking service was released in 2010. As a platform, it now hosts nearly a billion users and tens of billions of uploaded photos. It has gone from a characteristic 1:1 square format and filters to introducing hashtags, videos, and a messaging service. Although Instagram is owned by Facebook, it has a distinct identity, and the fact that it started as a photo-sharing platform still keeps its focus very much on images. Photos, as well as the identities created through them, are now social practices.

The early Instagram, with its particular aesthetic, invited or created a distinct culture around its users. Filters and the square format were tools for people to start creating highly

3
Ann Hirsch, "Women, Sexuality, and the Internet," *Pool* (June 2011), pooool.info/women-sexuality-and-the-internet [accessed August 4, 2018].

idealized documentation of their daily lives. This wasn't just selfie culture; it was a kind of identity formation through snapshots. Snapshots, though, that weren't just quick glimpses of daily lives but rather highly stylized and preplanned sets.

Artists were quick to pick up on this emerging cultural trend. Early Instagram artists like Amalia Ulman used the app to successfully mimic the cultural tropes of Instagram lifestyles. Ulman's 2014 Instagram performance, *Excellences & Perfections*, chronicled the artist's assumed persona who, trying to make it in Los Angeles, wove around herself an illusive aura of posh exclusivity. The series of photographs, selfies, and other lifestyle-related images followed Instagram's early style of square-formatted and stylistically filtered photographs. Ulman's performance ended up gathering a following of nearly 90,000 users, in a sense reaching her goal of "making it" as a lifestyle influencer. It is perhaps difficult to see what about Ulman's performance was different from that of a great majority of Instagram celebrities, other than her art education. This raises interesting questions about performative lifestyles and authenticity.

Since its release, questions of identity have been innately embedded in Instagram's very premise as a tool for sharing lifestyles, real or imagined—and therefore a core element of the projects of artists who have adopted it as an exhibition platform. Their work is intricately and fully connected to its platform. The work is about the exhibition platform and practices taking place on it. Its conventions of use are the same for all of its users, be they artists or amateurs (a term used, for example, by Jon Rafman when describing the producers of Second Life landscapes).

It's difficult to imagine another exhibition platform quite like this. Not just the content of the work but its coming into being is tied to space that is accessible to all other users who have downloaded the same app.

Post-Internet?

In a 2013 update to her "Lost Not Found" article, Olson continued to find ways to include what she now calls post-Internet work within art-historical discourse.[4] Criticizing the exclusivity of art history, she pointed to the influence of the Internet, unaffected by art-historical considerations, on wider cultural and social issues. She quotes Allan Sekula, from his

4
Marisa Olson, "POSTINTERNET: Art After the Internet," *Foam Magazine* 29 (October 2011).

1983 essay "Reading an Archive": "We need to understand how photography works within everyday life in advanced industrial societies: the problem is one of materialist cultural history rather than art history."[5]

Sekula's essay, upon further reading, underscores another problematic which can be read to present an ethical dilemma for the type of "pro" work championed by Olson. "At any stage of photographic production," he writes, "the apparatus of selection and interpretation is liable to render itself invisible (or conversely to celebrate its own workings as a kind of moral crusade or creative magic)."[6]

This, Sekula points out, "[…] privileges the subjectivity of the collector, connoisseur, and viewer over that of any specific author. […] [Photographs] become the objects of a secondary voyeurism, which preys upon, and claims superiority to, a more naive primary act of looking." A subsequent reference to Pop Art again comes close to issues arising out of appropriation in contemporary online settings: "The aesthetically informed viewer examines the artifacts of mass or 'popular' culture with a detached, ironic, even contemptuous air."[7]

I want to distinguish here between projects that have been a kind of arch commentary on the cultural tropes of Instagram and those of artists who cast aside the ironic gesture to more earnestly engage with online platforms and their communities, in the process becoming, more or less, users like the rest of us.

This shift coincided with a wider critical shift among artists whose main area of influence, as well as occasional exhibition platform, had been the online environment. A kind of rising awareness of the artists' highly problematic, even elitist, distancing from pejoratively-dubbed "amateur" users was behind this shift.

Or perhaps people just got tired of irony.

The self-proclaimed pro surfers of the early 2000s were becoming more self-critical, perhaps reflecting wider social and cultural shifts from 2008 on. Beyond any political or socially conscious engagement, it was perhaps no longer relevant to comment on the cultural novelty of the now ubiquitous technologies that had determined and created a new cultural environment.

5
Allan Sekula, "Reading an Archive: Photography Between Labour and Capitalism," *The Photography Reader*, ed. Liz Wells (New York: Routledge, 2003), 443–452.

6
Ibid., 446.

7
Ibid., 449.

Me: What if I fail?

Higher Self: How could you fail at being who you are? You need not be anything more than that.

Instagram image © Bunny Michael

#usermilitia[8]

One of appropriation's central ethical quandaries concerns how it can engender a supposed critical neutrality in detached viewers counter to the subjectivity of content producers. A reading of Rafman's Kool-Aid Man would expose the problematic voyeurism of Kool-Aid Man's observations of ghettoized sexualities and cultural niches on Second Life. If, on the other hand, we consider him to be just another user (or lurker) with his own particular agenda, this becomes less the case.

All users are like all other users. Or, to quote Jesse Darling, because "every artist working today is a post-Internet artist, you could also say that non-artists working in commercial design, attending high school, hanging out at home, posting content while caring for kids or parents, are also post-Internet artists, at least according to what the art-world commentary class defines as post-Internet aesthetics."[9]

Questions of appropriation extend beyond the narrow scope of what happens within a cloistered art world to a much wider discussion about what happens to content and information posted online. Information becomes a commodity, while content is created and shared without its producers—users—ever being compensated. Notes Darling, "Contemporary technologies—including surveillance systems, social networks, production techniques, and reproductive processes—have been marshaled and instrumentalized by artists and conglomerates alike."[10]

Darling, referring to the ethics that formed from a critique of *Relational Aesthetics*, writes, "The critique around various praxes collected under the rubric of that moment began to produce a certain set of ethics that made it difficult for artists to unthinkingly use the bodies of others to furnish their own artistic agenda (though it very much depends, unfortunately, on what *kind* of bodies, then as now)." Darling continues, "In those sectors of the art world that intersect with activism and social projects, there is much anxiety around the mis-interpellation of the data body by conglomerates; meanwhile, over in the storied realm of 'post-Internet,' whole practices are built around the nonconsensual aggregation and reinterpretation of [other] users' content."[11]

After a recognition of an ethical problem arising from a questioning of the traditional modes of post-Internet aesthetics, how are we to move forward? If irony is by necessity exclusive, is the answer a turn toward a more identity-based practice? A situation wherein artistic identity doubles as a professional status and personal or private pastime is not uncomplicated. The kind of affective labor that is practiced by users is both liberating but also vulnerable to manipulation. A final riff from Jesse Darling perhaps allows for at least the partial agency of the user-producer: "Now is a place, a co-ordinate; i am where "I" am not, and iThink (type, write, and right-click) therefore I am. […] We *know* that this serious business is affective labor which produces capital for the custodians of netspace; indeed, meme culture (including but not limited to YouTube parody, stock photo art, cut-ups, and image macros) can be seen as the user asserting a subjectivity that exists and thrives despite (and beyond) her status as part of a targeted marketing demographic. […] We may never own the means of production as such, but will continue to assert, pervert, and subvert the commons anyway: a gesture of post-corporeal territorial pissing which necessitates neither phallus nor spray can nor html."[12]

Conclusion

Because of the rapidly developing technological environment, it is important to focus on the ethical implications of the uses of these technologies beyond technological determinism. Rather than assuming a critical distance in order to question if it is possible under these swiftly changing circumstances to produce anything of lasting significance, perhaps a recognition of being on the inside, as an equal participant, is the way to go. In any case, where else would anyone truly interested in contemporary visual culture want to be? By using the words and interpretations of artists deeply immersed in online spaces, I wanted to express the kind of drive to attempt to understand their contemporary moment. I think it presents a hopeful case of developing ethics.

All the same, it is probably best to leave the present future unarticulated. But I like the idea of artists, as users and content producers claiming agency on social media platforms, moving toward a more general social practice involving working both on and offline to produce material with peers in real-life contexts. With so much content on social media focused on self-care, spirituality, activist politics, and sexual or racial identity as lived experience, it seems users are finding

8
A hashtag used by artist Jesse Darling to describe a kind of possibly subversive user-led occupation of privatized and monetized online spaces.

9
Jesse Darling, Lunch Bytes Conference, op. cit.

10
Jesse Darling, "Post Whatever: On Ethics, Historicity, & the #usermilitia," *Rhizome* (December 16, 2014), rhizome.org/editorial/2014/dec/16/post-whatever-ethics-historicity-usermilitia [accessed August 4, 2018].

11
Ibid.

12
Jesse Darling, "Arcades, Mall Rats, and Tumblr Thugs," *Mass Effect: Art and the Internet in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Lauren Cornell and Ed Halter (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015), 327–328.

that agency.

Perhaps the work of New York–based artist Bunny Michael, "Instagram's resident therapist," is a good example to end this discussion with.

In Conversation with Penelope Umbrico

on Unintentional Images and the Web as a Self-Portrait of Our Culture

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger Let's start with us people. When the Internet was young, and online photo circulation was new, and everybody appropriated everything, the aspect of representation was still very central. But nowadays, talking about appropriation feels a bit fake, since we know that the biggest appropriators are the corporations. It seems to me that the whole contemporary photo circulation system focuses on images in action instead of on questions dealing with representation. Many of your works deal with the ways people act with and through photographs.

Penelope Umbrico This is something I have always been fascinated by. I think these images still deal with representation when they're in the hands of the individuals who take them, but as soon as they're shared they stop being about representation and become only about presentation. I started thinking about this in relation to selfies taken in front of sunsets; how these images are posted to open channels on Instagram or Facebook. There are millions. I find the visual accumulation of that particular scripted photograph fascinating because when you see the accumulation you totally understand the disappearance of the individual. The insistence of the selfie is like an antidote to the anxiety and fear of disappearance. The selfie has this odd kind of paradoxical inversion: the more one pictures oneself online, the more one disappears because one's singular individuality becomes multiplied and fragmented. One is everywhere with everybody else who is also everywhere. Or maybe it's not an antidote but a form of agency. Since all these media platforms and technological devices that we use are so corporate and monetized, perhaps the selfie provides a moment of control or authority for the individual. "This is me taking a picture of me." And in both cases, I'm thinking about a kind of psychological anxiety. In reality, most people are not thinking about the corporate structures of media platforms or the technologies they use, and this is another form of the disappearance of personal agency.

AKR With many of your projects, the images represent certain things, but the work is not about what they represent. I'm thinking for instance of your multifaceted project *RANGE* (ongoing since 2012), where the images are of mountains but the work itself is about photographic technologies and how people use them. Can you talk about that project?

PU In all of my projects, I look at something that affects us in a very physical way, then turn the attention to how that experience is mediated through technologies. I'm interested in how these images actually change how we experience and think about these things.

So the *RANGE* project began when Aperture invited me to do a project using one of their books. I decided to use the entire *Masters of Photography* series. I focused on the mountains in them because the mountain is the most masterly and stable object, and master photographers are the most stable photographers. I wanted to speak to a perceived current instability of photography (though photography has always been unstable), so I re-photographed all the mountains in these books with my iPhone, using camera apps that had light-leak and chemical-burn filters. I found it fascinating that digital camera apps replicate the aesthetics of analogue film by synthesizing the mistakes of that technology. The iPhone, for me, presented the largest distance between myself and these masters, as well as the largest distance between what the device actually is and, in this case, the image it makes: instead of light leaking into a volumetric box containing chemicals on film, an iPhone is a vacuum that just makes code.

AKR I've seen many different kinds of installations of this work. How do you decide its final form?

PU With this particular project there is no ideal form, because I was running the images through camera apps that digitally generated all sorts of file formats and sizes. They could be pretty much anything. When I first printed them for Aperture, I made them standard sizes

Penelope Umbrico, *TVs from Craigslist*, screenshots, 2008. Courtesy of the artist

based on the Aperture books I was using. More recently, for large museum installations, if the museum has a set of frames they can use for the installation, they give me the sizes and I make files that fit those frames. I like the idea that the work itself comes out of standardization. I have also made videos with the images, as well as a leporello-format book. The physical form of the work has no underlying conceptual logic, so the project really allows for any kind of physical form.

AKR We were talking earlier about the feminist aspects of *RANGE*. You mentioned that in the early history of photography, mountains were something really stable and male, because at that time most of the photographers who were able to carry (or hire a person to carry) their things were male.

PU For me, the feminist position became an important subtext in the creation of this work. In Aperture's twenty-book *Masters of Photography* series, there were only four female photographers, and there were no mountains in their books. It may be because they didn't have the resources; but I suspect it was because they didn't have the inclination to stand on top of a mountain. For the text in the book, I used dictionary definitions of "mountain," "range," "ranger," and "master." It was striking how all of the definitions spoke to masculine characteristics. They also presented poetic dialectics around distance and mastery, which the work was already addressing both in physicality and in time: the idea of distance between the mountain and photographer; the "range" the camera can capture; the "ranger" as someone who ranges the mountains; the distance between my female self and the male photographers; their mastery of photography and my un-masterliness according to all of the definitions.

AKR How much do you think about gender when you think about your career? From which perspective is it a relevant topic in connection with your work?

PU I'm aware of it all the time because I'm subjected to it all the time. Aside from the most obvious ways—the price disparity between art made by males and art made by females, male-weighted gallery rosters and museum shows, etc.—there are also those strange, often maddening encounters, like, "If you have a child, will you be able to make your work?" No one asks a man this. One of my first such maddening experiences was during a conference where I gave a talk. This was before the Internet was ubiquitous, and the work I was making used home-improvement catalogues to look at how, post-9/11, when most retail stocks fell, home improvement, crafting, and home-decor retail stocks rose. In the media, the phenomenon was written about in terms of cocooning. Apparently, Americans wanted to make their homes better as they turned inward for security, and they were doing so by filling their homes with homemade kitsch. To me, it felt like Milan Kundera's idea of kitsch being the fear of history. Anyway, so the work I made around this theme involved re-photographing aspects of home-decor catalogues. I was giving a talk about this work at a conference and the guy who presented right after me got up and said, "I don't have enough time to sit around at home and look through home-decor catalogues. I travel around the world and take photographs."

AKR How do you work in different media and exhibition spaces? You start with material you find online but end up in a gallery space. Meanwhile, you also make books. What interests you when you make these transitions between the different spaces to exhibit images?

PU The physicality and materiality of the work are really important to me. Almost everything I work with originates from a physical object that's in the world in a way that makes us struggle with it. For example, *Out of Order: Broken Sets and Bad Display* (2007–ongoing) starts off with physical objects that someone is trying to sell. They photograph them, then the representations of these objects become ephemeral digital code on the

web, where I find them. In my work, the digital code which creates the images is transcribed back into material object again. I think this is especially important with the screen. We don't think about the materiality of the screen when it's working, but when it's broken we are very aware of its physicality and material make-up. The book I made with the images of broken screens I found for sale on eBay—sellers turn the screens on to show that the parts are working, and you can see all the liquid inside—extends this materiality. I print them on a Heidelberg XL 75 offset press, which can print so precisely that you're not aware of the printing at all. You look through it at the image on the page. But I manually add more ink than necessary to make the print. It gets really messy! I undermine the precision of the press and the slickness of the screen by calling attention to the material messiness of both. Every book and every print is different. Also, the book is unbound, which further subverts the idea of a clean, readable screen. Plus the images are laid out as full spreads on single pages and then folded into the book, so if you want to see the entire image of a screen you need to take the book apart. But if you keep the book together the images are broken up. I like that the organizational logic of the book is destabilized in this way. It requires incompatible maneuvers to view one or the other. I love watching people fumble with it at book fairs, trying to keep the pages from slipping out.

AKR I'd like to hear your opinion about the screen. How should we approach it as the main platform for showing and looking at images?

PU I think the screen can be very neutralizing, but it's also important to understand it as a material object. We tend to think of it as invisible, but it's interesting to contextualize it within the history of representational media. The shift between egg tempera and oil paint, for example, is like the shift between early tube screens and the more-real-than-real 4K HD LCD screens. After the opaque flatness of egg tempera, it must have been like magic to look at an oil painting with its transparent

glazes that could build up the illusion of light. The history of photography follows the same desire for illusory transparency; as does the screen, except that the screen is projective. A lot of my work deals with how material things that are reflective, such as prints and objects, start to take on a different character when presented in the projective space of the screen.

AKR You said earlier that even if everyone has a camera and knows how to share images on social media, the technology is not so well understood, and what is done with the images online even less so. In your work, you make technology visible, which for me is a political thing: how technology creates images and how, at the moment, we are created through technology.

PU Yes! And also how the work changes through technology. *TVs from Craigslist* (2008–ongoing) is a project in which I search online for photographs of used televisions for sale and focus on the individuals reflected in the screens of their TVs. Nobody cares about these photographs. Sellers are just taking photographs of the TVs to sell them, so they're not looking at details like what's reflected in them. When I first started the project, it was the seller's camera flash that revealed a reflection of the person. At the time, the images were quite small—something like 100×300 pixels—and the point-and-shoot lens was not good enough to photograph inside without flash. But as camera technology got better, and now with smartphones with smart cameras, I'm finding really detailed photographs without flash. They are very personal images, with people and all of their personal stuff reflected in the screens. There is a kind of inadvertent expression of individuality, privacy, and intimacy that you do not find in the photographs people take intending to share. In these utilitarian images, people stand beside unmade beds, beside dogs looking lovingly into the TV; sometimes people are naked. There are just really beautiful humanistic images in these dark-screen reflections. And I'm able to find them because technology delivers this kind of detail.

AKR It's a wonderful project. What I find interesting is the unintentional focus you're looking for: it's like going back to the specific motive for photographing where you photograph because you want to see something you couldn't see without taking a photo. Now you're diving into a similar kind of information that is exhibited without intentionality.

PU I think it's interesting partly because these people are completely anonymous. It's not about the individual in the end. If there were a lack of anonymity, if there were any kind of identification going on, I'm not sure I would be doing this project. I think because the people are anonymous, and they know they are anonymous, they don't worry about certain things. As an archive of images, this consumer-to-consumer web space is fascinating because it reveals something that would never be revealed if there was an element of authorial intentionality there. I think an important thing to realize about the web in general is that it's a kind of self-portrait of collective culture.

This conversation took place via Skype, on August 14, 2018.

In Conversation with Susan Schuppli

on Photographic Intelligence

Susan Schuppli, *Atmospheric Feedback Loops*, a 35mm vertical film in color with stereo sound, 18′. Installation view at Paradiso, Amsterdam (premiere at Vertical Cinema, Sonic Acts festival, February 2017) © Sonic Acts/ Pieter Kers

Iris Sikking I was very happy to invite you to show the vertical film *Atmospheric Feedback Loops* at Krakow Photomonth.[1] The work, which came out of a commission from Sonic Acts in Amsterdam,[2] brought you into contact with an outdoor research laboratory called the Cabauw Experimental Site for Atmospheric Research (CESAR), in the Green Heart of the Netherlands. What was so fascinating for you about this site, and how did you collaborate with the scientists?

1
Atmospheric Feedback Loops was installed during Krakow Photomonth 2018 at the Szara Kamienica Gallery.

2
Sonic Acts is a festival with a strong focus on contemporary and historical developments at the intersections of art, technology, music, and science. For more information, see, sonicacts.com.

Susan Schuppli While preparing for a workshop I had been asked to run for Sonic Acts, I met scientists working at CESAR, a research site where they study how our climate has changed over many years. But they also "listen" to the atmosphere—for example, the acoustic signals and noise generated by wind turbulence and cloud activity. I thought this was a very interesting conceptual bridge to the arts, and in particular to the context of Sonic Acts. When I visited Cabauw with Sonic Acts festival director Lucas van der Velden, we both remarked on the specific vertical feature of the landscape there, a tower full of instrumentation that soars 213 meters into the clouds.

Sonic Acts was going forward with its vertical cinema project again, and this seemed like the perfect opportunity to go back to Cabauw and see if I could document the work of the scientists there. I think these kinds of collaborations always require a fairly sustained period of engagement in order to develop a sense of mutual trust. It was really important to me that I represent their work in a way that was also meaningful for them. I understood the importance of developing a shared set of questions that we could, in effect, explore together.

Ultimately, I produced a 35mm film—shot digitally, in fact, then transferred back onto 35mm. The film premiered at Paradiso in Amsterdam on the opening night of the Sonic Acts Festival, in 2017. It contains time-lapse photography and drone video footage, as well as other video footage and field recordings of the acoustic properties of the Cabauw site itself, along with interviews with the scientists working there. For the time-lapse footage we shot one still frame every five seconds from sunrise to sunset over two days, using five different cameras organized around the perimeter of the tower, directed both inwards and outwards.

Even though the project was documentary in nature, I still had to make it clear to the viewer and to the listener what was at stake, what was happening there, through a set of aesthetic gestures. By this I mean I had to "enliven" the atmosphere by taking some creative license sonically and visually. I treated the atmosphere as a sort of media system. My biggest apprehension was not knowing how the scientists would respond to the fact that I had dramatized the behavior of the particles in the air. They are interested in observing, recording, and analyzing atmospheric conditions, but they do this passively. Because they listen to the atmosphere, they don't want to generate extraneous sound that would interfere with their data sets—the phenomena they're trying to study.

When the scientists came to the screening at Paradiso, they were really awestruck to see their own research transformed in such a spectacular manner. They were completely enthusiastic to discover that their research had been treated with a high degree of sensitivity. I know they've been screening the work, and that they mentioned it in one of their recent funding applications to the EU.

IS In the film, you include Dutch landscape paintings from the seventeenth century, which slowly dissolve in and out of the abstract video patterns you applied to the original footage. As the Dutch landscape is so dear to me, I was moved by this montage because it immediately opens up a glimpse into history, and in a very poetic sense stresses the necessity of paying attention to our environment.

SS The paintings are really important because, in order to study long-term climate change, you need what scientists call "data proxies." If climate scientists want to measure the temperature of the Earth 10,000 years ago,

they turn to things like tree rings or ice cores, which give them some indication about long-term climate change. But they can also look at cultural materials, like the work of Dutch landscape painters who very famously painted the changing rural landscape—these kinds of skies, in particular. For example, Jacob van Ruisdael painted over 600 paintings of this one area of the Netherlands. This cultural archive can provide scientists another proxy data set that provides some indication of atmospheric conditions in that location during that time.

What's really crucial is the extent to which the scientists at Cabauw feel indebted to that tradition. As an interesting side note, they also mentioned—several times, in fact—that the artist Joseph Beuys claimed that Dutch light had disappeared with the land reclamation projects of the 1950s. Beuys argued that because the proximity of certain towns and villages to the sea changed, the amount of moisture in the air also changed over these parts of the Netherlands, therefore affecting what has been called "Dutch light."

IS You are among the artists I invited who work with lens-based media and who relate in particular to the image and what it represents. What was it like to get involved in an event defined as "photography"?

SS It's certainly unusual for me to be in a media-defined festival. I tend to work with different forms of technical media which are closely aligned with photography. The gallery I was showing in, the Szara Kamienica Gallery—those artists weren't, strictly speaking, documentary photojournalists. I might call my own work experimental documentary, as my video work wouldn't be considered documentary in the classical sense. My photographic practice is, likewise, not about documenting a particular kind of condition; but I try to use the materials that are appropriate to the conceptual, critical argument or situation I'm trying to reflect upon. And consequently, I'm not necessarily a part of this "photography" community. For example, Adam

Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin started as photojournalists; while at this point they've migrated fully into the art world, their work often reflects on photojournalism or uses documentary techniques borrowed from it. So it's fair to say that photojournalism is still very central to the ways in which their contemporary art practice unfolds. The difference in particular for artists like Adam and Oliver is the degree to which a certain kind of fictive speculation comes into play. Their work isn't about trying to produce some sort of singular objective account; in fact, there are often different forms of narrative mediation operating. I guess I would locate myself in that same intersection between a documentary genre and narrative exploration/speculation.

Although an artwork can produce evidential materials when none seem to exist, there can be a higher degree of fabrication in an artwork than in a report meant for a legal or human rights context. For several years, I did research at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), in The Hague, and I was actually kind of astonished by the ways in which photographs were treated in the court. Photographs are theorized very differently within the context of law than they are in the context of art history, or even that of journalism. In a legal context, the photograph has to produce a truth claim. I do return to photography consistently, but through legal tribunals and courts. In these domains there's an enormous investment in the capacity of visual materials to produce public truths, whereas the subjective nature of photographs has been well rehearsed within the context of art criticism. Earlier, I was talking about giving myself creative license. As an artist, I need to find the materials that will help me tell the story I want to tell. And those materials may or may not come directly out of the situation I'm investigating or reflecting on. But I wouldn't bring those materials into a report that's going to play a crucial evidential role in a court of law, because you can't use those strategies of montage in the same way.

IS What does exhibiting mean for you?

SS Why exhibit? It seems like a non-question, right? We just take it for granted that if you're an artist, one of the things you try to do is exhibit your work. I think that art galleries have historically been, and continue to be, spaces that are much more open and far less constrained than many other kinds of public forums for the dissemination of ideas. A university would be another one, I would say: also very open to the mobilization of different ideas and materials, interested in activating different publics.

When it comes to Forensic Architecture[3] (with which I am affiliated) exhibiting in galleries and museums, I always argue that the question "Is it or isn't it art?" is misplaced. Rather, other institutions need to be as flexible and open as art spaces have been to a plurality of ideas, approaches, methods, etc. For me, exhibiting is the making public of ideas and stories. Here I follow Bruno Latour in terms of "making things public": we should demand that other kinds of public institutions—legal tribunals, for one—become as progressive as cultural spaces have historically been. So, asking "Why exhibit?" asks us to consider what means are at our disposal for narrating complex events and engaging with a fairly wide set of publics.

3 Forensic Architecture is an independent research agency based at Goldsmiths, University of London. Their evidence is presented in political and legal forums, truth commissions, courts, and human rights reports. Forensic Architecture projects are published online, in books, and as exhibitions. For more information, see, forensic-architecture.org.

IS With the Krakow festival, I tried to open up a discussion around what images are and what they can do. Often we take this for granted instead of questioning what we are actually doing and proposing when we make images public.

SS You find that disciplinary bubble everywhere, but you have to burst it. It is sort of surprising, in this day and age, when you run up against the traditionalists who are still holding on for dear life and policing the boundaries. In the Centre for Research Architecture, where I teach, our understanding of architecture had to be radically expanded to account for a whole set of spatial events. A curator should likewise try to expand what can constitute the field of photographic engagement.

At the Centre and with our students, we try to use a certain "architectural intelligence" to investigate events. By extension, I've tried to consider how I might mobilize a sort of photographic intelligence as a conceptual resource in order to analyze and represent aspects of climate change. It's more about thinking photographically than about having to realize everything in terms of a photographic practice per se. In short, how does a photographic intelligence allow us to make sense of the world differently?

This conversation took place via Skype, on August 17, 2018.

In Conversation with Natasha Caruana

on the Intertwining of Physical and Virtual Space

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger Let me tell you, first of all, why I wanted to talk to you specifically about your work *Timely Tale*. If we think about art spaces today, and about how networked reality has pervaded our everyday lives, one of the most interesting questions around exhibiting photographs is how physical and virtual space are connected. How not to think of online and offline as a dichotomy, but rather as two spaces intertwined in storytelling. In my opinion, *Timely Tale* is a wonderful example of how both the physical and virtual spaces are elementary parts of the story, and of how by experiencing the story in those spaces, the audience encounters a larger societal framework for the topics you examine and for the the main character—your mother, Penny—whom you follow.

Timely Tale consists of two parts: first the audience enters an authentic medical waiting room; once there, they are guided to use a headset to enter another space—that of your mother's bedroom—where they see a six-minute, immersive, 360-degree film about her.

Why VR? Why did you employ that technology to tell the audience about Penny and her life?

Natasha Caruana After investigating works that implemented VR equipment, I wanted to create a threshold that would add something important to the narrative of the piece. I was working on a story about my mother's life and the underlying political narrative around health. I am referring to the kidney transplant my mother had ten years ago; now that kidney is failing. For my mother, this meant being dependent on a British National Health Service (NHS) that has been degraded so much over the past ten years, with decisions about her health being affected by government budget cuts. Within these institutional spaces, such as hospital waiting rooms, you have no idea of the impact these cuts have on everyone's story. So I decided to recreate this institutional space within a gallery context. All of the furniture came from hospitals and surgery rooms that had closed down. We laid down a vinyl floor, which was also from the hospital. The chairs were all from a nursing home. And there was a TV on the wall displaying a news clip about the NHS's credit crunch and crisis. The sound was off, but a soundscape inspired by the clip, created by the composer Emilie Levienaise-Farrouch, played on loop in the constructed room.

All of these elements formed the context in which I made the work about my mother. The institutional, waiting-room setting serves as a portal into Penny's bedroom, where you see her messy room and hear her talking about her illness, her recuperation, buying designer clothes, storing medication, and looking for the perfect partner online.

AKR *Timely Tale* deals a lot with private and public space as well as institutional and domestic space. In terms of VR, it's interesting to think of the concepts of private and public space. How do these concepts apply to that technology? How do we understand and create the sense of different spaces?

NC One of the questions I asked myself while making the work was about how I could create intimacy. I watched a lot of pornography using a headset, observing why it's emotional and why it's not. How is the film structured? How do the scenes transition? Which angles work? Pornography was a perfect context to think about these questions, because it's all set in a bedroom. It helped me think about what perspectives could work. When I first started working on *Timely Tale*, I had my mum do different actions and then I cut them together; but by watching and learning the way porn is edited, I realized that these cuts would take the viewer out of the moment—they would lose something in going from scene to scene. Then I looked at the material we had, and there was one single-take clip that was five and a half minutes of just my mom waking up from a nap. It was just her and her life. It wasn't me directing. I realized that it needed to be one take.

AKR The VR visit to Penny's bedroom feels super intimate. You hung the camera from the chandelier, which created a kind of God's-eye effect. Why did you choose that perspective?

NC The point of view was very important because if the camera was too high it would become voyeuristic and kind of feel like surveillance, and if it was too low it would feel intrusive and claustrophobic. I had to be careful to get it just right so that you could get this sense of being an observer. The seven-minute film, which starts when you put on the headset, consists of only one shot inside the bedroom. You are hanging from the chandelier, so you can choose what to look at at any time. You're stationary but you can have a 360-degree perspective as you look anywhere you want.

AKR It's interesting that you mention the word "observer" in relation to the location of the camera. In my opinion, the camera's position also emphasizes the effect of Penny talking to herself, not to the viewer. Your mother is an absolutely fascinating character. She is a person, a woman looking for love, a mother of many children; but from the perspective of the health care system, she is only a representative of her illness—as we all are. Regardless of how cool she is as a protagonist of your work, there is always this question of how and why you as an artist have the right to show her life, her house. How did you negotiate this with her, and with yourself?

NC She loved being part of the project. She was fussed over. She was a film star! It gave her a chance to talk about herself, and not only about her health. She doesn't want to be defined only by her health. The work was not about the Penny who is always sick, who is always stereotyped as a person with physical or mental illness. She still thinks that by using Tinder she will find Mr. Right, someone who will take her away from her daily problems; and that she can save up her disability benefits to go out and buy designer clothes. This work was

Natasha Caruana, *Timely Tale*, 2017. Installation view. Co-commissioned by HOUSE Biennale and Photoworks

also a chance for her to express how much she loves the NHS. They have changed her life. Photographers often do projects about mental illness—we commonly see the use of scratched, black-and-white images to describe it—but *Timely Tale* depicts how I see mental health, or how Penny sees mental health. You have good and bad days. With the VR technology, you're able to tell another story.

AKR I want to ask about the volunteers who were part of your work. In the gallery, there were always people helping the visitors. Were they performers, or were they just helping with the technology?

NC I very consciously included the volunteers as part of the staging. When visitors came, the volunteers would sit them down, show them how the VR headset worked, and make sure they were comfortable. But even more important was that the volunteers knew and introduced Penny's story. I gave a talk to them where I explained the whole piece, and I also did a workshop with them using the equipment in the space. Every volunteer who was there knew the story and felt like a part of it. After using the VR headsets, people were coming out very emotional and wanting to speak to someone. With this technology, you're bringing such intimacy into someone's life. People felt overwhelmed and needed to talk about the piece; for example, about their own mothers. "Ah, my mother died. I wish I could have made a piece about her." Or, "My mother at home, she has so many clothes, just like your mom." Volunteers were very engaged, becoming more like guides or guardians of the piece. That's why I feel like they were semi-performers.

AKR If we think of the future of art exhibitions and of the institutional exhibition space, one important aspect seems to be the social potential of exhibitions. As events, they might become more and more discursive and social, where you share an experience and encounter art with others who are present in the space. In *Timely Tale*, you blur the invigilator/guide/performer roles, and provide a social context with "semi-performers" who become part of the work.

NC Think of the whole experience of putting on a VR headset. There are real challenges. It's cumbersome, and people may not have used one before. In one way it's fun, like a performance; but then again you're asking quite a lot of the audience. The other important thing is that the experience, the act of viewing, is very singular. You don't get the sense of viewing something collectively. The invigilator-guides were important because they allowed the audience to reflect as they came out of the film. You don't get to experience it as a group, which is one of the problems of using VR.

When I did the workshop with the guides, we realized that after viewing the film in Penny's bedroom, people didn't want to leave the constructed waiting room. However, as we only had four headsets to use at one time, we needed people to leave so the next audience member could view the film. To resolve this, we created a second, intermediary space, with a domestic feel, behind the hospital waiting room. And as people came out, the guides would say, "Thank you. If you want to sit in Penny's chair and see her teapots, please follow me." My mother talks about these teapots in the film—she talks about these teapots more lovingly than she does about her children! I went and took all the teapots from her house, packed everything up, and brought it all up in a van. I brought her chair, rug, and lamp to reconstruct how she sits at home. This installation provided the audience a moment to themselves. Every single audience member took it.

AKR It's interesting that the workshop pushed you to develop the work together with the guides. It contradicts expectations of how artists work. The alliance between virtual and physical is also effective politically, as we've seen in your work. It's an immersive and emotionally effective experience; but at the same time, it still deals with questions about the conditions under which the images were produced, who is using them, and for what purposes.

NC

It wasn't until the run-through workshop and testing that I fully knew what adjustments the work required. You enter via a public environment and view a film set in a private setting. This helped bring the personal-as-political narrative to the forefront. The audience was able to experience firsthand the impact of the Health Service cuts on an individual's life. I was asking a lot of the audience, and the two spaces were vital. In terms of curation, there's just so much more potential when there are two spaces to play with. It's a very exciting time, with artists installing between physical and virtual environments. You can transfer anyone from anywhere to anywhere else.

This conversation took place in Arles, on July 4, 2018.

What's Been Viewed?

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger

Why Exhibit?: Affective Spectatorship and the Gaze from Somewhere

[…] arguing for the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity.
— Donna Haraway[1]

A photograph from the website of artist Penelope Umbrico fascinates me. An installation view of Umbrico's work *Sunset Portraits from 9,623,557 Sunset Pictures on Flickr on 08/22/11*,[2] it documents visitors standing in front of a wall looking at a section of Umbrico's tapestried assemblage of images, which fills and exceeds the length of the horizontal frame.

The shape of the work they are beholding resembles that of a so-called "picture window," but the idea of such a window, with its single pane of glass meant to frame a tranquilly uninterrupted natural landscape, is here subverted by the patchwork interruptions of hundreds of little 10×15-centimeter machine-made prints. All of the images are ostensibly unique, but some of them look nearly identical and, throughout, the acts of photographing and the representations of the figures in the foreground are repetitious: hundreds of images, originally uploaded to public Flickr accounts, of people portraying themselves in coastal settings backed by a setting sun. The trite redundancies on display demonstrate, in the words of Umbrico, "the relationship between the collective and the individual, the individual assertion of 'I am here' in the process of taking the photograph, and the lack of individuality that is ultimately expressed, and experienced, when faced with so many assertions that are more or less all the same."[3] Also, the camera technology has privileged the sun's incandescent orb over these human subjects, whose individuality has been eclipsed by silhouetted anonymity. As a result, even if the acts of photographing and posting these portraits online were acts meant to record and preserve visibility, the technology itself has conspired to make the subjects all but disappear.

In this essay, I will be discussing photography exhibitions as a dialogue between action and representation in different ways. For instance, I am interested in how actions carried out through photography—posing, photographing, posting, sharing, looking at, being looked at, walking by, standing in front, being photographed and represented—can be layered in relation to photography exhibitions. And how anonymous gallery visitors looking at anonymous subjects have become

1 Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988), 589.

2 The photograph was taken, in 2011, at Pace/MacGill Gallery, where Umbrico's work was included in the group exhibition *Social Media*. In the title of each work in Umbrico's *Sunset Portraits* series, the number always refers to the number of images Umbrico would find when searching Flickr for "sunset portraits" by keyword on a given day. See, pacemacgill.com/m/penelope-umbrico.html [all URLs in this essay accessed September 22, 2018].

3 See, penelopeumbrico.net/index.php/project/sunset-portraits.

an elementary part of photographic work and, by extension, the elementary subjects of this text.

I believe that photography exhibitions can increase our understanding of how photographs operate today and how we interact with them. The change from representation to participation, amplified by social media, has not removed the ethical questions associated with exhibiting, which concern who and what is visible in society and how visibility is contextualized. Exhibitions are acts of display, which include both the possibility to act and responsibility for that action. Photographic exhibitions can take part in discussions about how the potentialities of photographs can be questioned, challenged, and re-contextualized.

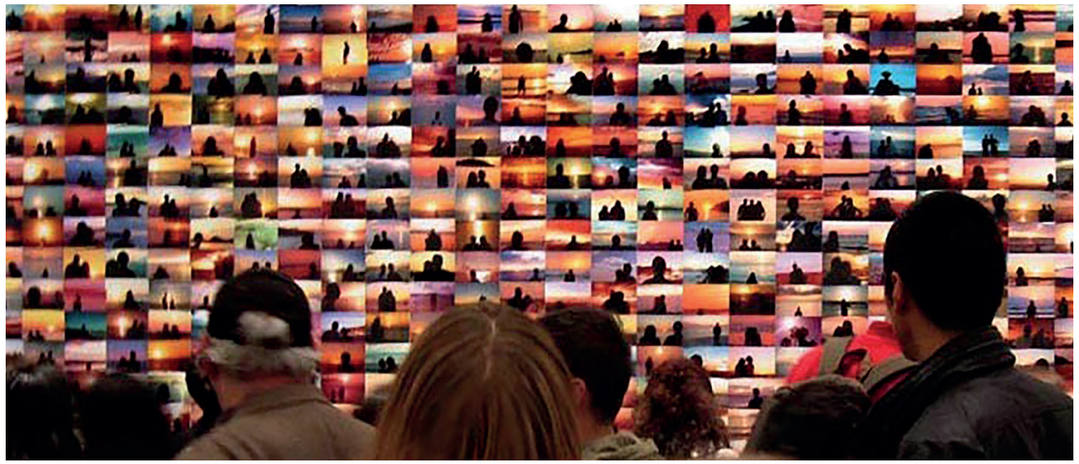
How to Exhibit Fluidity?

Neither photography nor exhibition are stable things. Photography has very rarely been about producing a work of art in the singular,[4] but in past decades the uses, definitions, and understandings of the medium have exponentially expanded and fragmented. Neither is exhibition autonomous; it is instead merely a frame, a context, or an arrangement. Physical exhibition spaces are often referred to as "semi-public spaces," white cubes, or black boxes, structured by walls and social codes. Even in so-called "public spaces"—both in the urban sphere as well as in online environments such as web-based galleries—exhibited images tend to be arranged according to certain visual or structural codes which rigorously organize the images, objects, documents, or projects on display and construct from them a representation of a social field.

The weakened idea of a public space, and changes in the concepts and definition of private and public over the last decades, have also drastically affected the act of exhibiting photographs given, on the one hand, the neoliberal privatization of the public sphere, and on the other, digital technologies and social media having disrupted how we use and experience public space. The rise of digital technology and social media confuses the cohesion of place and time. We spend a lot of time in virtual spaces mediated by the screen, while we are both literally present but mentally absent in our physical environments and relationships. The temporal and spatial fluidity induced by digital technology mirrors the blurring of public and private brought on by social media usage.[5]

4 Although one could argue that certain techniques like daguerreotype and Polaroid produce unique objects.

5 See, Claire Bishop, *Out of Body*, supplement distributed through *frieze d/e* (Münster: Skulptur Projekte Münster, 2016), available as a PDF at: lwl.org/landesmuseum-download/SkulpturProjekte/Presse/Out%20of%20Body_EN.pdf.



Penelope Umbrico, *Sunset Portraits from 9,623,557 Sunset Pictures on Flickr on 08/22/11*, 2011. Installation view at Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York. Courtesy of the artist

At the same time, galleries and art spaces create ever more photogenic art settings, installations, and views in order to encourage audience members to participate in image circulation by uploading and sharing online snapshots of the exhibitions they attend in person. Exhibition spaces offer a platform for self-broadcasting upon which the exhibition experience becomes one of diaristic photographing and spontaneous posting. On the one hand, this has led to massive exhibition spectacles, which are meant to be experienced together with fellow spectators as a stage for collective and overlapping documentation. On social media platforms, this manifests as generic imagery, which can be seen as a continuation of historical trends in touristic image-making.[6] On the other hand, spatial exhibitions are more and more conceived as an assemblage of pre-flattened views and backgrounds ripe for being photographed by visitors. In fact, in recent years, the verb "to display" has been increasingly used in the context of exhibitions. The etymology of this word is broadly associated with laying out for view, presenting a selection, offering choices (as in the context of trade, for example). Its synonyms include "to unfold," "to unfasten," and "to spread out," and its Latin root is *displicare*: "to unfold," "to display." The adoption of the word "display" into the vocabulary of art exhibitions has been associated with the increase of artworks involving a screen. Dorothee Richter has written that, more recently, it has been used to refer to new forms of economy and, especially, to ideas about (re)presentations that occur on surfaces (specifically, across user interfaces). According to Richter, the word contains a loaded relationship between surface and background, and gives precedence to the former over the latter, which is more complex, challenging, and difficult to comprehend, and which is not shown, or displayed, but instead concealed.[7]

Photographs move onto and across the walls of exhibition spaces.[8] The archive material, online imagery, archival footage, social media images, homemade documentaries, censored documentaries, and found footage are moved into and exhibited in gallery spaces, forming amalgamated works of art for which the role of the artist is often more akin to that of a curator or even aggregator than that of a creator in the traditional sense. Later, documentation of exhibitions carried out by exhibiting organizations, curators, artists,

6
See, for example, Yayoi Kusama exhibitions.

7
Dorothee Richter, "Revisiting Display: Display and Backstage," *On Curating* 22 (April 2014), on-curating.org/issue-22-43/revisiting-display-display-and-backstage.html#.W6rP8hMzZBx.

8
As a historical reference point when considering a contemporary audience's ability to encounter art and exhibitions through online documentation, including through photographs and clips uploaded to sites such as Contemporary Art Daily, UbuWeb, Google Arts & Culture, Vimeo, or YouTube, I would like to briefly mention André Malraux's book *Le Musée imaginaire*, the "imaginary museum," which was first published in 1947. Malraux's project has been seen as a forebear of contemporary user-based curation and knowledge production, and a theoretical precursor for exhibition spaces, unobstructed by the presence of physical walls, experienced solely through photographic reproduction. The imaginary museum, or "museum without walls," was Malraux's quixotic attempt to photographically "collect" artworks, assembling images of works into a comprehensive volume to be made democratically available to a wide audience. Malraux wrote that by means of photography, walls no longer defined and delimited the canon or the concept of art. The visual "availability" of artworks had the potential to turn specified art collections and the whole of art history into an "art of fiction." The creation of an expanded audience was the result of "a new field of art experience, vaster than any so far known [...] being opened up" via reproduction. *Le Musée imaginaire* was Malraux's practical and materialized answer to Walter Benjamin's

and, increasingly, visitors themselves, is rapidly uploaded to online environments and social media platforms. Art spaces participate in the perpetual re-contextualization and de-contextualization of images, content to let their audience function as pro bono promotors and data providers. For audience members, photographing and sharing affords them a way to craft a personalized exhibition experience while shaping their network-based identity and communicating with their social media communities.[9] For museums, galleries, and festivals, a photographing audience generates attention currency and amounts to a uniquely enthusiastic, outsourced marketing department more than happy to forgo a salary. It was telling when Adam Szymczyk, the artistic director of last year's Documenta 14, candidly acknowledged, during a public lecture on Marta Minujín's monumental, mirage-like installation, *The Parthenon of Books*, that, "In the middle of Kassel, I wanted to curate a spectacular piece for people to satisfy their need to photograph."[10] This "need" is catered to, and therefore capitalized on, not only by the Documenta organization, in the case of *The Parthenon of Books*, but by art organizations generally when they aim to strategically garner visibility and attention by enabling and encouraging audience documentation and replicative sharing across online platforms.

How to Exhibit Ideological Conventions?

When we talk about exhibitions, we still most often mean objects, events, and situations located in physical spaces. We still stage photography exhibitions in galleries and museums. In spite of continuous debate about, and critique of, the conventions of exhibiting, the dominant model for exhibitions of photo-based art in galleries, museums, and alternative exhibition spaces remains the white cube.[11] The concept of the white cube has been interrogated for as long as it has existed. The white cube has been pilloried and condemned for multiples reasons: it imagines the ideal viewer as a white, middle- or upper-class, well behaved, ceremonial, and disembodied figure, and it assumes that this archetypal viewer will focus on the singularity of a work of art with an uninterrupted gaze. It has been accused of whitewashing; it was used by National Socialists to propagate Nazi propaganda; it has dominated and colonized exhibition practice as a whole; and it has been utilized to spread Western colonialization and Western codes of thinking about modern and contemporary art.[12]

1936 *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, in which Benjamin saw the invention of photography as bringing into question the whole established concept of art. For more on Malraux's project, and its connections to Benjamin and the work of André Vigneau, see, Walter Grasskamp, *The Book on the Floor: André Malraux and the Imaginary Museum* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2016).

9
Even without taking an active role as a participant in a gallery space, visitors are recorded by surveillance technology, which produces constant imagery of the audience.

10
Adam Szymczyk, "Saastamoinen Keynote Lecture," lecture delivered at the Exhibition Laboratory, Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland, January 17, 2018, vimeo.com/252145670.

11
Brian O'Doherty has argued that the gallery space is no neutral container, but is, rather, a historical construct. O'Doherty approaches the gallery space as an aesthetic object in and of itself. The ideal form of the white cube that modernism developed for the gallery space is inseparable from the artworks exhibited within it. The white cube is not only a condition, but also subsumes into itself artworks themselves. In placing content within such a highly specific context, context itself becomes part of content. See, Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000; originally published, in 1976, as a series of three essays in *Artforum*).

12
See, Elena Filipovic, "The Global White Cube," *On Curating* 22 (April 2014), on-curating.org/issue-22-43/the-global-white-cube.html#.W6oWqy-B3-Y;

Nowadays, I often think of the exhibition experience as the definition of installation art: the installation takes over the gallery in a way that utilizes every element of the exhibition space and context, the relations between those elements, and indeed the body of the spectator itself, which, with its presence and orientation, creates situations with the artworks on display.[13] The physical presence of the spectator is needed for the realization of an installation. Bruce W. Ferguson has written that exhibitions employ complex tools of persuasion, which are used to orchestrate a set of social relations and interactions with an audience. Ferguson places such controlled communication, with the possibility of its either restricting or empowering an audience within the exhibition space, at the core of exhibition practice. He writes of the exhibition as a "strategic system of representations […] from its architecture which is always political, to its wall colorings which are always psychologically meaningful, to its labels which are always didactic […] to its artistic exclusions which are always powerfully ideological and structural in their limited admissions, to its lighting which is always dramatic […] to its security systems which are always a form of social collateral […] to its curatorial premises which are always professionally dogmatic, to its brochures and catalogues and videos which are always literary-specific and pedagogically directional, to its aesthetics which are always historically specific."[14]

Adhering to the ideological conventions of white-cube curating connects the physical space to a continuum in two directions: backwards to the modern history of art, and forwards to contemporary spatial practices. As Simon Sheikh has proposed, "If the gallery space is saturated with ideology […], and if it can be analyzed spatially and politically through artistic practices […], then this method can also be transferred onto other spaces and non-spaces (to reference the work of Michel Foucault and Marc Augé, among others). This," he continues, "can lead to a comparative analysis of space: an analysis of territories, states, institutions, and their contingent mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, representation and de-presentation—an analysis that not only determines what is shown and what is not shown, but also what must be eradicated in order for one spatial formation to take precedence over another."[15]

O'Doherty, op. cit.; and Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).

13
See, Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

14
Bruce W. Ferguson, "Exhibition Rhetorics," *Thinking about Exhibitions*, eds. Bruce W. Ferguson, Reesa Greenberg, Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), 178. One of the most well-known examples of spatial structure being used for propagandistic knowledge production in a photography exhibition was *The Family of Man*, Edward Steichen's landmark 1955 survey exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. *The Family of Man*'s spectators were surrounded by photographs which were hung at different levels on the walls and, suspended from the ceiling, out over open space. The exhibition asked the spectator to move and to become an active participant in constructing the narrative. This kind of "screen" structure was developed together with notable Bauhaus figures who had fled Europe, including Herbert Bayer, who had been exploring similar installation techniques in his design for Steichen's 1942 *Road to Victory* exhibition, also at MoMA. It placed the spectator in a position where he or she could choose between many options for navigating the space, but where those choices were still being controlled by those laying out the exhibition. See, Fred Turner, "*The Family of Man* and the Politics of Attention in Cold War America," *Public Culture* 24, no. 1 (January 2012), 55–84.

15
Simon Sheikh, "Positively White Cube Revisited," *e-flux* 3 (February 2009), e-flux.com/journal/03/68545/positively-white-cube-revisited.

Perhaps recent changes in photographies might require us to re-form and reactivate photography exhibition formats in a way that spurs us to simultaneously rethink accepted spatial and ideological arrangements predicated upon inherited histories of space and politics. This kind of action can start via a re-contextualization of images which focuses on the contexts and conditions of their production and use, and which has the potential to shed light upon what our contemporary exhibition practices make visible or relegate invisible, and the methods by which they do so.

How to View Screens?

Digital communication network environments and the habit of primarily viewing photographs on a screen pose a challenge to tangible and three-dimensional exhibition media as a user interface. Has the ascendancy of screens as the principal way of experiencing photographs changed the very nature of the medium itself? How do large and small screens as flat and reflective surfaces orchestrate our experience and influence our reception of photographs and understanding of representation?

Sarah Kember, a scholar focusing on the media, and a feminist who has a fascinating way of discussing the relationship between gender and media technology, writes that glass demonstrates the tension between mediation and immediation, transparency and ambiguity, more persuasively than any other medium.[16] She claims that glass has always been a mediator, working "toward the endpoint of mediation"; but in this day and age, fantasies about the future have turned glass into a conduit for information technology. Glass has become ubiquitous, just like glass-like plastic, and reacts to our touch like a laminate of intelligent and responsive skin, becoming one with the human body.

Both our contacts with others and our emotional experiences often rely on screens and the images that they relay and display as we interact with each other through visual media messaging, social media, video, blogs, and livestreams. An unexpectedly haptic experience is generated when we navigate toward and view photographs in virtual environments through technological devices such as smartphones and tablets, which form their own material network. Indeed, metaphors of skin and touch frequently recur in descriptions

16
Sarah Kember, *iMedia: The Gendering of Objects, Environments and Smart Materials* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). Kember uses the "i" in "iMedia" because "the i of the individual human subject is fully and finally lost, dispersed and de-presented," ibid., 12. The mechanisms and operations of iMedia are charted in a diagram that deconstructs "i" (as in the first person pronoun) into "in/determinable," "invisible information infrastructure," "intelligent intelligence," and, finally, "intervention."

of these image-materializing devices. (Separately, we don't think of the "invisible" screen when all is working and humming along as it should; but when a device stops working, we suddenly become very much aware of the physicalness of the obstinate glass, which becomes a barrier to our productivity. Devices are the target of our tenderness and rage.) Already, in an earlier era, Roland Barthes wrote of gelatin silver prints that in photographs, silver crystals record radiation from the photographer's subject, and that when the photograph eventually reaches him, it strokes him like the belated, emanating rays of a star. Light is a timeless intermediating substance which Barthes describes as a skin he shares with anyone who has been photographed. Do photographs lead us to fall in love with tablet-based technologies and the feel of glass beneath our fingertips?

A glass screen as a surface for displaying images creates an illusion of transparency, immateriality, and knowledge. In her book, Kember refers to the research of Isobel Armstrong and writes that glass—in addition to steel—became a symbol of the industrial revolution and also of social segregation in the early twentieth century. The cast-iron and plate-glass Crystal Palace, built for London's Great Exhibition of 1851, created "an environment of mass transparency never before experienced," and an entirely new poetry of seeing and being seen. The exhibition invited all citizens, irrespective of race or gender, to visit the displays of colonialist achievements. By promising to impart knowledge equally to everyone, its transparency made the Crystal Palace a materialized model of control and the harnessing of knowledge as a tool of power. In this way, it was a descendant of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon.[17]

The illusion of reality and transparency associated with glass is obvious when we talk of images on the Internet and online platforms as being "immaterial." In fact, the images intermediated by the transparency of glass in connection to its apparent ability to "show the world as it is" are anything but neutral; they are a complex neoliberal fantasy of an invisible information structure that denies its impact and role in the world around it. In this fantasy, equality is understood as an equal opportunity to participate in the market. The reality, though, as Kember writes, is that "glass itself might make everything clear to everybody equally, but its design and architecture, its cultural and technological working is never neutral but rather imbricated in power and social divisions."[18]

17
See, Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Glassworlds: Glass Culture and the Imagination 1830–1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), referenced in Sarah Kember, op. cit., 36.

18
Sarah Kember, op. cit., 36.

Who Has the Power to Materialize and Display a Photograph?[19]

Photography is a fascinating medium in that—our notion of the finality of a triggered shutter aside—there's no such thing as the moment of an image's definitive material manifestation. Using negatives or files to create images that look like "display-worthy" photographs is a material, informational, and ethical choice. To what extent, then, are questions of representation pertinent to the practices of displaying and using photographs and their material forms? In what sense do we understand a photograph in the same way as we do a "thing" or an "object" when we encounter it on a screen, in an exhibition, or printed in a book? How does a photograph communicate with spectators in these new, different, and evolving material contexts?

The questions of decision-making and power associated with photographs are concrete in the context of archives. In a photographic archive, photographs have a role as documentary witnesses and as archivable records of the event they document. Photographs and archives are also illusorily underpinned by the perception of their providing objectiveness and proof. When every photograph is in itself an archive, a camera is literally an archive-generating machine.

Using photography archives[20] in exhibitions differs from using other forms of art because photographs often have a "previous life," which results in them having accumulated other contexts of use and meaning beyond their meeting a contemporary ideal of art. Archival photographs are hybrids of classification based on visual aspects and on the cultural history and social values of different eras, art history, technology, material, and light. Only a small portion of the material in archives consists of photographic works of art and prints considered of an artistic standard, approved and even signed by the photographer. In addition to a large number of miscellaneous prints, most archives contain countless plates, rolls of film, and boxes of negatives. Today, there is also an increasing number of photographs on drives in digital raw, TIFF, and JPEG formats, as well as a miscellany of other digital files.

Every day, curators and conservators working in archives make important decisions about how to display photographs to be viewed by spectators. Who has the power to decide what is the correct way to materialize and display a historical photograph? One which may never have been previously printed; which may have been taken to be pasted into a family album or entered into the record in a courtroom; which may be a part of a series or a piece of reportage; which can be, in principal, copied endlessly, cropped, enlarged, reduced, and processed in countless ways; which was taken at a time when the photographer couldn't have imagined how images would come to be printed, screened, and displayed in the distant future.

Photographs have their own aesthetic history that has influenced the size, tone, and contrast of their exhibition prints. Strong contrast has been used to comment on contemporary conditions in society, and delicate gray tones have been used to shroud a subject in a mysterious mist. The aesthetic and political ideals of a period define differently the photograph as an object to be presented to spectators, and are involved in determining how a photograph takes material form and in what contexts of usage and display it appears. Technology and contemporary media play a significant role in this.

Who Has the Power to Decide Whose Visibility Means the Invisibility of Others?

Choices made for exhibition spaces are not neutral, and one system of classification or naming will inevitably be succeeded by another. Following an exhibition, images will continue their lives on the Internet and/or in archives. In an exhibition, we witness a moment where an archive has been taken apart and put together again for a purpose that has or has not been explicitly stated.[21] In "Reading an Archive," Allan Sekula writes that archives and their principles of order are manifestations of capitalism, bureaucracy, and positivism; and that he sees them as natural resources or tool sheds that may be in active use or dormant. Sekula puts forward that materials or their potential interpretations are already freed in the archive where they in principle are primed for any type of use.[22] Images can be viewed as historical documents or individual aesthetic objects. Information about the context in which an image was originally used may be preserved even with the discovery and examination of new contexts, but it may also disappear when an image is taken from an archive to be included in a book or an exhibition.

19
This section draws upon ideas developed for a paper the author co-authored with researcher and curator Sofia Lahti: Sofia Lahti and Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger, "Archive Fever and Catastrophe: How Can a Photograph Found in the Archives Become an Opportunity for Different Historical and Aesthetic Experiences?", *Mustarinda: Helsinki Photography Biennial Edition*, eds. Paavo Järvensivu, Noelia Martínez, and Basak Senova (Hyrynsalmi: Mustarinda Association, 2014), 85–89.

20
The technological progress of photography has enabled replication and quick production of images, and, as a result, has engendered a feverish desire to take and accumulate photographs. This "burning with desire" need to build archives, and to process nature into facts that can be entered into archivable systems, is as old as the medium itself, with the expression appearing, in 1928, in a letter from Louis Daguerre to Nicéphore Niépce, the two credited inventors of photography. See, Okwui Enwezor, *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, exhibition catalogue (New York: International Center of Photography; Göttingen: Steidl, 2008), 12, which itself takes its title from Jacques Derrida's book on archives, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). See, too, Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

21
"Archival fever" has been a topic since the beginning of this century; it has been examined by prominent theorists including Allan Sekula, Hal Foster, and Benjamin H. D. Buchloh. The classification of knowledge that takes place in archives, and the resultant production of knowledge and associated political viewpoints, has been the motivation for many recent critical works and exhibition concepts. They include: *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, curated by Okwui Enwezor, at the International Center of Photography in New York, in 2008; *10000 Lives*, curated by Massimiliano Gioni, at the 8th Gwangju Biennale in Gwangju, South Korea, in 2010; and dOCUMENTA (13), the concept of which included artists who use archives in their work, under artistic director Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, in Kassel, Germany, in 2012. Additionally, *Collect the WWWorld: The Artist as Archivist in the Internet Age*, curated by Domenico Quaranta, which toured several countries in 2012, discussed the new roles of Internet Age artists as recyclers who filter, collect, archive, and reuse existing cultural materials.

22
Allan Sekula, "Reading an Archive: Photography Between Labour and Capitalism," *The Photography Reader*, ed. Liz Wells (New York: Routledge, 2003), 443–452.

Questions of materiality that concern the display of photographs are unavoidably linked with the ethical issues of displaying them. The act of exhibiting is entangled with the ethics of framing narratives: What are the narratives we recapitulate and reinforce? What are the dominant, recurring narratives? Are divergent counter-narratives given a forum? What can exhibition makers do with this kind of knowledge? In the age of the Internet, information networks and search engines have facilitated access to images, but they have also standardized photographs as raw content to be fed into an often context-deficient, screen-mediated cascade. The presence in our lives of Instagram, Facebook, Tumblr, and YouTube—our epoch's labyrinthine visual archives, hoarding content to such a degree that they are unmanageable by humans and so, in their stead, presided over by algorithms—leads us, in an unprecedented way, to form our idea of the world on the basis of visual "discoveries" that are too often banal, mundane, and marginal.

With regard to exhibiting, the questions and ethical dilemmas of display are still the same, including who has the power to decide whose story will be told; and, concomitantly, whose visibility necessitates the invisibility of others? What conditions have made a particular photograph possible? Who does the photograph portray? What if my mother, father, or child were portrayed in this space and in this manner? What kind of visibility normalizes certain representations and power structures? Whose story, told time and again, results in alternative stories remaining untold?[23] The answers may not be straightforward or pleasant to acknowledge, but they must be sought in order to understand how the medium of photography is anything but neutral, and how the acts of curating and exhibiting bear with them an inherent responsibility. Photographs can be used for many contradictory purposes about which we as exhibition makers should be open. My "we" might exclude many positions and bodies.

23
See, *Curating as Anti-Racist Practice*, eds. Natalie Bayer, Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński, and Nora Sternfeld (Espoo: Aalto University, 2018).

How to Exhibit Contexts?

Over the last two decades, a period which has witnessed a server-swelling excess of photographs being uploaded onto the Internet, we have endlessly debated the circulation of images, reproduction, simulacra, and the dissolution of the meaning of photographs. Fortunately, the debate about representations continues. Irrespective of the increase in the volume of photographs and the diversity of the actions performed through them, the debate on the relationship between representation and visibility is still as relevant as it has ever been in the history of photography. Photographs are not equal, and the things, people, beings, and bodies that they represent are not equal. Someone working with photographs cannot for a moment forget the questions of situating and of the interaction between local and global, and the responsibility associated with being aware of them. We cannot claim that "this does not concern us," not even in the most homogenous and parochial northern outpost of the world.[24] Let me take as an example the alliance between selfie culture and feminism.

After an initial sense of freedom associated with the idealism and identity work of its early years, the Internet has failed to offer freedom or escape from the conventions and strictures of corporeal representation.[25] Photography exhibitions that deal with photographing itself and the conflict between approaches that objectify and repress women's bodies are a good example of this.[26] As is shown by the history of images, it is clear that representing the self is no trivial category of image-making. It is irritating, provocative, under- and overrated, yes—but nevertheless it ties representation to living bodies. In the user-oriented and action-based display environments of the Internet, selfies have offered an opportunity to disagree with the historical ideals of the self-portrait and representations of humans similar to that of various visual canons.

Selfies have been seen as feminist gestures advanced through social media, whereby women take control of the representation of their own bodies through performative self-portrayal and self-narration.[27] The selfie culture and feminism have formed an alliance to the extent that so-called selfie-feminism has become mainstream, if not the primary source of resistance.[28] The union of selfies and feminism has, however, been criticized for once again positioning white women as the image of woman by giving visibility to white

24
The author of this text is based in Helsinki, Finland.

25
As Aria Dean writes, when images first began to circulate on the Internet, everyone appropriated everything. Today, however, we are aware that big corporations are the biggest abusers, and this has diluted the impact of appropriation.

26
Body Anxiety, online exhibition opening, 2015, bodyanxiety.com/gallery/landing; *From Selfie to Self-Expression*, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK, 2017; *From Self Portrait to Staging the Self*, Brandts, Odense, Denmark, 2015; and *#snapshot*, Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki, Finland, 2014, are just a few examples.

27
In the so-called second wave of feminism, women's right to represent themselves was the primary source of resistance.

28
See, Aria Dean, "Closing the Loop," *The New Inquiry* (March 1, 2016), thenewinquiry.com/closing-the-loop; and Rózsa Farkas, "Whose Bodies 2," *Temporary Art Review* (August 3, 2015), temporaryartreview.com/whose-bodies-2.

bodies considered attractive in the dominant white consumer culture. In fact, instead of being feminist and emancipatory, selfies create hierarchies between different kinds of bodies and restrict others' ability to self-represent and proudly claim equal visibility. As Aria Dean writes, "I don't intend to advocate for a politic of anti-representation or a fundamental refusal of the image. However, being of the mind that to be Black in particular is to be at once surveilled and in the shadows, hypervisible and invisible, an either/or theory of representation seems unhelpful. So long as the feminist politic with the most traction enjoys this uncomplicated relationship to visibility, it will only sink further into aestheticization and depoliticization."[29] Hito Steyerl has said that our physical body is the only thing which can disappear nowadays, while our data never disappears. But still, the organic body is very much connected to those projections and images, which form the body over and over again.[30]

This simplified selfie-case shows that displaying images and making photographic exhibitions is increasingly about dealing with and curating the contexts of images. Questions of representation and associated means of influencing such as resemblance, composition, and aesthetics associated with photography are in no way inconsequential or ignorable. But what the link between photograph and context leads us to understand is that we can no longer look at a certain type of image—say, a picture of a person—and conclude anything specific about its meanings and uses. This is why the act of displaying photographs is increasingly one of tracking and displaying their contexts: how and for what purposes the images have been used. As Rózsa Farkas has written, "The body needs to do more than simply present itself; it needs to insert itself, so for example we can read selfies as part of the affective labor of communicative capitalism: affective labor is being a labor of care, a social role that has extended to how we nurture our self-image and friendships online; the image does not exist alone—the image, the trace of our affective labor, is part of communicative capitalism as it travels across sites, it gathers likes, shares, etc. (it performs its labor)."[31]

29
Aria Dean, op. cit.

30
Hito Steyerl, in "Roundtable: History in a Time of Hypercirculation, with Hito Steyerl, DIS and Susanne von Falkenhausen," *Spike Art Quarterly* 42 (Winter 2014), spikeartmagazine.com/en/articles/roundtable-history-time-hypercirculation.

31
Rózsa Farkas, op. cit.

Who Is Looking at Who?

How do photographs affect us and the world? Despite all the recent debate about computer-manipulated and simulated images, this question is still linked to spectators' experiences of reality and the relationship between photographs and the physical world. Twenty years ago, Sarah Kember already wondered, "How can this be?" How, she asked, could spectators be worried about the manipulation and simulation of photographs and the threat they pose to their relationship to reality "[…] even though that has already been undermined by decades of semiotic analysis. How can we panic about the loss of the real when we know (tacitly or otherwise) that the real is always already lost in the act of representation?" Kember proposed that "the panic over the loss of the real is actually a displacement or projection of a panic over the potential loss of our dominant and as yet unsuccessfully challenged investments in the photographic real."[32]

Kember turned the gaze back onto us, the spectators, and our fear of the loss of our position, from which we define the way photographies represent and act. As a maker of photography exhibitions, I repeatedly return to spectatorship and emotions. How photographs are experienced is related to emotions, whether the omnipresent panic over the instability and redundancy of the position of the spectator mentioned by Kember; or the worry about images that no longer exist only because of our affective labor, as described by Farkas; or any other feelings of shock, embarrassment, or empathy experienced through viewing images. The display of photographs is associated with the emotions of the spectator, user, and myself, controlling them and, above all, using and abusing them within the affective labor of communicative capitalism.[33] Through photographs people generate a massive amount of emotional labor: likes, shares, posts, comments, and emojis that are all affects as currency and politics. Circulating photographs, writes Brian Kuan Wood, "lead to a kind of psychotic swamp of affect and emotional feedback loops, and this is where the apparent immateriality of information finds its final form—not in infrastructural bonds but in the melting and reforming of personal and loving bonds."[34] Photographs may well be the hardest of all hard currencies of affective exchange. "Love," concludes Wood, "is a debt."

32
Sarah Kember, op. cit.

33
According to Michael Hardt, affective work—work that makes use of emotions—is one of the great generators of added value in today's economy. The boundary between work and leisure is unclear, and emotions, work, social relationships, and political provocation all dissolve into intellectual capital that is often mediated by technology. Work and worker merge together, and the body becomes the representation and the embodiment of work. See, Michael Hardt, "The Power to Be Affected," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 28, no. 3 (2015), 215–222.

34
Brian Kuan Wood, "Is It Love?", *e-flux* 53 (March 2014), e-flux.com/journal/53/59897/is-it-love.

What is the meaning of exhibiting, of the intentional display of photographs for viewing, in this context? The situating of the cognitive and affective work associated with photographs feels to me especially important when working with images based on photographs. An assumed, omnipotent spectator—"a gaze from nowhere"—has become unnecessary and ceded room to diverse spectatorships and contexts. At the moment, I feel that it is more relevant than ever to situate the one who is *looking at* and the one who is *being looked at*. The gaze and the view return to the spectator and the complex and conflicting body of an individual spectator. As Donna Haraway wrote, "I am arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims. […] I am arguing for the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity."[35] What if exhibitions were to aim not to hold the position of authorized knowledge, but rather to become sites for radically testing what can be shown, what potential can be harnessed, what alternatives can be embraced? What is possible to imagine, and then what is beyond even that? Why are the limits of imagination not the same for everyone?

What are we doing, attempting, achieving, when we exhibit and encounter photographs?

We produce knowledge and affective labor; we rethink representation and enforce action; we try to resist or increase consuming; we control the gaze and wish to emancipate; we make ethical decisions and invest in attention economies; and we ask spectators to think about how they engage with images and the very act of looking.

Postscript:
As of January 1, 2018, 45.6 percent of the world's population does *not* have Internet access.[36]

35
Donna Haraway, op. cit., 589.

36
"Internet Usage Statistics: The Internet Big Picture: World Internet Users and 2018 Population Stats," internetworldstats.com/stats.htm.

Taco Hidde Bakker

Televisiting, or, Why Visit an Exhibition in Person in the Age of Hyper-Documentation?

Why visit an exhibition in person when there is ample documentation available online, at your fingertips, as well as an increasing number of options for virtual visits? Could studying hi-res photographs and film recordings of an exhibition come anything close to visiting the real thing? It will depend, of course, on the type of exhibition, the medium being exhibited, and how much previous exhibition-visiting experience you have accumulated. When an exhibition is comprised of work that you have seen before, or staged in a space you are familiar with, then there is a good chance you will be able to envisage what the real thing must be like. And when an exhibition contains photography or film, reproduction media par excellence, sharp photographic impressions of an exhibition and good quality reproductions of the work seen elsewhere might suffice for the virtual visitor to form an adequately detailed impression.

"Where have I been and what did I witness?" I often ask myself after visiting an exhibition. When attending an exhibition, am I a primary or secondary witness, or a combination of both? And how could I possibly render a truthful account of an exhibition visit? In seeing exhibitions, there is a different kind of transport or ecstasy at work compared to, for example, watching a movie, reading a book, or attending a concert. To scrutinize and fathom the (possible) depths of what an exhibition has to offer usually requires a lot more, and certainly different kind of, labor than reading or filmgoing. Indeed, exhibition attendance might be as much a cause of physical exhaustion as a deliverer of joy and inspiration. Comprehensive and highly detailed documentation is capable of easing the burden of real-life exhibition visits, and also provides ongoing access to shows one was unable to attend, including those staged in distant locales or in times past.

I have never seriously explained my reasons for visiting exhibitions. I more or less take their existence for granted and assume that in most cases they are worth visiting: for the opportunity to behold rare works of art or other artifacts in their original glory; to learn new things and satisfy my curiosity; and so on. For a long time, I had also taken it for granted that I always needed to attend an exhibition in person—all the more so when I had proposed to, or was commissioned by, a magazine editor to write about one. Part of what goes into an exhibition review is the experience of being inside an exhibition, physically relating to and sensing the material qualities of the works on display. Too often had I read exhibition reviews in which I learned nothing about the actual experience of a reviewer moving through the exhibition space, complete with details of the exhibit's design, setup, and layout. Some exhibition reviews, containing only the bare minimum of biographical information about the artist, a few hints about how his or her work is situated within an oeuvre, a comparison to other artists, and descriptions of a few highlights, read like previews or upgraded press releases more than actual reviews.

Then, one day, I yielded to the temptation to write a "long-distance" exhibition review. I had already pondered the idea of writing a review based on the words and images of others—posted online by visitors or related to me by a friend who had attended at my request—when, out of the blue, the perfect opportunity presented itself. In 2013, Christina Töpfer, editor at the quarterly magazine *Camera Austria International*, for which I had written book and exhibition reviews, asked me whether I was interested in writing about a show at the New Museum in New York City.

Although I had spent considerable time in New York in the past, it had been a while since I had done so, and I had no plans to pay a visit any time soon. Nevertheless, intrigued by the request, I proposed having a friend of mine visit the New Museum to walk me through the exhibition over Skype. Much to my surprise, Töpfer was interested in this experimental teleportation. We both agreed that the theme of the show and the ethos of the invited artists—the South African collective Center for Historical Reenactments (CHR)—were fitting to my approach.

After-after Tears, CHR's exhibition, on the fifth floor of the New Museum,[1] was comprised of drawings, a site-specific installation connecting their hometown of Johannesburg to Manhattan, video pieces, sculpture, readings, and performative lectures. Most importantly, CHR's approach to art and history, in their own works as well as those of the artists they commission, is one of "cultural rumination," with the collective reflecting, refracting, and responding to art, past and present, springing from various cultures. Their rehearsals and experiments, reenacting and reinterpreting artistic convention, amounted to, in the words of Gabi Ngcobo, one of CHR's co-founders, a "re-questioning [of] questions that perhaps

1
Center for Historical Reenactments, *Museum as Hub: Center for Historical Reenactments: After-after Tears*, New Museum, New York, May 22–July 7, 2013; see, archive.newmuseum.org/exhibitions/1706 [accessed September 12, 2018].

Installation views from *Museum as Hub: Center for Historical Reenactments: After-after Tears*, New Museum, New York City, 2013 © Jesse Untracht-Oakner. Courtesy of New Museum

have been asked before, but re-posed to see if the current situation produces new answers or new ways of posing these questions."[2]

I accepted a chance to be guided through the exhibition, via Skype, by Ryan Inouye, co-curator of the exhibition. I also requested high-resolution exhibition photographs and wall texts from the New Museum's press department; spoke with Ngcobo, who was in Johannesburg, again via Skype; paid a studio visit to Kemang Wa Lehulere, another CHR member; and was given access to the video work on display in New York. Having been able to study the minutiae of CHR's show from afar, I next moved on to the dilemma of how to account for and thematize my physical absence in my review. Should I unapologetically reveal my hand in the lede? Bury this peculiar circumstance somewhere deep in the text? Relegate it to a footnote?

I decided I should be open about my second-hand witnessing of the exhibition. The way I wrote my way through the exhibition, and its explicit as well as implicit themes, resulted in an offbeat review,[3] in which I interwove descriptions of the works on display with brief reflections on the meaning of the prefix "re-" (as in, to begin with, "reenactment"), representation and presentation, frames and windows, cultural translations, and degrees of witnessing (the reviewer coming after, the reader coming after-after). A review chasing its own tail.

Increasingly aware of all the exhibitions that I cannot physically attend—an awareness intensified by social media, on which I follow distant museums and galleries, and where friends and colleagues post links to what they think are interesting exhibitions—I find consolation in the fact that, nowadays, many shows are so thoroughly documented with photographs and, to a lesser extent, filmic impressions. And so I have "seen" many more shows than I, with my limited means, ever could have visited in person.

Meanwhile, documentation has become crucial for the rationale, and even more so for the legacy, of an exhibition. With the emergence, over the past century and a half, of optical media such as photography, film, and, more recently, virtual reality (VR), we are no longer reliant on paintings, drawings, and engravings as the sole means for preserving an image of an exhibition for posterity. Today, there are abundant means for documenting exhibitions, including recreating

2
Skype conversation with the author, July 7, 2013.

3
My exhibition review of *After-after Tears* was originally published in *Camera Austria International* 123 (2013), 79–80. A slightly revised version, including an edited transcript of my e-mail correspondence with Töpfer, can be found in Taco Hidde Bakker, *The Photograph That Took the Place of a Mountain* (Amsterdam: Fw:Books, 2018), 79–86.

the experience of walking through an exhibition space via filmed documentation, 360-degree photography, and detailed digital reconstructions. The future legacy of an exhibition will likely be increasingly shaped by how comprehensively it was documented, and by the amount and variety of documentation that remains accessible to future generations.

Even incomplete and threadbare documentation, as in the case of the three surviving black-and-white photographs of Kurt Schwitters' room-filling, in-situ installation *Merzbau*—which Schwitters began building himself, in 1927, in his house in Hanover, Germany, and continued to work on through the 1930s, but which was later destroyed during an Allied air raid, in 1943—can provide a fascinating glimpse of a long-gone piece of in-situ art. These three photographs, taken by Wilhelm Redemann, in 1933, were used as a blueprint for a reconstruction of the *Merzbau* which I walked through at a Schwitters retrospective at the Princeton University Art Museum, in 2011.[4] However, after having spent time inside the reconstruction, I could not shake the disappointed feeling that the whole setup, however diligently executed, was somehow ersatz. I found the photographs that I already knew to be far more compelling, dynamic, and—even limited to their two dimensions—closer to the real thing.

Although I do not expect "live" exhibitions to be fully phased out and replaced with virtual ones any time soon, there is an increasing intermingling of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) applications with exhibitions, both encouraged by institutions as well as carried out, guerrilla-style, by outside groups. Moreover, the media-driven buzz around exhibitions and the aforementioned accessibility of documentation further confuse the contours of the thing itself with its palimpsestic (after)image. If these developments continue apace, I wonder what future need will motivate people to visit exhibitions.

4
Kurt Schwitters: Color and Collage, Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey, March 26–June 26, 2011.

Marko Karo

Finalists: Resounding an Exhibition

How to conceive photography as an operation for making things public within a museum apparatus? With this question in hand, and owing more than a passing debt to Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel's editorial and curatorial work *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*,[1] this essay elaborates on a site-specific exhibition project of mine entitled *Finalists*, which was on view at the Sibelius Museum, in Turku, Finland, in the first half of 2011. The project engaged with the "unworkable" objects in a museum's collection as a vehicle for contesting bifurcated curatorial narratives. Let us start with the latter, the persistent cultural processes of bifurcation, by way of a story: the story of Marsyas.

Marsyas is known as the Phrygian satyr who dared to challenge the god Apollo to a contest of music. Like most Greek myths, the story exists in multiple versions. One of the most comprehensive of these can be found in Ovid's two works, *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*. Whereas the first[2] gives us the initial scene leading to the competition—Marsyas' finding the flute that had been cast away by the goddess Athena (displeased by the disfiguration of her face when playing) and eventually boasting of his skills to the Nymphs and challenging Apollo's lyre playing—the second[3] provides a vivid description of the contest's tragic outcome. Having agreed that the winner could treat the loser in any way he pleased, the parties commenced the contest that eventually ended in Marsyas' defeat.[4] To punish him for his hubris, Apollo then tied Marsyas to a pine tree, flayed him alive, and nailed his defeated opponent's peeled-off skin to a tree branch. Why this spectacularly gruesome punishment? Perhaps in order to prove that underneath the deceptive skin, at the level of veins, tendons, and tissue, the body is as rational and refined as the lyre (according to Apollo, the god of reason and light). Indeed, throughout the myriad renditions of the Apollo–Marsyas conflict in continental thought and cultural history, the story is seen to encode a profound antagonism between vision (the lyre as a domain of harmony, detachment, and representation) and corporeality (the flute as a medium of contact and embodied excess). Steven Connor notes accordingly, "The defeat of Marsyas, which is a defeat of the breath, of the voice, of the body and of the animal, is the subduing or silencing of the medium of sound by the medium of sight."[5] Here the skin, or the superficial, becomes a contested intermedial terrain—a site of contact and conflict.

1
Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy, eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe: ZKM Center for Art and Media; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005). The publication accompanied an exhibition of the same name, which took place at ZKM, from March 20–October 3, 2005.

2
Ovid, *Fasti*, vol. VI, trans. James George Frazer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 373.

3
Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vol. VI, trans. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), 315–316.

4
From other accounts, we learn that Marsyas' unavoidable failure, as a flutist, at matching Apollo's playing of the lyre upside down contributed to his defeat. See, for example, *Gods and Heroes of the Greeks: The Library of Apollodorus*, ed. and trans. Michael Simpson (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976), 7.

5
Steven Connor, "Seeing Sound: The Displaying of Marsyas *(sic)*," a lecture given at the University of Nottingham, Nottingham, England, on October 16, 2002. The text of the lecture is available at: stevenconnor.com/marsyas.html [accessed July 27, 2018; *(sic)* in URL].

Out of interest in seeing how the phenomenon of music, a cultural praxis that is simultaneously thoroughly material and essentially ephemeral, can be displayed in a museum context, I visited the Sibelius Museum[6] sometime in the mid-2000s. To my surprise, I encountered a setting that reminded me of both Marsyas' wretched fate and the story's enduring cultural ramifications. Choosing to emphasize authorial singularity, technical sophistication, classificability, and representationality (themes of nation and nature, scores, sheet music, compositional structures, manuscripts), the main exhibitions effectively portrayed classical music through a nation-centered history of immaterial and visual rationality.[7] This impression was accentuated by a curatorial juxtaposition with a small ethnographic section that associated indigenous musical cultures with materiality, embodiment, and roughness (by showcasing instruments made of gasoline canisters and animal bones, for example). In other words, whereas histories of occidental art music were correlated with refinement and lucidity, non-European traditions of music were reduced to the unrefined other of "our" story.

Troubled by the museum's reductive display of musical phenomena, I started thinking about how photography could be employed as a critical vehicle on this peculiar site. A site on which objects that were initially designed to be used through contact were no longer within the range of touch and therefore also divested of their original use-value, residing out of sight in the museum's storage/archive or preserved *in vitro*, hidden in plain sight. How, then, to activate photography within the sense modality of touch, with a view to engaging with the agencies of things? How to resonate the surface of things through images?

Having received permission to explore the museum's holdings, I began to engage with its stored and archived collection of instruments and related items, handling the fragile materials with white cotton gloves, looking for signs of life. After a brief overview of this largely haphazard assemblage of objects, accumulated primarily as a result of donations and wills, I started to photograph all that which was not shown to the public in the museum: battered sculptures, decaying instrument cases, damaged fabrics, broken instruments. In short, the unspoken, unexplained, unworkable, overlooked, and obsolete things that nevertheless testified to the unques-

6
Being the sole museum in Finland devoted to the phenomenon of music, the Sibelius Museum functions as a platform for exhibiting the history of art music and the work of Jean Sibelius specifically, showcasing collections of musical instruments, running a concert program, and facilitating archival research in musicology. The museum is closely associated with Åbo Akademi University, in Turku. Both the exhibition and concert activities are funded through the Åbo Akademi University Endowment.

7
The main exhibitions have since gone through changes in recent years.

tionable materiality and tactility of music. In the context of the collection—a cordoned-off repository for the physical manifestations of the past, a crime scene of sorts—my work effectively constituted a forensic inquiry, documenting stains, cuts, and chafes, including those undetectable by the naked eye. That said, even if I worked *post factum*, the aim was not to dwell in nostalgia for some markedly material past, but rather to engage in a speculative visual archeology that orientated toward the future by remaining vigilant about the residues of the past and the enunciative potential of things. Such a modus operandi naturally builds upon prior elaborations on both archival practice and the roles of photography therein.

An archival practice that approaches undisciplined knowledge through an archeological resuscitation of discarded objects finds unavoidable echoes in many of the central elements in Walter Benjamin's thinking. The latent (epistemic, aesthetic, and political) potential residing in outmoded objects, and its salvaging or reparation (*rettung*) through immersive encounters and unruly constellations, is a deliberation that can be found throughout Benjamin's extensive oeuvre, from his earlier works enhancing the critical function of allegory[8] or radicalizing material engagements with things,[9] to the last, unfinished encyclopedic study of the urban fabric as a philosophical, historiographic, and political testing ground.[10] In view of this discussion, Benjamin outlines a particularly interesting dynamic in the essay "The Task of the Translator."[11] As with works of art in general, a translation, Benjamin maintains, is not a matter of communication, signification, or representation. Rather, translation takes place at the point of disjunction between an original and a translation. Instead of trying to efface the difference between languages by rendering a foreign language into a familiar one (through a "faithful" translation), the task of the translator is to preserve and accentuate the foreignness of language that flows from its incessant change. Translation, therefore, constitutes a medium of exposure to a process of differentiation: the task is to activate the artwork's inherent potentiality for alteration, its translatability (*übersetzbarkeit*). Benjamin insists that this is a ghostly task: "A translation issues from the original—not so much from its life as from its afterlife."[12] In other words, translation demands the death of the original. Crucially, it is

8
Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 2009).

9
Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. J.A. Underwood (London: Penguin Books, 2009).

10
Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

11
Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," trans. Harry Zohn, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume I, 1913–1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 253–263.

12
Ibid., 254.

here that translation entwines with photography, as noted by Eduardo Cadava:

> "[…] like the photograph that names both the dead and the survival of the dead, translation names death's continued existence. The original lives beyond its own death in translation just as the photograph survives its own mortification in a photograph. If the task of translation belongs to that of photography, it is because both begin in the death of their subjects, both take place in the realm of ghosts and phantoms."[13]

In light of the above, my work with the *Finalists* project was realized essentially as a process of translation. The aim was to counter the museum's epistemic shortcomings by instigating a translation from the sphere of categorized, known, and subdued objects to the domain of unruly and foreign things through the anachronic underworld of the closed and obsolete collection.[14] What is at the center of this process is photography, used neither as a representational vehicle nor as a carrier of signification but rather as a topological medium working on the surface of things. Yet, this does not simply demarcate a flat territory. As Michel Serres has shown, topology can be explained with a crumpled handkerchief. The spatial relations existing in a flattened-out handkerchief (geometry) change completely when one crumples it: previously remote and disconnected points become closer, even superimposed, while those that were side by side before can now be far apart. This simple change, Serres notes, elucidates no less than the concept of time and space: just as time is not linear but crumpling, multiplicitous, and entwined (in which ostensibly disparate historical events can rub against each other), space is not flat and rigid but folded and contingent.[15]

In the *Finalists* series, topology presents itself through a forensic imagination that approaches surfaces of various kinds as affective milieus shared between subjects and objects. In photo theory jargon, many works in the series are indexes of indexes, traces of traces, records of imprints that are themselves records or pointers to time and action that has already ceased. Michael Newman has noted that traces like these, in their opaque temporality and materiality, touch the two limits of signification and representation: absence and excess. There

13
Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 17–18.

14
This turn from objects to things corresponds largely with Bill Brown's formulation of thing theory. See, Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Things*, ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 2–21.

15
Michel Serres with Bruno Latour, *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time*, trans. Roxanne Lapidus (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 60–61.

Marko Karo, *Hooded Tuba*, 2007 © Marko Karo

Marko Karo, *Hooded Cello*, 2007 © Marko Karo

is an absence as a leftover trace and an excess as an overflowing proximity, as an event of contact. Hence, life and death entwined, on the surface. For Newman, this means that the images bear witness through a blind spot; they are blind witnesses operating on the level of touch.[16] In a similar vein, Georges Didi-Huberman has characterized Jacques-André Boiffard's photographs of insects, included in Georges Bataille's journal *Documents*, as "contact images":

> "Contact images? Complex images. Between *touching something* (the impression as such) and *touching someone* (in the gaze that is instituted) a complexity, mediation, or supplement always intervenes. The photographic paper—which the gallery owner firmly discourages you from touching—has not really touched the fly. […] Thus contact images are not immediate images (a genre which, in any case, probably does not exist). Rather, they are images that impose a certain symptom of adherence on optical distance, such that we can feel *our seeing touched*. Or that force physical contact to retreat—severely or only slightly—in a well-composed distancing, such that we can feel *our touching seen*."[17]

Accordingly, touching is never unidirectional but unavoidably reciprocal: to touch means always to be touched. What is more, touching, at least in conjunction with images, is thus not a form of immediate contact, a grasping, but rather infused with mediating surfaces, screens, and textures. Just like the skin provides an interface for both protection and exposure, the photographic image can be seen as a modus for our complex embodied entanglement with the world.[18] And just as one cannot get to the bottom of the human being as a sentient creature by stripping away the skin, one cannot get to the bottom of the image by peeling the photographic surface. It is through mediated exposures to the outside and the foreign, the affective return of touch, that both subjectivities and images happen.

Against this background, we can also think of materiality not so much in terms of materials themselves but rather as the substance of material relations, the ways in which we are being together through and with materials. Acknowledging the relational nature of materialities, the sole emphasis on

16 Michael Newman, "Drawing Time: Tacita Dean's Narratives of Inscription," *Enclave Review* (Spring 2013), 5–6.

17 Georges Didi-Huberman, "Contact Images," trans. Alisa Hartz, *Tympanum: A Journal of Comparative Literary Studies* 3 (1999), 47, underconstruction.wdfiles.com/local--files/imprint-reading/contact_images.pdf [accessed July 27, 2018]. This kind of interruption or withdrawal of possession as a central element in touch resonates closely with Jean-Luc Nancy's thinking of touch. For Nancy, touch designates neither immediacy nor presence but rather involves a confluence of contact and separation. In touching, we are exposed to the outside, and through the sensation of being exposed we become distinct, at once shared and separated. Underlying this is Nancy's emphasis on coexistence, being-with, as an a priori condition of being human. Importantly, Nancy also stresses the centrality of art and the image as an experience of being exposed to the outside. See, Jacques Derrida, *On Touching—Jean-Luc Nancy*, trans. Christine Irizarry (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

18 See, for example, Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, trans. Jeff Fort (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).

photographing obsolete objects gradually started to feel insufficient in developing the *Finalists* project further. To broaden the field of enunciation in the project, engaging more extensively with the cultural resonances of Marsyas' defeat and making way to a certain futural, I began to document finalists of a different type: final contestants in youth classical music competitions, organized primarily in Russia. Having set up a portable studio in the lavish back rooms of concert halls, I photographed the performers shortly after their solo performances with a classical orchestra. In doing so, I encountered children with a curiously displaced charisma: young people full of eagerness and potentiality for the future and yet embodying the historical gestures and visual codes of occidental art music, enfolded in a certain cultural skin, being at the same time here and there. Perhaps there was something inherently photographic about them.

Eventually, under the title *Finalists*, the photographs depicting the aforementioned two groups of finalists—the archived objects at the end of their lifespan and the young musicians at early stages in their lives—formed the basis of a parallel installation of photographs, videos, and objects temporarily inserted amidst the permanent displays in the Sibelius Museum, on the walls as well as in vitrines.[19]

What kind of an assembly or constellation did this turn out to be? How to weave contact and conflict into the very fabric of an exhibition? Within the larger framework of the museum, the aim was to open a temporary space of negotiation and contestation. A space where people were invited to rethink their positions as agents (unlearning the habit of being a passive recipient), to move from being *in front of* exhibits to being *amidst things*, forging relations across material surfaces and temporal layers, mingling with the agencies of things. As Michel Serres has pointed out, rather than being a process of unveiling, or flaying, knowledge is created by being amidst things, on the skin and through touch: "Tissue, textile and fabric provide excellent models of knowledge, excellent quasi-abstract objects, primal varieties: the world is a mass of laundry."[20]

On this basis, the installation attempted to make space for a spatio-temporal play in which attention could be shifted from particular images (and their internal dialectic between figure and ground) to the relationships and translations

19 Using the archived objects in the installation proved to be difficult as the museum considered most objects too vulnerable to be exposed to sunlight. There was something paradoxical about the idea that remediation, instead of archival closure, would shorten the lifespan of the objects.

20 Michel Serres, *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies*, trans. Margaret Sankey and Peter Cowley (London: Continuum, 2008), 100.

between images and objects. The aim was to facilitate undisciplined forms of knowledge creation on the basis of contingent encounters of materials. In other words, to activate the space left in between materials, the space that Aby Warburg famously termed "the iconology of intervals" and "the law of the good neighbor" in his *Mnemosyne Atlas*.[21] In so doing, I wanted to facilitate a certain chronopolitics, a fragmentary and embodied way of thinking with images and materialities, to provide space for non-representational forms of visual elaborations of history. Hence, to put history in motion.

How, then, to make things public within the parameters of a museum? In an essay entitled "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik, or How to Make Things Public," Bruno Latour ponders the contours of an "object-oriented democracy," and arrives at a listing of requirements for a Dingpolitik, understood as a new degree of material realism capable of recalibrating politics. The first two requirements are the following: (a) politics is no longer limited to humans and incorporates the many issues to which they are attached; and (b) objects become things, that is, when matters of fact give way to their complicated entanglements and become matters of concern.[22]

Along these lines, the *Finalists* project first approached the museum as a singular habitat within which to remediate materials through fieldwork of a sort. Second, the project sought to extend this infiltration by instigating a temporary occupancy and assembly in the museum space. Given all this, together with the museum's endorsement of the work process, the exhibition can be seen as a para-institution in its logic and structure. Being at the same time parallel and parasitic, neither clearly in opposition to the institution nor conditioned by it, the para-institution establishes a temporary frame of action both within and alongside the host-institution. As Serres has noted, "The parasite is an infectant. Far from actually transforming a system's nature, its form, elements, relations, and paths, the parasite makes the system change its condition in small steps. It introduces a tilt."[23]

Clearly, a single exhibition does not change much, but it can introduce a temporary shift of attention, injecting a rigid institution with a dose of animism.[24] Perhaps through these kinds of small gestures, Marsyas' skin can keep on resonating a bit longer.

21
See, warburg.library.cornell.edu/about [accessed August 24, 2018].

22
Bruno Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik, or How to Make Things Public," in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, op. cit., 41.

23
Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence R. Schehr (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 293–294.

24
For a discussion on "animist institutions," see, Katie Lenanton, "Suturing Collection Wounds" (MA thesis in Curating, Managing, and Mediating Art, Aalto University, 2018).

In Conversation with Marina Paulenka

on Feminist Approaches

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger You are the director of the Organ Vida photography festival in Zagreb, Croatia, where your focus this year is on women's perspectives. You have also worked as a photographer and a curator on many projects which have dealt with female-identifying perspectives and women's rights. Do you define yourself as a feminist curator?

Marina Paulenka I've never actually seen myself only as a feminist curator. I have curated many exhibitions, but my love—and life—is feminism. Actually, I hadn't even heard of the term "feminism" when I was young, since I come from a very traditional patriarchal family. I have always approached feminism on a practical level: how women are treated, how they see themselves, how my friends view their relationships, for instance. I began dealing with feminist issues in my photographic projects before I began studying feminism. First, I did a project with two lesbian friends. I wanted to show their everyday life. Then I wanted to see what it means to be a woman and a mother in a prison in Croatia. Women's incarceration is still a taboo subject in Croatia. I have always felt that I am an activist. I really want to make some positive change. I think that the label "feminist" has a bad reputation in the Balkan countries. Being a feminist is seen as if you are an insufferable person, a frustrated woman, a man-hater, a person who is stubbornly dogmatic about some uncompromising philosophy. That's why I always ask people, "Do you want to be equal with everyone? Yes? Okay, then you are a feminist." It is about fighting against misogyny for me.

AKR The new conservatism, the distrust of liberal democracy, and the strengthening of retrograde right-wing extremism have weakened the position of women in many European countries. As you write in the statement for your festival, "We are facing a situation in which women must fight anew for the rights that had been won long ago."

MP Yes, we need to understand the context. For example, in the countries where the emancipation of women came later, in Eastern Europe and in the East in general, women are still struggling for that emancipation. They are fighting for something that we do not necessarily understand. Something that we have already gained. They are mostly fighting for the right to work, the right to study, and they are fighting against sexual harassment. But still, what we wanted to say through the festival statement, that "women must fight anew for the rights that had been won long ago," refers to the fact that this is happening where we think these rights have already been secured. We are not always aware of the fact that these rights are being targeted, infringed upon, threatened. We don't know the history of women's struggles, we don't know the heroines of the past and of our time. On the other hand, look what is happening in music: look at Beyoncé and the alliance between feminism and neoliberalism! Look at what is happening in politics: centrist and center-right politicians are labeling themselves as feminists, like Hillary Clinton. I am aware of the contradictions happening within feminism. There are many feminisms today.

AKR That is true. When we are talking about feminism, we are talking about different challenges in different parts of Europe. For instance, in Finland, where I come from, "feminism" is defined at the moment through the deconstruction of both the patriarchy and white society. I suppose the core is always the fight against the patriarchal system; but since Finland's predominately white population is, unfortunately, still susceptible to xenophobic tendencies, feminist approaches often deal with inequality between different ethnicities, as well as different sexualities and different genders. To say "I'm a feminist" should not only mean that one is defined as a white, educated, middle age, middle class, heterosexual, working woman. What do you do want to achieve as a curator who loves feminism?

MP I want to do something that can have a positive change. I try not to be too extremist. I want to make exhibitions which talk to a lot of people, a mass, because art should not be elitist, art should educate and encourage critical thinking. Right now I am working on an exhibition by documentary photographer and filmmaker Nina Berman. The exhibition deals with the life of a person who survived sex trafficking and child pornography, and her struggle to find physical and emotional safety while living in a state of flashbacks, trauma, drug addiction, and poverty. Berman documented her life for twenty-five years and collected all kinds of material from her personal archive: her passports, medical reports, etc., as well as drawings in which she depicts what other people have done to her. We work with lots of material, video, sound, so many photographs.

Now we are just forming the triangle between the artist, her work, and the audience. I want an audience from different backgrounds. At the moment, in Croatia, it is hard to encourage people to foster critical thinking and not to work only for an affluent, educated public. In a Croatia where, in 2013, a woman spearheaded a right-wing political initiative, "In the Name of the Family," that was established for the purpose of collecting signatures calling for a national constitutional referendum whereby voters would decide whether or not to amend the Republic of Croatia's constitution by adding a provision defining marriage as matrimony between a man and a woman. Women are fighting against women.

AKR Like Marine Le Pen in France.

MP Exactly, and the same woman and organization also organized a referendum against the Istanbul Convention, which is a convention to prevent violence against women and domestic violence, and which was ratified this year in Croatia. She is attempting to organize a referendum against abortion rights as well. All of this misogyny affects our art institutions, too, because the political climate affects our leaders' decisions about financing institutions.

AKR It is frightening how divided Europe is at the moment. We have different goals and different challenges. In the Nordic countries, women more or less have control over their own sexuality and their bodies, abortion is legal, and women can work, educate themselves, and have a family at the same time. But even if this all sounds great, we must still ask: Are these privileges in fact shared and experienced equally by everybody in society? Are people of a different gender, ethnicity, age, or class *really* treated equally? The answer is no. There is a constant need for vigilance in the fight against nationalism and racism; a constant need to pay attention to the division of labor and precarious work; a constant need to ask, "Who are the people who don't have a voice in this society?" A constant need for, in a word, solidarity.

MP I think the goals are the same but the problems are different, and the ways they are resolved differ in various parts of the world. This is also why I want to show diversity and intergenerational artists in my exhibitions.

AKR It is a good point you make about diversity and intergenerationality. The diversity aspect is certainly something which needs to be addressed in the field of contemporary photography. For example, if we look at the Rencontres d'Arles—one of the biggest and oldest photography festivals in Europe—the disparity between exhibited men and women is shocking, to say nothing of the lack of ethnic diversity. And even when women are exhibited, they are invariably young and labeled "emerging." Today, the accelerated "photo festival machine" seems to have developed a craving for young female artists. Where are the middle-aged and older women photographers? What are the structures that support men's careers over women's? We must think about age when developing feminist approaches.

MP Absolutely. I respect the older generations of photographers and artists, especially those who were working in photo-documentary journalistic storytelling. Different generations have different approaches, which also shows how visual storytelling changes. At the moment, the younger generations are creating a new feminism, a new view, a new female gaze. Younger artists such as Arvida Byström, Anna Ehrenstein, and Amalia Ulman are turning visual language to another direction and to different platforms. Social media and cell phones give us another platform that can be turned into a tool for emancipation. We are changing representation within presentation.

But yes, we need to solve the problem through an intergenerational approach, to hear voices from all generations. Unfortunately, the facts you are mentioning are a part of our speedily consumed, capitalistic, fountain-of-youth culture.

AKR I agree. Female gaze and alternative female representations have been the cornerstones of feminist-oriented approaches toward photography; but what is interesting about social-media photos is that in addition to what and how they represent, they also act. Or, people act through the photos. Often the action is more important than the interpretation: what you do with the photos is just as important as the content of the images themselves. The Internet is a place for art, which allows us to observe the ways images are used on it. Well, you talk with enthusiasm about the next generation and a new female gaze. As a curator, you have the power to push these things further.

MP Exactly so, and because of that, we put in focus the young, Instagram generation of artists, to engage with them and attempt to understand the world they are living and acting in—an Internet world that affects all of us, especially the younger generations, and not only artists, but everyone. The Internet and social media have had an enormous impact on us. They change the way we communicate, the way we understand our relationships, the way we see ourselves and others, the way we get criticized and praised. Again, we are wearing these masks, these www masks, and acting out our lives while actually inviting, and enjoying, the gaze of Big Brother. It is important to be educated in visual culture, and to understand the power of images and of what images communicate to us.

I just cannot sit and do nothing. I am doing the thing I think is important to do in my branch. A lot of other women are doing impressive things in other spheres of life. We need to respect each other and support one another. Also, men should be our biggest supporters, and they should condemn misogynist behavior and attitudes.

This conversation took place in Arles, on July 5, 2018.

In Conversation with Mark Curran

on Multivocality as a Representational Strategy

Iris Sikking Your project *THE MARKET* (ongoing since 2010) deals with the functioning of our financial market.[1] Your PhD was supervised by a visual and media anthropologist, and you used photography as a central research method. This has shaped your practice as a photographer—or rather, you might say, as a researcher using photography. An important part of the installation is the full transcripts of conversations you had with stakeholders in the financial sphere, which were also on display in your exhibition at Krakow Photomonth 2018.[2]

1
For more detailed information about this project, see, themarket.blog, Mark Curran's research blog.

2
THE MARKET was installed during Krakow Photomonth 2018 at the Szara Kamienica Gallery.

Mark Curran Photography is central to my practice. By way of context, I was a social worker and then, over twenty years ago now, wanting a career change, I bought a camera. Subsequently, through my postgraduate education, I was introduced to ethnography and visual and media anthropology. Since the late 1990s, I have completed what I describe as a cycle of long-term research projects focused on the predatory context resulting from migrations of global capital. While I would consider myself a researcher, much of what I do is centered on thinking about photography and the role of ethics and representation and the politics of representation. In response to these concerns, I have adopted the approach of "multivocality/montage," taken from visual ethnography, as a research and representational strategy. The full installation of *THE MARKET*, my ongoing, multi-sited, transnational project on the functioning and condition of global markets and the role of financial capital, incorporates photographs, film, soundscape, artifactual material, 3D data visualization, and verbal testimony. So the transcripts you mention of those conversations with bankers, traders, brokers, and financial analysts, along with the other components completed in Dublin, Frankfurt, London, Amsterdam, and Addis Ababa, are a central element in that approach.

IS You found that audiences in the exhibition space are very open to engaging with these transcripts. You also aim to reach out and present your work in other contexts beyond "the art world." How do you involve the audiences in these various contexts?

MC I'd absolutely advocate for the potential of practice-led research to reach multiple audiences beyond academia. This has been critical for my earlier projects and continues to be so with *THE MARKET*. A key theme has been the study of power. In 1972, Laura Nader, an anthropologist at the University of California, Berkeley, wrote about "studying up," and proposed that instead of studying the powerless, we should study the powerful; that instead of asking why some people are poor, we should ask why other people are more affluent.[3] However, gaining access to those structures is incredibly difficult, which is intentional—it's constructed that way—so I spent one and a half to two years negotiating access to specific sites and/or individuals working in this sphere, building relationships enabling people to tell their stories: the person as witness, regardless of ideological position. And that's where ethnography comes in, in terms of a long-term engagement, in terms of immersiveness, and as a critical commitment. So you can see the transcripts as objects lying there on a table, but in some cases it took two years for that object to come into existence.

Some of the transcripts are blank, where individuals collaborated but then directed me to redact the complete text for various reasons—including fear, a functioning attribute of this sphere. It was also very important to maintain the anecdotal quality of the conversations; people who have read them say it's like they can hear the voices. As an installation in the context of practice-led research, it's about appropriating strategies, so in one way it may look like art, but it's not necessarily art. And this can be so powerful: Allan Sekula, whose work is a major reference, said that the economy was never a sexy subject for art. So, in a time of continuing crisis, what's the role of art, and, indeed, its relation to activism?

3
See, Mark Curran, "Studying Up," *THE MARKET* blog (January 20, 2015), themarket.blog/2015/01/20/studying-up-from-capital-at-work-methodology-in-the-market [accessed September 22, 2018].

Mark Curran, *THE MARKET*, 2010–ongoing, desk with documents in folders; and *The Economy of Appearances*, 2015, single-channel projection, HD digital video animation, sound, 4′51″. Installed in the Szara Kamienica Gallery, as part of Krakow Photomonth 2018 (photo: Studio Luma)

I have to say, particularly with this project, in the encounters I have had and invitations I have received—for example, to present at international conferences on global finance—when I address the functioning and condition of the global markets and talk about the "normalization of deviance" as an appropriate cultural description for this sphere, people central to its operation listen and agree. That's been invigorating and affirming. It evidences a consensus regarding the unsustainability of this system.

And during the installation of the project at the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris, in 2014, we had a panel discussion with two economists; the Irish ambassador to France was also present. I always insist on a program of events because the idea is that the installation becomes a site of discourse, a space to open up and provoke discussion. There were 150 people in the room, and another 150 on the waiting list. In the context of people working in this sphere who were also present, it was no news to them: they were kind of like, "We know this." But in terms of the general public, there seemed to be a real desire to understand these systems and the reasons behind them. Also, the people who run La Défense, the financial district in Paris, requested all the transcripts. These experiences and outcomes have been a consistent response to the installation—overwhelmingly positive regardless of location. I should also add that I use social media, my research blog, and my role as an educator as means to further share the outcomes to encourage involvement, awareness, and critical debate.

IS In 2015, you traveled to the Zuidas in Amsterdam. I live near the area, and saw this financial district grow rapidly over the past two decades. Could you elaborate on the research process and your visual approach to constructing the video work *Algorithmic Surrealism*, which was part of the installation in Krakow as well?

MC The work in the Zuidas district was an opportunity to expand the scope of the project. It was commissioned by the Noorderlicht Photo Festival, in Groningen, and the NEPN Research Centre at the University of Sunderland, in the UK. I had been curious about Amsterdam as the location of the oldest exchange in the world. However, I started to do a lot of research around the role of "shadow banking"—the Netherlands, Ireland, and Luxembourg are central to the functioning of that global system—and that of "high-frequency trading" (HFT), which I'd already been researching in London. A British government report states there will be no human traders within a decade. This led me to this new financial district in Amsterdam where, in response, I made photographic work, recorded sound, and created 3D data visualizations and a short film.

What the site brings to the project is what I describe as "financial surrealism": the notion that we've entered a period where the market has no relationship to the economy or even social reality—which is perhaps the end phase of late capital. We've entered—because I would argue that financial capital seeks for everything to be recreated in its image—what the anthropologists Karen Ho and Anna Tsing call "the economy of appearances." What I experienced in Zuidas embodied that.

While working in Amsterdam, I was also invited to contribute to an event about representing financial capital, at the Royal Anthropological Institute in London, along with other artists, anthropologists, bankers, professors of accountancy, and traders. One of the organizers was Brett Scott, a former trader who used to work in global finance and is now a financial activist. Brett wrote an essay titled "Algorithmic Surrealism" to describe how HFT operates. It's 6,000 words long and all in the first person, which I also felt maintained the ethnographic voice present throughout the rest of *THE MARKET*. So, with Brett's permission, I adapted the essay into a short script for the voice-over of the film.

The film, also titled *Algorithmic Surrealism*, was recorded in the landscaped park in front of one of the global investment banks in the Zuidas. I was struck by

this evidently manmade landscape, botanic-like and completely artificial in its construction. So the female voice in the film, for example, describes dredging up oil from the Niger Delta, because with things like HFT and cryptocurrencies, we're using large amounts of energy, which is unsustainable—destroying the environment to produce something that doesn't even exist, on which we then speculate. This is where the world of finance finds itself. As the voice states, we're creating meaninglessness.

IS It's a project you could continue for years, I suppose. You are now working on a publication of all the material from *THE MARKET*. Would that be the conclusion of this project, or is there a logical next step?

MC The idea would be to produce a substantial publication—a material artifact documenting a sphere which may become abstracted by the very algorithmic machinery it has innovated. This is the challenge, because I know it'll be expensive. Alongside the publication would be a web-based version to be made freely available.

And for the future, well, I see it as a cycle of projects. There are four projects to date, including *THE MARKET*.[4] At the moment, I am trying to access people who code within financial capital. At the heart is storytelling, because obviously anthropology studies human culture, and giving cultural description to this sphere is central for me.

A lot of contemporary work focuses on "re-presenting" what these systems do. While I think that's important, I also believe we need to go beyond that. Human beings designed these systems, so if we are to imagine a post- or beyond-capital future, we need this cultural description.

A key concern of *THE MARKET* project has been algorithmic machinery as a key innovator of financial capital. So I've begun conversations with coders in various global locations, mostly anonymous, who code specifically for financial capital, and centered their stories on questions about ethics. At the moment, they're

4 The other three Curran projects are *Southern Cross* (1999–2001; Gallery of Photography/Cornerhouse, 2002); *The Breathing Factory* (2003–2005; Edition Braus/Belfast Exposed, 2006), the outcome of his doctoral research; and *Ausschnitte aus EDEN/Extracts from EDEN* (2003–2008; Arts Council of Ireland, 2011).

all male. One is a father with children, working within this system while also knowing its implications. And this had already come up speaking to traders. I remember a woman who attended the event I mentioned at CCI in Paris, who worked on the dealing floor of a global investment bank in Paris. She came up to me after the event and told me about the debate she was having with her partner about whether or not to bring a child into the world—because, she said, "I know what the future might bring."

This conversation took place via Skype, on June 27, 2018.

How to Frame?

Niclas Östlind

Framed or Unframed?: How the Question of Photography as Art Has Shaped Exhibition Practice in Contemporary Photography[1]

1
This essay is based on my PhD thesis, in artistic research, at Valand Academy, University of Gothenburg: *Performing History: Photography in Sweden 1970–2014*. The thesis was carried out as a series of ten exhibitions and twelve publications, produced between 2009 and 2014. The main theoretical framework was Pierre Bourdieu's culture sociology.

What opportunities and limitations do photographers face when they want to make their work public? How do they navigate in order to use photography as both a critical voice in society and reach a wide audience without being driven to exclusivity on the one hand or populism on the other? One way to clarify today's options is to broaden our time frames when studying how photographic institutions were established and what exhibition practices and ideals they have created since. The examples that follow are drawn from the Swedish photography scene; but the problems and trends both reflect, and are part of, international photography culture as a whole.

Tillmans and Beyond

A valuable aspect of working in the field of higher art education is that the interests and work of the young photographers clarify the tendencies that shape photography. In all exhibition formats, however, conventions arise—even in the more open forms—and one of the references that has had the greatest influence over the past ten years is Wolfgang Tillmans, which cannot come as a surprise to anyone. Tillmans' way of creating dynamic space, both *with* and *for* images, but also how he forms associative and intertwined stories in which visual rhymes and contrasts play a prominent role, has become an obvious exhibition-making point of reference for many young photographers. The resolved hierarchies between framed and unframed images—which can be displayed in a variety of ways ranging from being nailed or glued directly to the wall to being displayed in museum vitrines—are examples of how to embrace a photograph's ability to be both a unique object and a reproduced image.

Nevertheless, many photographers are driven by a desire to continue to develop how photography is presented, for example by emphasizing the performative dimension. A good example is Heikki Kaski's 2017 exhibition *Vibrate on Silent*, which took place in a Valand Academy stairwell. In addition to a combination of different types of framed and unframed images—an approach which has become nearly classical today—covering a ten-meters-long wall on the ground floor, there were also various objects included, not least a white balloon with a diameter of several meters. The balloon, placed between rails on the second floor, became a bright and foreign entity that took possession of the space. The entire

stairwell was also filled with the sound of four choral singers performing. Up and down the staircase, on different floors the installation appeared in different ways. Additionally, visitors ascending and descending, or sitting on the steps or on the floor to watch and listen, created an expected yet still unpredictable choreography of their own. The various elements formed a weave of images, objects, and events that set both the senses and the imagination in motion. More than an exhibition, the audience witnessed an hour-long performance and a transformation of space, which they themselves contributed to with their physical bodies.

There is another interesting aspect to consider. The movement between the unique and the reproduced, which is prominent in the "Tillmansian" exhibition method, also characterizes the form of presentation that today plays an equally central role in exhibiting: namely, the book. One of the strongest trends in the last fifteen years is also the shift to published photography. As such, the question of photographic exhibition practice—or rather, about where and how photography meets its audience—should be seen in the light of the printed image and the photobook.

Another crucial question concerns when, and in what ways, photography has emerged with artistic ambitions, something that should be understood as, among other things, photography filling a function beyond the utilitarian and illustrative. However, photography as art faces several delimiting definitional problems. One of these is the distinction between fine art photography and photography as contemporary art. A fundamental difference lies in how the actors identify and position themselves in relation to the media-specific. Within fine art photography, this includes photo fairs, photo galleries, and photobook festivals. On the other hand, the idea of the distinctive nature of photography does not have an equally strong identity-creating role in contemporary art, but it is instead characterized by the ideals and practices of the extended and trans-disciplinary field. Although the division is far from unambiguous—and in addition contains contradictions between documentary photography and art photography—the different positions affect where and how photography is presented and assessed.

Exhibitions and Ideologies

By looking at the development of photography institutions in Sweden, and how they have defined their view on photography as a medium, different exhibition practices and curatorial possibilities and limitations become visible. Let's begin in the mid-1960s, when Christer Strömholm published his first book, *Till minnet av mig själv* [To the Memory of Myself]. It was published, in 1965, in conjunction with his exhibition at what used to be called "the theater" at the NK department store in Stockholm. The pictures, several of which are among his most famous, were glued directly to masonite boards and varnished. Granted, Christer Strömholm was not yet the central figure in Swedish photography that he would later come to be; one can still be amazed at both the mounting and the place where the exhibition took place. Back then, there were no photographic institutions or practices that took into account conservational considerations which would later become so important. There was also no market for photographs in signed and numbered editions. The photographers received income via commissions or by publishing pictures in magazines and books—not from the sale of prints.

In 1974, three years after the Fotografiska Museet launched its continuous exhibition program,[1] it put on one of the first collective presentations of contemporary Swedish photography. The exhibition showed new work by four young (male) documentary photographers, including that of Jens S. Jensen, who, in 1973, using a camera and a tape recorder, had documented life in Hammarkullen, a newly built residential suburb of Gothenburg. The work resulted in both a touring exhibition and a book, which was published, in 1974, within the contemporaneously launched "Aktuell fotolitteratur" series.

For Jensen, it was important to anchor his series in the place and amongst the people it depicted. Prior to the opening of the exhibition at the Fotografiska Museet, the work was shown one weekend in the cafeteria of Hammarkullen's school. In archival installation images, the exhibition resembles nothing so much as the enlarged pages of a photobook. Images and texts were mounted on large white paper, and laminated in order to be easily nailed to the wall, but also to facilitate the exhibition being packed up and sent on to its next venue. It was this version that was subsequently exhibited at Fotografiska Museet, and which later toured throughout Europe. The fact that exhibition design was being driven by practical concerns was typical for the practice of socially-engaged documentary photography in the 1970s. The ideal was to reach as broad an audience as possible, and to present it with documentary visualizations of social injustice in order to increase awareness, spur debate, and catalyze change.

Another example typical of the period was photographer Jean Hermanson's documentation, in collaboration with author Folke Isaksson, of industrial workers and the tough conditions they endured on the job. The resulting photobook, *Nere på verkstadsgolvet* [Down on the Workshop Floor], which was published in 1971, also toured for several years in the format of a show of printed screens which were displayed in workplaces, libraries, and other public spaces. Of the hundreds of sets of screens that were originally produced, not a single one survived. The screens were simply discarded when they were deemed of no more practical use. Although the original images in these contexts could often be very well produced technically, their reproductions were considered to have no intrinsic value of their own. Their strength lay in their intermediary function, and the focus was on easy reproducibility and holding down production costs.

That there was an overlap between practical and ideological reasons for not framing photographs became particularly apparent when an artist took the "wrong" approach and did the "wrong" thing. This was the case with Björn Davidsson (aka Dawid) and Håkan Berg's 1978 book and exhibition *Verkligen?!* [Really?!]. In accordance with prevailing ideals, the work was about social inequality and social issues, but at the same time broke radically with the narrative and didactic form of documentary photography which held sway at the time. Here, the images were combined, in a highly associative manner, with statistical information about the state of Sweden in terms of public health, class divisions, and integration. The gap between image and text created a Brechtian distancing effect meant to reveal the underlying structures shaping Swedish society. But Davidsson and Berg were harshly criticized for what was considered to be an overly intellectual approach—one which spoke to the well-educated but left ordinary people on the outside looking in. What's more, the images were mounted on white panels recalling frames,

1
Fotografiska Museet, which opened in 1971, was the first institution in Sweden with a government-defined mission to collect, care for, and display photography in its own right. Although its name lends the impression of it having been an independent institution, Fotografiska Museet was always part of Stockholm's Moderna Museet, both organizationally and as a physical venue.

which was yet further evidence to critics of the exhibition's unforgivable petit bourgeois preoccupation with appearances.

Another representative milestone in the gradual shift of the photographic field in Sweden was the opening, in 1978, of Camera Obscura, the country's first commercial photography gallery. The inspiration for the gallery came from New York, where the photography market was flourishing. Camera Obscura introduced an approach new to the Swedish context, embracing a novel way to both relate to, and display, photographic images. The gallery had lighting specially designed to reduce reflections, used acid-free paper passepartout, and hung photographs in a way that highlighted individual images and their aesthetic qualities. It also operated the first photobook bookshop in the country, and through its selection of titles, the range of references to photographers who had been more or less previously unknown in Sweden was broadened.

However, criticism came swiftly. Among documentary photographers, strong voices were raised in opposition to the sale of signed and numbered prints. The practice was accused of restricting the circulation of photography and of creating an economy that opposed the distinctive nature of the medium. What should have been harnessed as a weapon in the struggle for a better society was instead being hawked as a mere collectible. The criticism reached acute intensity when the gallery exhibited Lewis Hine's photographs of child laborers in early 1900s America. According to the gallery's detractors, the contrast between the content, the context, and the way images were presented laid bare the market's cynicism.

A Change of Scenery

The Fotografiska Museet, too, became a driving force behind shifts in the approach to, and handling of, photographs. In the 1970s, it formed an institutional identity by distancing itself from the ways in which cultural-historical museums had worked with, and perceived, the photographic image up until that point. Instead of an "ethnographic perspective," then prevalent in cultural-historical contexts, the photograph was claimed as an art form in its own right—a position directly or indirectly influenced by John Szarkowski's thoughts about the inherent characteristics and traditions of photography.

On a concrete level, this meant placing the individual photographer at the center of things, for example by orienting the organization of the collection toward specific photographers rather than overarching motifs. Conservational and curatorial attention was also directed toward "vintage" prints, i.e. images that the photographer him or herself processed (or allowed someone else to process according to specific instructions), the materiality and expressiveness of which were intimately connected with the place and time of a print's creation.

In 1981, this movement manifested itself, in a polemical and controversial manner, with the exhibition and accompanying publication of *Dazzling Pictures: New Trends and Young Photography in Sweden*. As an alternative to the documentary tradition, a more subjective and artistic orientation was here spearheaded by a younger generation of photographers. This was especially visible in the way in which texts, which previously had commanded a prominent position, changed in character or were made to disappear entirely. Pictures would now speak for themselves, and any accompanying text would be more about the photographers, or, untethered, of a literary or impressionistic nature.

Exhibition display also underwent its own changes, becoming more sober in appearance, with framed photographs hung in even rows on walls painted white or a muted gray, a form of presentation which became the norm at both public institutions and commercial galleries. It was also not uncommon for the frames themselves to be specially designed and incorporated as an integral part of the works on view. Two examples typical of the time were the exhibition of Dawid's *Rost* [Rust] series (Fotografiska Museet, 1983–1984), in which shiny red wooden frames lent the images a unique and cohesive accent; and Tuija Lindström's *The Girls at Bull's Pond* (1991), in which custom-made blackened iron frames bracketed Lindström's depictions of fair naked bodies afloat on the surface of dark water.

Previously, photography had been characterized by the fact that negatives were always available for future prints to be made as needed. However, beginning in the 1980s, photographic prints became increasingly desirable and collectible objects rigorously produced in limited editions. A consequence of this, but also of the increasing emphasis on the individual expressions embedded in the printing process, was that new demands were made on how images were reproduced. Compared to photobooks of the 1970s, in the

Opening of Jens S. Jensen's exhibition *Hammarkullen*, shown at the local school, 1974 (photo: Jens S. Jensen)

Opening of Thomas Sauvin's *Works from Beijing Silvermine, and On This Day* by Thomas Sauvin, Klara Källström, Thobias Fäldt, and Johannes Wahlström, 2017 (photo: Per Nadén)

1980s, there was something of a revolution regarding printing techniques, as well as perceptions regarding the quality of reproduced images. Such a shift in expectations also affected documentary photography, which, even though it no longer maintained a dominant position, continued to evolve, not least in the cultural-historical context.

In 1991, ten years after *Dazzling Pictures*, Moderna Museet presented *Lika med* [Equals], a survey of contemporary Swedish photography. The fact that, this time around, Fotografiska Museet was not in charge of the exhibition—which one might have assumed—revealed the gap that had arisen between representatives of fine-art photography on the one hand and, on the other, a photo-based contemporary art represented by a new generation of artists, curators, and critics. If *Dazzling Pictures* revolved around the vision of a curator who had identified a new trend among young photographers, *Lika med* was based on a more theoretically-anchored concept.

The exhibition featured around 200 images taken by some 100 photographers, a selection which rendered individual authors subordinate to overarching thematic concepts, and which highlighted the medium's circulation through a diverse range of contexts. Displayed side by side were images drawn from the spheres of fashion, advertising, studio photography, scientific research, journalism and documentary practice, pornography, art photography, and contemporary art. The images were divided into four categories: value, identity, desire, and transformation. Both the exhibition and its accompanying catalogue contained texts that, tapping concepts from visual studies and linguistic philosophy, explained how the different categories were intended to problematize established perceptions of photography, as well as to show how photographic images affect both individuals and society at large. Questions about representation and politics were, unsurprisingly, the focus.

The position that had been so pressingly defended a decade earlier—that of photography being an art—was no longer considered crucial to uphold. Instead, it was argued that the characteristics of (and the interesting thing about) photography was the medium's heterogeneity, and the role it played in the construction and negotiation of images of reality. Exhibition practice also broke with the sober presentation that had previously been used to bolster the artistic stature of

photography. To begin with, dissimilar types of images were juxtaposed in close proximity to each other, with the images themselves simply affixed to large plywood boards propped against walls. As with the aforementioned screen shows of the 1970s, efforts went into making sure that *Lika med* could be easily packed and transported, although at this point on to established artistic institutions rather than workplaces and libraries.

Lika med was in many ways a radical exhibition, not least in terms of how it was designed. What came to mark the 1990s was the photographic image being shifted into the white cube of the gallery, where it was embraced by the aura of exclusivity on which the art field depends. There was also a significant change in the appearance of images, with color photography breaking through and the dimensions of prints noticeably increasing. New mounting techniques involving aluminum or Plexiglas resulted in an increase in production costs, which was passed on to, and reflected in, the higher prices that photo-based contemporary art began fetching.

The Old and New Fotografiska Museet

From a cultural and sociological standpoint, it can be argued that weak fields, such as the photographic, are particularly dependent on the actions of a handful of agents in possession of cultural capital. As an example, in 1998, Moderna Museet carried out an organizational restructuring. In the process, Fotografiska Museet was closed and photography was fully integrated into the parent museum's holdings and programming. However, in the years that followed, Moderna itself became less active in the photographic field, with the result that the medium found itself relegated to a subordinate position within the institution. Fotografiska's folding and Moderna's withdrawal from the photographic scene left a void.

Into that void stepped brothers Jan and Per Broman, who had been running a photo fair at the time, and who had notably arranged a David LaChapelle exhibition. Entrepreneurs, the brothers were quick to diagnose what was missing in the Swedish photography scene, identifying what Pierre Bourdieu called "a space of opportunity." The brothers, having decided to invest in a permanent space for photo exhibitions, put together a business plan, found a venue, and reclaimed the name Fotografiska Museet.

Its inauguration, in 2010, revealed the chasm between publicly-funded elite culture and this plucky, upstart commercial actor. According to their detractors, Fotografiska delivered fast food and empty calories, while Moderna Museet ladled up nutritious slow food (such culinary analogies were indeed employed). And yet, despite the establishment's critical skepticism, in less than a year, Fotografiska had emerged as one of the most visited cultural institutions in the country. Albeit with entirely different means and ideas about both exhibitions and communication, it had achieved what the Swedish documentary photographers of the 1970s, with their touring exhibitions, outreach activities, and reasonably-priced books, had sought to achieve in an earlier era: it had reached a mass audience. Since much of Fotografiska's income is derived from ticket sales, they primarily show internationally-established, brand-name photographers, often focusing on popular genres such as portraits of famous people, fashion images, and nudes. But they have also given space to documentary projects and series that address environmental issues and human rights concerns.

Fotografiska embraces the breadth of the photographic medium while downplaying the "aura" of the original work so diligently cultivated by establishment art institutions. For Fotografiska, that aura plays a remarkably minor role in its exhibition practice. Motif and narrative are central, and many exhibitions are produced inside the building: prints are made on-site, and then framed, installed, and lit in a more or less standardized manner, which gives the exhibitions a clearly recognizable expression. It's also worth noting that Fotografiska's exhibition posters often adorn the walls of apartments in real estate advertisements—mainstream visibility that few other institutions have achieved. Symptomatically, Fotografiska employs exhibition producers but not curators, the group of professionals which, more than any other, has elsewhere shaped exhibition practice and directed the critical discourse around the context and terms of the dissemination of art.

Make It Happen

As shown by the above examples, the forms of presenting photography have been influenced by existing in a field of tension between photography as a heterogeneous practice and the idea of a medium of a more specific nature; as well as by the photograph having, curiously enough, both a marginalized and privileged status within the hierarchy of art. Given the history of the institutions as well as their current positions, it can be said that the situation is not uncomplicated. For those who want to combine an interest in the materiality of photography with a critical perspective and a more democratic circulation of images, the possibilities are limited.

Interestingly, there has been an evolution in the goals of students. Previously, many sought to be represented by a commercial gallery; but today more and more take matters into their own hands and seek to create their own contexts, often in coordination and collaboration with others. One such individual who has done precisely that is Klara Källström. She and her partner, Thobias Fäldt, have published more than a dozen books under their own imprint, B-B-B-Books. The books are formally experimental and political in an innovative way. They are also printed as stand-alone objects wherein the work is the physical book itself, an arrangement which, however, does not preclude the book's content from later being reinterpreted and re-displayed elsewhere in other formats. Their activities spring from the network they have established and developed over time while working on photobooks and with photobook festivals around the world.[2]

By establishing publishing platforms and venues for presentations and conversations, many photographers have managed to carve out a space between the often rigid positions that have characterized photography's exhibition history. They have placed themselves next to the market-driven players, without categorically saying no to commercial assignments or to selling their works. Teaching also often forms an integral part of their practice. What made this possible, among other things, is that the recurring question of if photography is art or not has been largely set aside. The compelling thing about the medium is it can do many different things in many different contexts, with the desire to publish a unifying driving force. Whether dissemination is specifically achieved through exhibitions or photobooks or any other means doesn't matter so much, so long as photography is circulating and, at the end of the day, making a difference in society.

2
Källström and Fäldt, together with architect Per Nadén, also founded and operate FG2, a nexus for cultural activities located at Föreningsgatan 2, Gothenburg. The first to make a presentation there was the French artist and collector Thomas Sauvin. The development of his exhibition was coordinated with the organizers, as well as with author Johannes Wahlström. Although it took as its starting point Sauvin's extensive archival archeological project *Beijing Silvermine*, the development process also resulted in a new joint work, *On This Day*, which challenges the way certain events are chosen to become "historical."

Karolina Puchała-Rojek

Against Archiving?: Living Archives by the Archeology of Photography Foundation

The purpose of this essay is to paint a comprehensive portrait of artistic praxes that for the past ten years have underpinned the Living Archives program run by the Archeology of Photography Foundation. The ten-year time frame, as well as the sheer number of works developed under the auspices of the program, seem to warrant a sort of synopsis: an attempt at systematizing undertaken efforts, and one which offers an opportunity to ponder the validity of the methodology adopted for the project. Have the projects developed within the Living Archives program—a program intended to breathe new life into the collected works of deceased artists—turned out to be significant, and thus has a primary objective been fulfilled? Can we consider Living Archives to be a meticulous but respectful approach to archival work that does not in any way obscure an archive's subject?

"An Archive Bearing Contemporary Significance"

At the core of the Archeology of Photography Foundation's mission is a commitment to making the archives it oversees accessible: literally accessible either online or on site, and figuratively so by way of creating a space that can facilitate the reconstruction of primary, original meanings complemented by the emergence of new interpretations of historical works of art.

Established in 2008, the Archeology of Photography Foundation[1] (hereafter, the Foundation) is tasked with the preservation and maintenance of archives left behind by important Polish photographers beyond institutional reach, generally in the hands of their immediate families or next of kin. For ten years, the Foundation has grown and accumulated extensive experience in dealing with photography collections. As of today, it is involved with the preservation of ten photographic archives, including the photographic legacy of Zbigniew Dłubak,[2] one of the foremost photographers in Polish history.

The Polish dictionary defines an "archive" as a fixed collection of documents. In the Foundation's case, the majority of collections it deals with have come into its care after the death of the sole creator of an archive's material, thus precluding the growth of an archive to which no new works (except, possibly, newly discovered ones) will ever be added. The dictionary entry goes on to note that although archives aren't intended for current use, their contents may ultimately emerge "bearing contemporary significance." From this

1
The Archeology of Photography Foundation (Polish: Fundacja Archeologia Fotografii, or FAF) was established, in August 2008, by Anna Duńczyk-Szulc, Karolina Ziębińska-Lewandowska, Rafał Lewandowski, and Karolina Puchała-Rojek. Aside from a small gallery in its offices at *ulica* Chłodna 20 in Warsaw, the Foundation also operates a digitization lab and a dedicated archive where the majority of the collections in its care are stored. For more information, see, faf.org.pl/en.

2
Zbigniew Dłubak (1921–2005), Polish photographer, theorist, and painter, and editor-in-chief of *Fotografia* magazine, one of the most important photography publications in post-war Poland. Influenced by the Surrealist movement, he was the author of one of the first experimental photographs created in post-war Poland. A member of Grupa 55 and the Permafo group and gallery, he also collaborated with influential galleries including Krzywe Koło, Foksal, and Remont.

rather classical interpretation of the term emerged, in 2009, the notion of "living archives," a program wherein contemporary artists—primarily those employing photography in their practice—were invited to take a closer look at the archives in the care of the Foundation; to examine their dominant themes and subject matter; and then to explore them further in their own works. The practice is a direct reference to the latter portion of the definition cited above: the archives under the Foundation's care bear contemporary significance, and not only because they allow us to establish and corroborate a contextual framework for an oeuvre's creation, thus enabling us to understand and draft a history of Polish photography. Above all, these archives offer us the possibility of revealing non-linear linkages between history and modernity, and of discovering novel meanings within the realm of artistic endeavor.[3]

This question, and the very title of my essay, paraphrases the theses put forth by Susan Sontag in her seminal 1964 essay, "Against Interpretation,"[4] in which the writer voiced her displeasure with the surfeit of commentary and opinions that tended to emerge around works of art, threatening to eclipse them in the process. But Sontag's lamented "surfeit" pales in comparison to the veritable deluge of words, images, and interpretations inundating us nowadays. Can the contemporary works developed under the Living Archives program be accused of contributing to such surfeit? With Sontag's remarks and observations in mind, let us focus on a cross section of the Foundation's efforts over the past decade.

Working with Space

The 2009 Krakow Photomonth festival featured photographer Krzysztof Pijarski's Living Archives project *Dłubak — Sources*. Pijarski was invited, by Karolina Ziębińska-Lewandowska (the Foundation's president at the time), to the old Warsaw apartment of the late Zbigniew Dłubak. The contents of the archive of Dłubak's *Iconosphere* series[5]—prints, negatives, contact sheets, envelopes, packaging material, typewritten documents, sheaves of scratch paper covered in Dłubak's handwriting, and even the artist's suitcase—were shipped from France[6] to Poland, and later unpacked inside a tenement building at *ulica* Puławska 24A in Warsaw.

3
Archives—subject to specific schemes of description and the primacy of word over image—examined through the lens of power and its abuses, have been repeatedly critiqued by scholars and philosophers such as Allan Sekula and John Tagg. Texts from a symposium on the theory and praxis of the archive, organized by the Archeology of Photography Foundation and led by Karolina Ziębińska-Lewandowska and Krzysztof Pijarski, were subsequently collected together and published in the following volume: *The Archive as Project: The Poetics and Politics of the (Photo) Archive*, ed. Krzysztof Pijarski (Warsaw: Archeology of Photography Foundation, 2011).

4
Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," *Against Interpretation, and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

5
Iconosphere I, 1967, one of Dłubak's most important works, was a photographic installation in which prints of female nudes from his *Existences* series were hung within a maze-like structure.

6
Dłubak emigrated to France, in 1982, and lived and worked there until his death, in 2005.

However, Pijarski decided against drafting a comprehensive inventory of the "mess" that a fellow artist had left behind in hutches of nondescript boxes. Instead, he focused on marginalia, on apparently insignificant scribbles, on sheaves of notes that initially seem unimportant in light of a lifetime spent among film negatives. He elevated the significance of seemingly trivial supplements, deeming them as worthy of attentive study as the canonical works that made their owner famous. The gesture indicated that perhaps the origins of Dłubak's practice lay not in the center, where his most enduring efforts were situated, but somewhere on the unmapped outskirts. This approach overturned the possibility of drafting an objective documentation whose purpose would be to communicate the extent of what is known about a given artist and his or her oeuvre, instead shifting the semantic weight of the project toward the unexplored niches of Dłubak's archive.

Pijarski's effort also had a peculiar driving force to it, and one that is particularly noticeable in hindsight: for those who never had the opportunity to see Dłubak's archive at first hand during his lifetime, and to experience that particular space in the artist's presence, the idea of Dłubak's archive, its "iconosphere," is constructed upon the photographs created for *Dłubak — Sources*.[7] The images conjured by a mention of the archive in the visual imaginations of those who have seen the series—the blue armchair and the lamp with the tulle shade; the stack of cases for glass plate negatives; cardboard boxes stuffed beneath a table with a stretch of black fabric—are all products of Pijarski's artistic visitation.

Pijarski used the Dłubak archive to create a plethora of new images—the obverse of what an archivist would have done, as their work, whether at the Foundation or any other conservation-minded institution entrusted with a late artist's archive, entails rigorously adhering to a predefined set of professional strictures. These rules, prescribed by a handful of international systems and groups, include specific guidelines for arranging prints, negatives, and contact sheets; methodologies of inventorying; and storage and preservation techniques. *Dłubak — Sources* drew attention both to the material, tangible nature of the archive and to the physical space formerly inhabited by the artist. Dłubak's home, once a witness to the birth and evolution of the future archive, became at once a temporary shelter for this collection of yellowed documents and photographs, as well as a base of inspiration for the creation of new pictures.

7 Photographs in the series are viewable at: pijarski.art.pl/pl/works/dlubak-sources-2009 [accessed July 1, 2018].

Nicolas Grospierre was another photographer who attached considerable importance to the rooms in which an archive took root during an artist's lifetime. His project, *The Picture Which Grows*,[8] was created in the tiny apartment of Polish photographer Tadeusz Sumiński,[9] after Sumiński's archive itself had been moved to Foundation premises, but before any renovations to the apartment had taken place. Standing amidst what remained of the late photographer's furniture and personal effects (a cabinet, a desk, bookshelves still lined with spines), Grospierre says he realized that, "The order prevalent throughout the apartment, characteristic for places where archives are kept, would create a wonderful counterpoint for my concept."[10]

Grospierre then set to work. He began by searching through Sumiński's archive, eventually making a selection of pictures demonstrating a high degree of formalism, precise compositions, and evident fondness for geometric form. Then he set a camera in the middle of the apartment, snapped a picture, printed it on site, and attached the print to a fixed point within the space of the apartment. With the interior around him thus minutely altered, Grospierre took another picture, put it up, took another picture, put it up (on the wall, on a piece of furniture, on the ceiling, on the floor), and so on.

Grospierre ultimately snapped and attached to surfaces 536 pictures, filling the room with photographs of the room containing photographs of the room, with the guiding precept being that each picture was a direct result of its predecessor. The resulting installation—a viral construct in which photographs appear to rampantly reproduce themselves across any available surface—triggered a confrontation between the tidy, static order of Sumiński's room and the encroaching, entropic disarray of Grospierre's spree. Thus, the generative intent of Grospierre's efforts ran deliberately counter to that of archivists and historians trained to contain, even though both professions share Grospierre's fascination with the tactile nature of an archive.

Indeed, the majority of archivists, and nearly all artists invited to participate in the Living Archives program, have exhibited the same awestricken delight when in the presence of such voluminous quantities of prints and contact sheets

8 Nicolas Grospierre and Tadeusz Sumiński, *The Picture Which Grows* (Warsaw: Archeology of Photography Foundation, 2011).

9 Tadeusz Sumiński (1924–2009), Polish photojournalist. Collaborated often with *Polska*, a magazine for which he documented everything from industrial facilities to diplomatic visits to exhibitions. Operating independently from the mid-1960s onwards, he is renowned primarily for both his landscape and cityscape photography, genres within which Sumiński moved deftly, and which he often deliberately subverted.

10 Nicolas Grospierre, op. cit., n.p.

Nicolas Grospierre, from the series *The Picture Which Grows*, 2011. Courtesy of the artist

annotated with hand-scribbled notes—"good," "trash," "too dark"—and shorthand hieroglyphics, and the thousands upon thousands of negatives crammed into sleeves crammed into albums crammed into boxes crammed into rooms.

Working with Contexts

One recurring artistic practice has included expanding upon existing readings of original pictures by contrasting them with new works developed solely for the purpose of the Living Archives project. One of the first, and most interesting, implementations of this particular approach was Julia Staniszewska's *Awaiting*. It was also one instance in which an artist invited to participate in the project worked with an archive that is not under the care of the Archeology of Photography Foundation.[11]

The point of departure for Staniszewska's efforts was a series of photographs taken by Zofia Rydet (1911–1997), a photographer whose vast archive is maintained by a foundation established for the purpose of overseeing her legacy.[12] Rydet's photographs, a selection of which was originally published under the title *Mały człowiek* [Little Man], offered a clear-eyed but compassionate portrayal of children in various, rarely idyllic, settings. The pictures exemplify Polish photography's humanist traditions.

Staniszewska selected a handful of pictures from *Little Man* and juxtaposed them with a single staged photograph taken in a fertility clinic. Immersed in modernity, Staniszewska explored her own experience. She did not take pictures of children, like Rydet had, but instead directed her lens at adults who wanted to have them. In the center of a perfectly framed shot sat a posed couple, the woman rigid, the man resigned, the two looking neither into the lens nor at each other. On the walls of the clinic's waiting room, in neat columns and rows, hung pictures of children, the very "purpose" of the would-be parents' visit to the facility.

Set against Staniszewska's work, Rydet's pictures expose the oppressiveness of the photographs adorning the clinic's walls. Significantly, Staniszewska did not revise the meanings of Rydet's original work, but instead broadened the possibility of their readings beyond the historical context of humanist photography. Staniszewska's radically formal work, when juxtaposed with *Little Man*'s empathetic, almost neo-realist frames, shot according to the precepts of participant photography, allowed her to examine the issue of how photography—be it commercial or artistic—exploits the images of children; but also to appreciate the significance that such images carried in the overall body of work of Zofia Rydet, an artist who, although childless herself, often made children the focus and subject of her portraits.

Agnieszka Rayss was one of the Living Archives artists who interrogated the representation of the body in photography, particularly in terms of visuals and semantics. Rayss, who co-founded the Sputnik Photos collective, and who is widely renowned for her documentary projects dealing with the sociopolitical situations in various former Soviet republics, as well as work exploring the strategies of building and operating museum collections, was paired with the archive of photographer Mariusz Hermanowicz.[13] But instead of tackling the archive itself in its entirety, as is generally the approach, Rayss chose to address the very specific choices being made, in parallel, by the curator of a Hermanowicz retrospective being simultaneously organized by the Foundation.

This second exhibition illustrated the many creative approaches that Hermanowicz had taken over the course of his career, including the final chapter of his working life, which began around the year 2000, when he abandoned post-conceptualism in favor of embracing studio photography and more conservative formal devices.[14] His later efforts—mostly formally precise nudes—exemplify the highly conventionalized tendency to objectify the female form in art, a tendency which has also been perpetuated by photographers through their depictions of the body as a tantalizing object of desire.

In her *Where the Body Is*, itself a response to the Hermanowicz exhibition, Rayss offered another perspective: she photographed bone samples, moulages, and organs suspended in formalin from the collections of defunct university anatomy departments and forensics labs. In clinically training her lens on slabbed flesh, shards of skeleton, and excised vital organs, Rayss stripped her depicted bodies (or what remained of them) of any erotic associations, draining them of carnal desirability as she consciously rejected prior codes of corporeal representation.

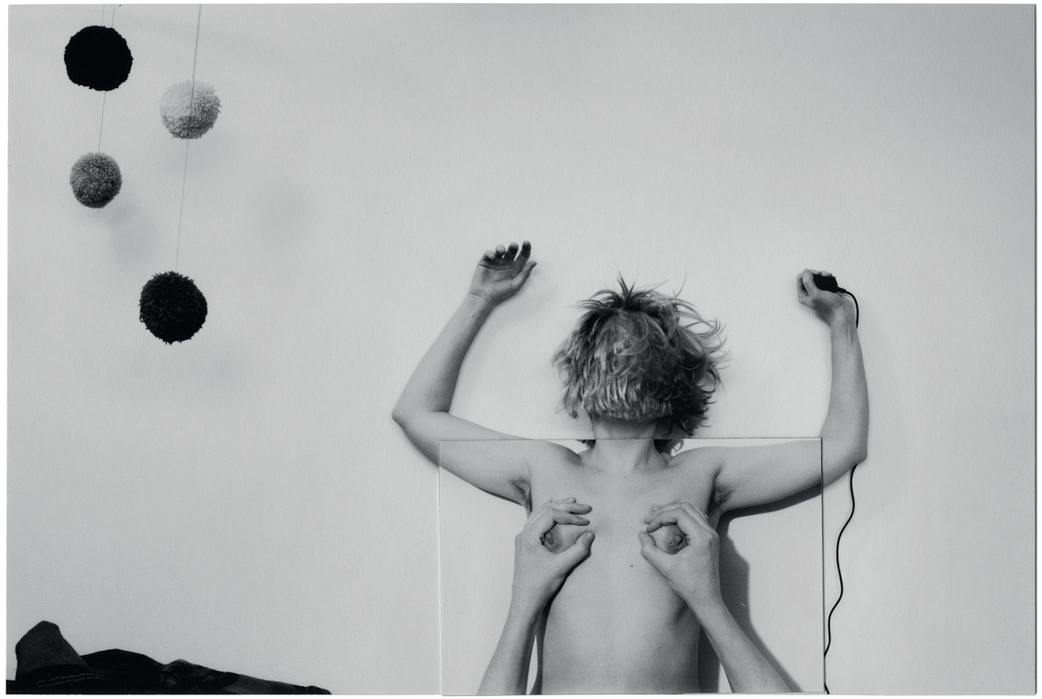
11
Other examples include Basia Sokołowska's project *Botanical Archive* (2012), for which she worked with the photographic archive of Roman Kobendza, which is currently in the care of the University of Warsaw Botanic Garden; Dorota Buczkowska's *A Year in a Sanatorium* (2016), created in collaboration with the Norwegian archive Sogn og Fjordane; and Jakub Certowicz's *Inventory* (2016), created in collaboration with the Regional State Archives for Oppland County, Norway. The latter two projects were developed within the Foundation's Long Life for Photographs program; for more information, see, fotoarchiwa.faf.org.pl/en/about-project.

12
For more information on Zofia Rydet and the Zofia Rydet Foundation, see, zofiarydet.com and fundacjarydet.pl/?lang=en. Rafał Lewandowski had the idea to incorporate Rydet's photographs in the Living Archives project.

13
Mariusz Hermanowicz (1950–2008), photographer and illustrator. Creator of series ranging from documentary to conceptual photography, including some of the most notable and widely-acclaimed Polish photographic series of the 1970s. One stage of his career was characterized by his appending witty comments and captions to his photographs. In his final years, Hermanowicz re-embraced studio photography and classical photographic forms.

14
See, Mariusz Hermanowicz, *Someone Who I Don't Know*, exhibition catalogue, ed. Tomasz Ferenc (Warsaw: Archeology of Photography Foundation, 2017).

Agnieszka Rayss, *Where the Body Is*, 2017. Courtesy of the artist



Aneta Grzeszykowska, *Halina #5*, 2016. Courtesy of the artist

Through her interactions with Hermanowicz's work, Rayss, whose early artistic efforts included photographing assorted specimens in the collections of obscure museums, was able to see a reflection of her own photography within the context of the portrayal of the human body, which she then used to select her own photographs for *Where the Body Is*. The artistic gesture, based around direct references to selected photographs from the Hermanowicz archive, allowed Rayss to reinterpret both series, which had previously been examined in rather narrow contexts. Her subtle commentary on Hermanowicz's representative work, with its allure of supple flesh, offered the possibility of gauging changes in social and artistic realities that had taken place during the fifteen-year interim separating the tail end of Hermanowicz's career and Rayss' juxtaposition.[15]

Working with Images

In the process of working with an archive's digitized content, one ends up "handling" photographs that exist only in negative form; images which, for one reason or another, never made it into a photographer's archive as prints. Sometimes, of course, prints go missing; but more often than not, a photographer simply never got around to developing an image onto paper. This was the case with source material for a series of photographic collages created by Aneta Grzeszykowska that was featured, in the spring of 2016, at a Living Archives group exhibition held in Warsaw.[16] Grzeszykowska, a photographer and sculptor, was invited to work with the archive of the legendary Polish graphic artist and photographer Wojciech Zamecznik.[17]

As she began perusing his collection, Grzeszykowska's attention was quickly drawn to Zamecznik's intimate portraits of Halina Zamecznik, his wife and companion, who featured in much of his work, particularly his poster efforts. For Grzeszykowska, an artist who unselfconsciously uses her body as the subject of, and material for, her own work, using pictures portraying another body came naturally to her. Grzeszykowska would take a picture of herself posing exactly like Halina Zamecznik once had for her husband in images Grzeszykowska had selected from his archive. Then she would paste a Zamecznik photo, printed from a scanned frame, over her self-portrait, thus combining her body with the body of

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Some of the pictures from the aforementioned Hermanowicz series, *A New Stage*, were previously showcased, in July 2004, at *The Revealing*, an exhibition held at the Small Gallery of the Association of Polish Art Photographers (ZPAF) in Warsaw.

16
Living Archives: Dorota Buczkowska, Jakub Certowicz, Aneta Grzeszykowska, Paweł Szypulski, Sala Kisielewskiego, Palace of Culture and Science, Warsaw, Poland, April 28–May 20, 2016.

17
Wojciech Zamecznik (1923–1967), graphic artist and photographer. Designer of exhibitions, posters, book and album covers, and film title sequences. One of the most distinguished of Polish graphic artists, he incorporated photography extensively in his work. Both an adherent of the Polish school of humanist photography as well as a proponent of experimental photography.

Halina Zamecznik. Because Grzeszykowska's underlying pictures were composed with a wider frame, they contained more detail in terms of the surroundings in which they were taken. This was more than a formal device; the gesture itself shifted, and then shared, the authorship of the picture. Grzeszykowska, shutter release cable in hand, symbolically conferred her own subjectivity and artistic independence onto the wife-model. As a result, Grzeszykowska's self-portraits became Halina Zamecznik's, too.

Grzeszykowska's project was one of the most ethically, if not legally, delicate efforts pursued under the Living Archives program, owing to its extensive use of private, intimate images that had never been printed during Zamecznik's lifetime. The Foundation decided to include the series in its 2016 group exhibition; but, as per the Zamecznik family's request, without a title (*Halina* had been the artist's proposed title) and excluding works that made use of archival material the family deemed too revealing for public display. Although from a formal and semantic standpoint the project fit perfectly the themes interrogated by Grzeszykowska, it ultimately forced the staff of the Foundation to question whether all of the digitized contents of its archives are necessarily fit for dissemination and exhibition, particularly in light of the fact that the terms for some archives stipulate that negatives or contact sheets from a collection be made available only to researchers, scholars, and archivists—explicitly forbidding their public exhibition. These discussions, however, did not ultimately prevent the dissemination of the aforementioned negative scans, nor did they, in this case, restrict their general availability.

An Erotics of the Archive

The curators and archivists working at the Archeology of Photography Foundation invite contemporary artists to work with archives left behind by preeminent photographers. Although invitee selection, and what the curators focus on when they introduce the invitees to the archives they'll be working with, have considerable impact on the course of the effort, ultimately it's the invited artists themselves who invariably focus on the marginalia; who deconstruct, shifting readings and contexts; who redefine and reimagine the ways the original works may be exhibited. They operate on a visual level,

often intuitively, sometimes lacking in-depth knowledge of the archive they are working with and the circumstances in which individual artworks were created. Although they may reaffirm an earlier era's readings from time to time, in most cases they end up changing them. By definition, these "living archives" are not only an adventure for contemporary artists, but also an opportunity to immerse themselves in an archive, and to submit to the infectious creative energy that continues to permeate it.

From the vantage point of today, it seems that this method is still something more than mere interpretation that imposes specific ways of reading and understanding an archive. In the closing paragraph of her essay, Sontag argues that "in place of a hermeneutics, [viewers] need an erotics of art."[18] The artworks developed using the "living archives" model seem to answer that call—they do not work against the archives, and nor do they overshadow them, their authors, or the works of which they are comprised, because rather than offer simply yet another dry academic analysis of an archive, they instead exist as sensual renditions. They emerge and impact their audience within the same realm—of art—and thus make it possible to label this particular method an "erotics of the archive."

18
Susan Sontag, op. cit., 14.

Kim Knoppers

Mining the Archive, Excavating Identities

When night falls and I take my customary evening stroll, I always marvel at the Moon. I know it's a globe but I see a flat disc. It's a truly magical celestial body. For us Earth-dwellers, part of the Moon is always hidden since it turns on its axis at the same speed as it orbits the Earth. As a result, it always shows us the same face. Until 1959, the other side of the Moon, the far or dark side, was invisible to us. That changed when the unmanned Russian spacecraft Luna 3 photographed it for the first time. Although the pictures looked grainy and blurred, they caused tremendous excitement. They showed a mountainous area with more craters and fewer volcanic expanses, a landscape quite different from the side we are so used to seeing. From that time on, we saw more and more photos of the dark side of the moon, made during NASA missions. Now there are cameras on satellites between the Sun and the Earth that transmit images all the time.[1]

Things that are literally outside our field of vision because of the distance between us and them, as is the case with heavenly bodies like the Moon, or things that are so microscopically small that we cannot see them with the naked eye, such as insects or bacteria, became visible. This is also true of phenomena that are too quick for our eyes to see unaided. Photography allows us to examine in detail a flash of lightning, or to observe the slow growth of plants.

Something similar—making the invisible visible—applies to photography that falls outside our field of vision in a more metaphorical sense: vernacular photography that in many cases is not part of the canon of photographic history, or that was made for the individual, for use within a closed circle of family, friends, or community. Photographs that have been stored in albums as things of private value give us an opportunity to look from the inside, to see what is not usually explicitly made visible because it is a commonplace though integral part of daily life. The same holds true for photographs or negatives made by commercial photography studios since they first began. Such images could reveal the specific economic or cultural backgrounds of the sitters, commemorate events and activities, and preserve memories. They are the results of the efforts of the studio photographer in combination with the wishes of the client.

Photography as a tool for making invisible histories visible, and the fact that a photograph's meaning is conditioned

1
See, nasa.gov/resources/26/first-photo-of-the-lunar-farside and nasa.gov/mission_pages/LRO/news/lro-farside.html [both accessed August 24, 2018].

by the context and sequence in which it is seen, is at the core of my work in an ongoing series of exhibitions I have been curating for Foam Fotografiemuseum, Amsterdam, featuring photographs from the archives of commercial photography studios in different eras and in a range of geographical locations. The exhibition series was prompted by a growing interest in vernacular photography and an acknowledgement of its socio-historical and artistic value. The archives presented, which have been preserved by chance, help to reinforce the cultural or national identities of groups that are underrepresented in visual history.

Here I will look at my position as curator during the creation of this series of exhibitions; my collaboration with researchers or with the owners of these archives; how they are exhibited in a way that gives them form and coherence; and the importance of putting archives of this sort on exhibit. At the point when the photographs are taken out of the surviving archives of the studios, or removed from photo albums and frames on living room coffee tables and walls, we can look at them with fresh eyes and attach to them significance beyond the personal meaning they had in the private sphere. Naturally, there is a responsibility here. How do you ensure that work is not entirely removed from its original context when fitting it to a new storyline? How do you ensure that photographs originally made for private purposes are not shamelessly exposed to the intrusive gaze of outsiders?

In his classic collection of essays, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*,[2] John Tagg stresses the relationship between power and the photographic image. He delves into nineteenth- and early twentieth-century archives of photographs assembled by prison administrators, police forces, hospitals, and city-planning bodies. He explains how photography has been used as legal, social, or medical evidence and appropriated by state institutions as a tool for exerting power over individuals and shaping dominant narratives. Besides the official or dominant histories described in Tagg's book, there are all kinds of informal, unofficial histories that live in dark cupboards, cluttered attics, even stashed away in garbage bags, but that have strong and revealing voices of their own.

Within the context of a publicly accessible museum with a broad audience made up of people of various ages, cultural

2
John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

backgrounds, education levels, and gender identities, Foam regularly presents vernacular photography from the lesser-known photographic archives of commercial photo studios, with the intention of making the histories they present visible and part of collective memory. An exhibition in which these photographs are central can make us more conscious of works that exist outside the official canon of the history of the medium. Mind you, Foam is a museum that also pays a great deal of attention to the official canon of photography and, with the space it gives to emerging photographers, one that helps to determine what the canon will come to include in the future. Yet it is also important to look at vernacular photography from studio archives that shows an alternative visual history shaped by photographs. Ultimately, one essential feature of a democratic society is its willingness to challenge dominant discourses and learn about many alternative voices.

Foto Galatasaray:
Maryam Şahinyan's Photo Studio

Let me attempt to clarify the above by focusing on the exhibition *Foto Galatasaray: Maryam Şahinyan's Photo Studio*, shown at Foam, Amsterdam, in 2013. It exhibited a selection drawn from the archive of the Armenian-Turkish commercial studio photographer Maryam Şahinyan (Sivas, 1911–Istanbul, 1996). From 1935 to 1985, she worked in a modest studio in the central Istanbul neighborhood of Galatasaray. The period during which it was compiled makes the archive a unique inventory of demographic change in Istanbul after the founding of the Republic of Turkey, in 1923. It includes photographs of people who moved to the city from rural areas and had their portraits taken at Foto Galatasaray.

The exhibition was based on research conducted at SALT in Istanbul by artist, writer, and researcher Tayfun Serttaş,[3] with whom I collaborated closely. The museum, which is to say the curator, is in this case the mediator between the researcher and the visitor. After publisher Yetvart Tomasyan saved hundreds of boxes of glass negatives from outside studio Foto Galatasaray, where they had been piled on the curb for garbage pickup, it was almost a quarter of a century before Serttaş came into contact with Tomasyan.[4]

Foto Galatasaray: Maryam Şahinyan's Photo Studio was also an overview of the fifty-year working life of a female studio photographer. Şahinyan's identity in relation to her environment is of great importance here. She was a local woman and a devout Christian of Armenian descent, an identity not shared by the majority of the Turkish population and certainly not by the studio photographers of the time. It made her part of a tight-knit circle that determined the sociological basis of Foto Galatasaray's clientele, setting it apart from Istanbul's other studios, all of which were run by men. Şahinyan's female clients felt comfortable in a studio where the camera was operated by a woman. They sometimes even had themselves photographed with their hair loose, or in their underwear. The local transvestites liked to visit the studio as well, and they displayed their extravagance with obvious pleasure in front of the camera. The same went for Christians of Armenian descent. They came to Foto Galatasaray to satisfy their desire to embrace cultural representation by means of carefully chosen accessories or particular hairstyles and costumes. The ecclesiastical dignitaries who frequented Şahinyan's studio because of her devout background were photographed straightforwardly, in rigid poses.[5] Foto Galatasaray was never as famous or as visible as some of the elite photography studios of the day, such as the nineteenth-century photo studio of Sébah and Joaillier. Nonetheless, its representation of the middle and lower classes ensured the studio's continuity.

A reinterpreted archive itself—in this case in the form of photographs—has little meaning unless it includes the investigative method as an integral part of the end result: in this case, the exhibition. This provides context and helps the audience to understand the point of view from which curatorial choices have been made. A number of the original glass negatives were on display, along with a video in which Serttaş discussed his research and described the digitalization process; and a video in which Tomasyan, the archive's "savior," shared his own experiences. The public had access to the complete archive via an online database.

The exhibition included a selection of reproductions of the digitalized glass negatives, showing how varied the images were. These were hung according to typologies, an arrangement intended to offer the visitor some guidance through the vast quantity of photographs. Sequences of typologies could also be seen on ten screens placed in a semicircle in a darkened space. The focus was on certain gestures, on poses, on

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Tayfun Serttaş earned his master's degree from Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul with a thesis entitled "Photography and Minorities in Istanbul in the Context of Modernism and Cultural Representation." He has also worked to bring attention to the archive of Stüdyo Osep, a commercial photo studio run by photographer Osep Minasoğlu, which Serttaş spent a decade cataloguing and researching; see, tayfunserttas.blogspot.com/2009/09/studio-osep-studyo-osep.html [accessed August 24, 2018].

4
Cooperation between Serttaş and Tomasyan led to the publication, by Tomasyan's Aras publishing house, of a Maryam Şahinyan monograph: *Foto Galatasaray: Studio Practice by Maryam Şahinyan*, ed. Tayfun Serttaş (Istanbul: Aras, 2011).

5
Tayfun Serttaş, "Anti-memory," *Foam Album 13* (Amsterdam: Foam, 2013), 68–73.

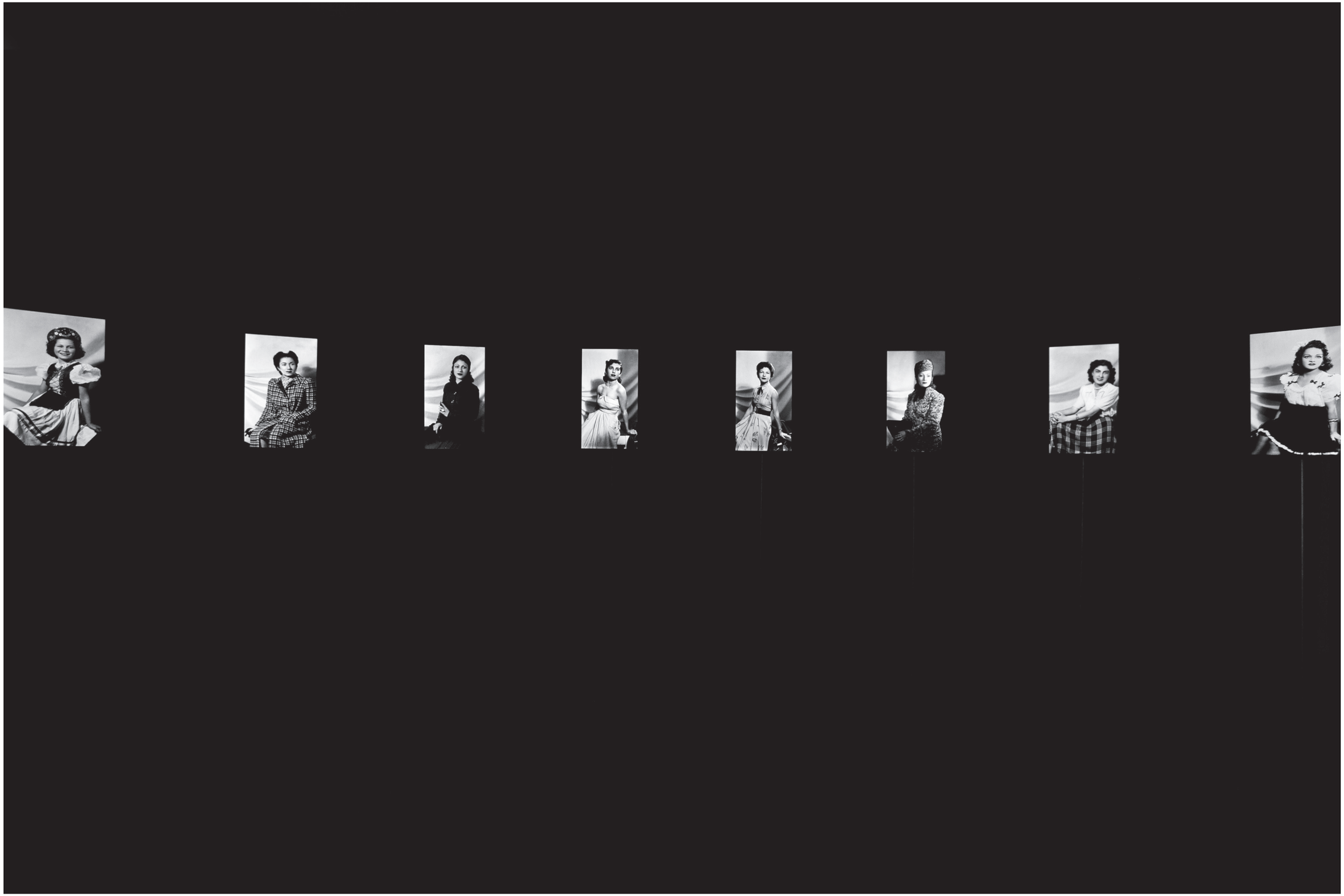

Foto Galatasaray: Maryam Şahinyan's Photo Studio, March 22–May 12, 2013 © Foam, Amsterdam/Christian van der Kooy. Courtesy of Maryam Şahinyan/Tayfun Serttaş and Yetvart Tomasyan

Dynasty Marubi: A Hundred Years of Albanian Studio Photography, September 16–November 19, 2013
© Foam, Amsterdam/Christian van der Kooy. Courtesy of Marubi National Museum of Photography, Shkodër

types of clothing and the festive traditions of Christian Armenians. The decision to use typologies brought an order to the archive that it did not initially possess, making it possible to stress certain accents within it. Opting for sequencing and screens created a transition from a dusty, neglected archive to a contemporary interpretation of the works for modern-day visitors. By paying attention to both the original form and the process of digitalization, justice was done to the choices made, and the audience was informed about them.

Dynasty Marubi: A Hundred Years of Albanian Studio Photography

In 2016, Foam organized an exhibition called *Dynasty Marubi: A Hundred Years of Albanian Studio Photography*. It arose from my involvement in another exhibition, *Women from the Marubi Archive*, at the Marubi National Museum of Photography in Shkodër, Albania. I chose to focus specifically on the women in the archive, in line with the observation that as producers, women are often left out of history, and as subjects they are frequently portrayed in a certain way. By placing women center stage, the exhibition aimed to honor the women of the Marubi Archive. Some of the women depicted in it were influential and extraordinary in their own time, like Shaqe Çoba (1875–1954), the first female intellectual in the city of Shkodër, and an activist within both the women's movement and the national independence movement. Shote Galica (1895–1927), born in what is now Kosovo, was another prominent figure in the Albanian liberation movement and a legend in her own time. As well as telling the heroic story of famous women, the exhibition introduced forgotten women, who remained anonymous and lived on the margins of society. Also shown were women who were important in the history of the Marubi family and studio, such as the wife of Pietro Marubi, the studio's founder; the mother of Kel Marubi; the wife of Kel's son, Gegë Marubi; and Bernadine, Kel's daughter, who worked in the studio for a while, organizing and cataloguing the negatives. She also occasionally took photographs herself.[6]

In Foam Amsterdam, the starting point for the exhibition was less specific than that of the exhibition in Albania. *Dynasty Marubi: A Hundred Years of Albanian Studio Photography* was a general introduction to three generations of Marubis

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Based on the introduction I wrote for the exhibition *Women from the Marubi Archive* on the occasion of the opening of the Marubi National Museum of Photography in Shkodër, Albania, in 2016.

showing a cross section of the archive. The reasons why I, as a curator, wanted to present the Marubi archive at Foam were as follows. The archive contained 150,000 glass negatives of the highest quality that deserved a place in an international photographic canon invariably oriented toward Western photographic centers such as the United Kingdom, France, and the United States. The exhibition was an introduction to the rich photographic history of an isolated European country that is often overlooked. In the exhibition, thematic coverage of events from the turbulent history of Albania, from Ottoman times through to the communist period, was combined with a focus on social rituals, folkloric costumes, and sociologically interesting group portraits. Lastly, the exhibition fit within the framework of a series at Foam featuring the archives of commercial photo studios in that it covered a long period of time, was comprehensive, and shed light on a visual history which had been excluded from the dominant historical narrative.

In 1856, seventeen years after the official announcement of the invention of photography, Pietro Marubi, a Catholic who had emigrated from his native Italy to Albania a few years earlier, opened the first commercial photography studio in Shkodër, a town in the far northwest of Albania. The Ottoman rulers and their soldiers liked to have their photos taken, and they frequently did so. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Ottoman influence declined while calls for an independent Albania grew louder among the elite. From that moment on, three generations of Marubi photographers created portraits of a diverse range of people, from the urban bourgeoisie to King Zog to those who became Albanian nationalists. In particular, Kel Marubi—Pietro Marubi's assistant, who later inherited the studio after Pietro's death and adopted his surname—made a major contribution to Albanian visual history with his documentation of the lead-up to Albanian independence. In the 1970s, Gegë Marubi, the son of Kel and the last descendant of the Marubi "dynasty," donated to the Albanian state the studio's archive, which became the keystone of the Marubi National Museum of Photography.

The commercial Marubi studio ensured that a rich historical and visual chronicle was compiled of the end of Ottoman rule and the beginning of Albania as a nation state. Generations of schoolchildren grew up looking at photographs

Disfarmer: The Vintage Prints, March 18–June 15, 2016 © Foam, Amsterdam/Christian van der Kooy.
Courtesy of the Edwynn Houk Gallery/private collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg

made by the Marubis, which were commonly used in school textbooks. Recently, the potential of the Marubi archive has been rediscovered by the current government of Albania as a visual history of a freshly independent nation state. It contains a great deal of information about Albanian nation-building that can be used by a government as a means of emphasizing a national identity, especially in addressing each new generation. This was one of the reasons for building the new Marubi museum in Shkodër. Although the collection of photographs comes from a commercial studio, their meaning can change and be deployed as part of various stories, depending on the party presenting them.

At Foam, a selection was shown of modern reproductions that, on the one hand, were placed in a chronological timeline and, on the other, thematically arranged. This suited the character of the archive, since the Marubis photographed important historical and cultural events outside the studio as well as people of different backgrounds inside it. The exhibition displayed the images in three different ways: modern prints in various formats, digital slide shows, and twenty-five original glass negatives of various sizes that had never been exhibited before. Exhibiting them was complicated by the fragile nature of the glass plates; the recently acquired status of the archive with the founding of the Marubi National Museum of Photography; and dated and complex bureaucratic red tape left over from the communist era. The exhibition was made possible in the end only by the determination of the young, enthusiastic, and expert team at the Marubi National Museum of Photography, under the leadership of its director, Luçjan Bedini.

Disfarmer: The Vintage Prints

In a final example, I will discuss how images from a studio archive are taken up in artistic discourse. The exhibition *Disfarmer: The Vintage Prints* presented 182 vintage photographs and several glass negatives.

Between 1915 and 1959, American studio photographer Mike Disfarmer (1884–1959) made portraits of the residents of Heber Springs, a small town in rural Arkansas. Disfarmer's clients were a cross section of the population of Heber Springs and the surrounding area, ranging from farmers in overalls and housewives dressed up for the occasion to soldiers in uniform, high-school football players, and children in their Sunday best. He documented women whose husbands had been sent to the front in the First or Second World Wars, and photographed the region's farming community during the Great Depression and in the more optimistic 1950s. It was these people who scraped together the fifty cents for three pictures. The so-called penny portraits ended up in postcard format in family albums and displayed in living rooms.

Disfarmer's way of working was straightforward. Clients arrived in their everyday clothes. He positioned them directly in front of the camera, against a simple background, then asked them to look straight into the lens. There was no small talk by the photographer to put his subjects at ease. Disfarmer simply opened the shutter and closed it again.

In 1977, eighteen years after Disfarmer's death, his work attracted the attention of the world of photography and art. That year, the International Center of Photography in New York organized an exhibition of enlargements made from the original glass negatives, which had been kept throughout the intervening period by the former mayor of Heber Springs. In the 1970s, he visited Peter Miller, who worked as an assistant to a fashion photographer, to talk about the glass negatives. Miller took possession of the negatives and restored them. Around 3,000 have survived, most from the period 1939–1945. When Julia Scully, editor of *Modern Photography*, saw a selection of the photos, she was just as enthralled by the quality of the images as Miller had been. In 1976, they worked together to publish the book *Disfarmer: The Heber Springs Portraits, 1939–1946*, with square prints cropped from the glass negatives that emphasize the autonomous character of the work. Then, in 1977, the ICP exhibition was held in New York, at which were shown reproductions of enlargements from the glass negatives. It was the first step toward establishing Disfarmer's reputation in the United States as a portrait photographer of notable significance.[7]

Only after Disfarmer's death did his work become known internationally, and to be regarded as an archetypal example of classic American portrait photography. In the context of the series of exhibitions about the archives of commercial photography studios, I found it important to examine in detail how photographs of this kind became part of an artistic discourse. The 2014–2015 exhibition *Becoming Disfarmer*, at the

7
For further reading, see, *Disfarmer: The Vintage Prints*, eds. Edwynn Houk, Gerd Sander, Richard B. Woodward, and Michael P. Mattis (Zurich: Edwynn Houk Gallery; New York: powerHouse Books, 2005); *Becoming Disfarmer*, eds. Gil Blank, Tanya Sheehan, and Chelsea Spengemann (Purchase, NY: Neuberger Museum of Art, 2014); and *Disfarmer: Heber Springs Portraits, 1939–1946: From the Collections of Peter Miller and Julia Scully*, ed. Julia Scully (Santa Fe: Twin Palms, 1996).

Neuberger Museum of Art in Purchase, New York, had dwelt on this at length, but without showing a larger selection of vintage prints from Disfarmer's time.

In fact, up until the mid-2000s, no vintage prints of Disfarmer's work had ever been exhibited. They were confined to family albums and the private domain of the living room. This changed in 2004, when collectors Michael Mattis and Judy Hochberg were offered several original Disfarmer photos by a young couple who had grown up in Heber Springs. Mattis' enthusiasm was sparked and he began an extensive project in which vintage prints were tracked down by calling at practically every house in Arkansas' Cleburne County.[8]

A narrow glass display a full ten meters long formed a timeline in which explanations were offered about the different phases of the studio, the dating of the work, and Disfarmer's background, with the help of maps, texts, and both glass negatives and prints. In another room, the focus was on the history of the work's reception and how Disfarmer posthumously came to be regarded as an artist. The focus of the exhibition was on the original context in which Disfarmer was working, with less of an emphasis placed on Disfarmer as an artist.

Dark Side of the Moon: Conclusion

An archive is a living organism, subject to multiple interpretations that change over time. The broad representation of identity based on these archival visual histories is an area of special interest within the series of exhibitions examined above. This series revealed, presented, and questioned social, historical, and artistic issues that I think are meaningful as a counterbalance to the stream of superficial and shallow images that surround us today. It also provides a crucial counterbalance to the better known official canon of photography, with its emphasis on big names and iconic images. The nature of the archives is an integral part of the exhibitions in this series, which are characterized by invaluable collaborations with specialists from various fields, whether they be researchers, artists, or collectors.

My role as curator in this series is diverse, ranging from the discovery of the existence of the archives through my network to the maintenance of contacts, the provision of a platform for researchers and collectors, research of my own,

8
"[...] a dedicated team of historically-minded locals was quickly trained and mobilized; ultimately they combed every dirt road in Cleburne County in search of Disfarmer originals." Michael P. Mattis, *Mike Disfarmer: "Disfarmer Rediscovered"*, from *Disfarmer: The Vintage Prints*, op. cit., americansuburbx.com/2012/01/mike-disfarmer-disfarmer-rediscovered.html [accessed August 24, 2018].

and building an exhibition from scratch. At the heart of my profession as a curator is the need to choose, to select, to kill my darlings while crafting clear and coherent stories. The series reflect my interest in the photographic archive as a tool for bringing underrepresented and even invisible visual histories and identities into the foreground while narrating stories that might otherwise remain untold. The archives mentioned bring to light stories whose existence we suspected but that became visible only through the large number of photographs, a specific and extended time frame, the distinctive hand of their makers, and the attention paid to them by researchers, collectors, and curators. In fact, my aim is to illuminate the dark side of the moon by means of photography.

In Conversation with Jules Spinatsch

on the Physical Confrontation with Images

In Jules Spinatsch's *Vienna MMIX – The Spiral*, presented during Krakow Photomonth 2018,[1] a spiraling structure leads the visitor through a staggering number of images taken during the annual Vienna Opera Ball. Originally executed in 2009, this photographic mosaic has since been showcased in many formats, including, in Krakow, along the inner wall of a free-standing, whorl-shaped construction.

Iris Sikking Before you started experimenting with the use of networked cameras, an exploration that eventually led to your impressive surveillance panorama series, you were a photojournalist. Could you recount why and how you moved in a more artistic direction?

Jules Spinatsch In the 1990s, the photographic landscape shifted dramatically, and the perception of photography changed immensely. Large-picture stories disappeared from magazines, and journalistic images were celebrated as the authentic photography—they claimed to have access to a certain truth. What most triggered me to explore a new visual approach was a combination of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and the American-led Operation Desert Storm, in 1990–1991, as well as the book *Fait* by Sophie Ristelhueber.[2] As no one was allowed to enter Iraq or Kuwait during the conflict, the collective imaginary was shaped by eerily green-tinged, night-vision recordings beamed into our living rooms by CNN. There was nothing else. The Americans had total control over the imagery. After the war we started seeing the instrumentalization of photographers from agencies like Magnum, when they were called in to produce images of victory—which was no more than propaganda.

A couple of months after the war ended, Ristelhueber created a strong series of pictures: from an aerial view and from the ground, she photographed tracks in the desert. When I saw these images, I realized how we had been cheated. Sophie's photographs showed us hundreds of tank tracks in the sand, and wreckage of military equipment, giving us another view of the war.

1
Jules Spinatsch, *Cul-de-Sac*, Starmach Gallery, Krakow, Poland, May 25–June 24, 2018. A short installation video of the exhibition is available at: vimeo.com/276625272 [accessed September 22, 2018].

2
Sophie Ristelhueber, *Fait* (Paris: Éditions Hazan, 1992), which is out of print, and *Books on Books #3: Sophie Ristelhueber: Fait* (New York: Errata Editions, 2009).

3
Jules Spinatsch, *TD IV Pulver Gut, Davos*, 2003, a part of the *Temporary Discomfort* series; see, jules-spinatsch.ch/chapter-4 [accessed September 3, 2018].

4
Jules Spinatsch, *Heisenberg's Offside*, 2005, a panoramic installation comprised of 3,003 still images recorded, by an interactive network camera, at an October 2005 World Cup qualification match between Switzerland and France, at the Stade de Suisse in Bern; see, jules-spinatsch.ch/no-2-heisenbergs-offside [accessed September 3, 2018].

My first surveillance panorama work, *Pulver Gut*,[3] came from an experimental impulse, a desire to find out how to create independent images within politicized situations. Having grown up in Davos, Switzerland, I had known the World Economic Forum, which holds its annual meeting there, since its beginnings. I intentionally didn't enter the designated media area. Instead, I explored different approaches to the idea of surveillance, because I wanted to explore the situation from the outside. The first part of the work is a series of landscapes and portraits. Then I encountered, on a ski resort's website, a webcam that combined up to five images into one panoramic image. What would happen, I wondered, if you used this webcam in another context? I was curious to know what I could do without putting myself behind the camera. Together with the technician I worked with, we placed networked cameras in front of the site where the Davos summit took place, and zoomed in to the max. Then I realized that it takes time to make a panorama. In fact, I was cutting up the space into time fragments, which is an arbitrary process. It turns out that creating a panorama is a method of programming that's bound to fail. I mean, with this technological approach, you will most likely not detect anything. On the contrary, you will miss almost everything, which shows how surveillance strategies miss even more than they record, even though they record a lot. For example, my World Cup qualification match panorama doesn't have a single soccer ball in it.[4] In the end, the notion that surveillance fails most of the time was a very challenging one for me. The *Surveillance Panoramas* series plays with the idea of gathering a lot of images, but the question is how you analyze them—how you can overload somebody with tons of unnecessary information and still try to conceal the essence of something.

IS I was wondering whether you could have visualized the outcome back then, because you were experimenting so extensively with this new technology. Could you elaborate on this in the case of *Vienna MMIX*? When you started to produce this work in Austria, you already knew it would be presented in public space, right?

JS The basic idea of the Vienna work was to record an "entire society." The Opera Ball is a representational event that takes place every year, and the evening runs according to a fixed program. Everybody who attends is an actor and a participant at the same time, and a spectator, too. People go there to show themselves from their best side, to show the role they play in society. While all the splendor of the space was rendered perfectly in my recordings—even little areas became interesting in themselves—my way of representing the event undermines precise expectations of the viewer, because the camera controlled the space, but not the action, within each frame.

I actually wanted to place a camera at the center of the building, but that spot was reserved—as it is every year—for Austrian television. I solved the problem by using two cameras, each covering 180 degrees, and afterwards I combined their images and got virtually the same middle position as the television networks. However, my panorama covered the complete event, which lasted about eight hours, from when people began entering the opera house until the last person left and the music stopped. The public presentation as a huge circular panorama was part of the original concept, but it turned out that a circular panorama on the inside of a walled structure was not allowed, for safety reasons. We decided to turn the walls inside out, which was actually much better: you make it even more public by pointing the walls of a closed building out into an openly accessible space.

IS After the presentation in Vienna, you have continued to work with these images. You've presented them as single images carefully selected from the collection of 10,008, and designed a book containing them all.[5] What did you want to convey with these specific forms?

5
Jules Spinatsch, *Vienna MMIX – 10008/7000, Surveillance Panorama Project No. 4 – The Vienna Opera Ball* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2014).

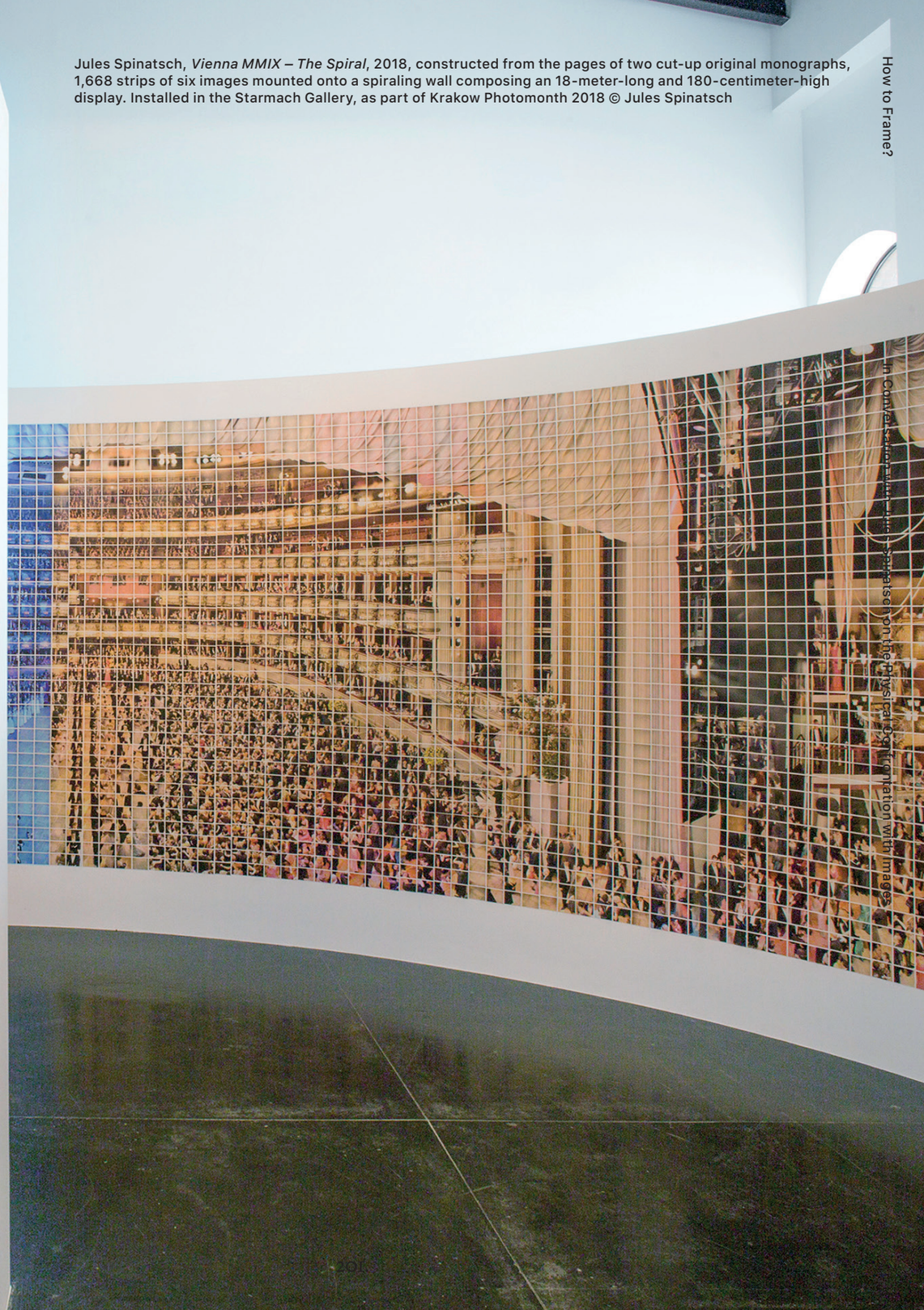
JS While doing the Vienna work, I realized that the single images were at the core of the panoramas. The unintentional, uncontrolled part is the actual content of a single image. I know the moment at which the camera records a certain area in the space, but I don't know what's happening at that moment. This unintended aspect of each picture had a significance that I wanted to explore differently by arranging groups of images from among the 10,008. What's important for me is the reflective part of these single images. Therein lies the message of the work: I want people to be aware that quite a lot of what they see and interpret in an image is what they put into it themselves. Furthermore, it's up to the viewer to combine these fragments into a narrative. You might compare it to making a novel out of text fragments.

The gallery is a better space for this process because the audience is slowed down, prepared to look attentively at things. On the contrary, the spectacular format of the outdoor circular panorama was designed for everyone who dropped by, and is a reference to the nineteenth-century panorama—the first mass-entertainment medium, before the invention of film.

The concept of the book was to include all the images, so I placed every column of the recordings onto one spread, making a flip-book from thirty-six positions. The book also contains a second volume, titled simply *71 Photographs*, and both are presented together in one sleeve with an essay and a selection of single images—making them as detached from their original content as possible.

IS Specially for the solo show at Krakow Photomonth, you decided to create a new format for *Vienna MMIX* based on a very early idea of yours: a spiral wall structure that contains the cut-up pages of two original books. This structure contains all the images of the panorama pasted on the inside of a white spiral wall twenty meters long and 2.2 meters high. Could you tell us more about the construction, and the title, of your *Cul-de-Sac* exhibition?

JS For the moment, this seems to be the ultimate form in which to present this work, and I'm not sure I will ever do a more elaborate installation with it. Personally, I like it more than the circular panorama for the public



Jules Spinatsch, *Vienna MMIX – The Spiral*, 2018, constructed from the pages of two cut-up original monographs, 1,668 strips of six images mounted onto a spiraling wall composing an 18-meter-long and 180-centimeter-high display. Installed in the Starmach Gallery, as part of Krakow Photomonth 2018 © Jules Spinatsch

space—it's defined by many more transitions and visual overlaps as you walk inside the spiral walls. The claustrophobic feeling I was looking for with the original closed, circular setup becomes even more pronounced with the spiral design. And the whole history of the work is contained within it, because it's constructed out of the book. What we did was cut up two copies of the book, cut the columns out of the pages, and paste those on the wall.

For the show at the Starmach Gallery, I chose the title *Cul-de-Sac* as a reference to Roman Polanski's 1966 film of the same title, for I really had in mind that you're never sure if you'll be able to get back out again. The opera house itself is from the 1860s, and for me the particles and molecules in the dust of the building can be seen as witnesses of a long and complicated history. Somehow it's also an absurdity: it offers at first sight a circular panorama, and then gets narrower and narrower, and concludes, you could say, as a dead-end road.

IS What is the role and meaning of exhibitions in your practice?

JS When exhibiting a work in a space, the physical confrontation is very important for me—even more so in our digital times. The speed of media gives the urge to slow down and take time to really look, to think about a specific image instead of only consuming a stream of images at a fast pace. In an exhibition I like to play with scale by presenting the panoramas as huge prints, so you as a person can become part of a specific surrounding and context. I definitely want to show how photography is used and misused, or used to reach certain goals. Images are not just there innocently—and you are not innocent as a viewer either.

This conversation took place in Zurich, on June 20, 2018.

In Conversation with Anni Wallenius

on the Evolving Challenges of Exhibiting Photography Collections

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger The collection of the Finnish Museum of Photography is massive. It contains more than three million items covering a variety of categories: negatives, prints, archival material, etc. You work there as chief curator of collections. What are the most compelling challenges curators such as yourself face at the moment when exhibiting photography collections?

Anni Wallenius In our collection policies, we state that we collect examples of both different photographic cultures and also different uses of the medium. It is important to document the original, contextual use of the photographs, but we cannot build time machines, of course. That is the conflict and the challenge that we are always discussing. I think that the role of our museum, when exhibiting the collection, is partly to make visible the ways photography has been used in different eras. We try to exhibit the meanings that the photographs have had, as far as we can grasp them, during the time they were produced and used. The meanings that the photographs had may be unfamiliar to today's audience. But we can't limit ourselves to that, because it is impossible to exhibit the material with total historical-minded objectivity. We are aware of the fact that we are articulating new interpretations all the time. We need to be open about that. Acknowledging our own role in framing the photographs and in making decisions about how to exhibit material need not diminish the value of knowing the original context.

AKR What principles do you adhere to, and what kinds of choices do you make, when you seek to describe the original context?

AW There is the concept of a collection's objects in their "ideal form." This refers not only to their physical form. According to this concept, the object's value is augmented the more you know about all the contexts it has been a part of. This includes the process of acquisition. The objects of the collection need to be documented in a way that allows us to reference an object's prior use and the story of its existence both inside and outside the museum; which is to say, all that an object has experienced. The more you know about something, the more ideal of a collection object it becomes. We are a photo archive because our collection is the primary source of research. The collection is the starting point from which you can develop different theories and illuminate new viewpoints. Even though you cannot lock the meaning of the archived item, you can document the meanings and uses that have defined its existence in the process of gathering factual information. All of it adds up to the sum significance of the item.

AKR How about cases in which awareness of an object's original context and meaning raises ethical dilemmas for contemporary institutions and audiences? How do you handle ethical quandaries when relating the histories you give an account of?

AW There are two questions in such cases: What is the history of the collection and what are we exhibiting now? I would say that every institution, especially every heritage institution, should nowadays be cognizant of the history and provenance of its collection. In Finland, for example, several museums have repatriated their Sámi collections to Sámi Museum Siida, the national museum of the Sámi, located in Inari. Since museums have become aware of how this part of their collections formed, they have not been able to justify why their museum should retain stewardship of these objects. So they have decided to repatriate them. A good way to deal with the difficult parts of the history of your institution is to deal with them publicly. You come up with proactive solutions that you can stand behind. Another important way is to cooperate directly with the people whose heritage the material in question belongs to. I hope that this is something our institution is going to do more of in the future.

AKR Can you give an example?

AW The photographs in our collection of and about the Sámi people. We have a collection of Finnish Tourist Association photographs in which Sámi people are objectified for the purposes of tourism marketing. Our museum has begun discussions with the group Suoma Sámi Nuorat (Sámi Youth of Finland) about cooperatively exploring ways to make use of this collection by developing and presenting new interpretations of the material. It is critical for us to frankly acknowledge the relevant colonial history and context in which these photographs were produced and used. However, that does not automatically preclude us from ever showing these photographs.

AKR The ethical choices you make, and the new context for historical documents you create, certainly refer to the relation between visibility and representation. It is a choice to give visibility to something. Exhibiting material and assembling a portrayal of a people does not always mean that you accept and agree with earlier uses and representations, which can instead be questioned and challenged. But when you give visibility to something, it can overshadow visibility of something else that might be worth exhibiting or at least bringing to the fore of discussion and debate.

AW Yes, that is important. We cannot really force the audience to read the photographs or their contexts in the way we are exhibiting them, however focused our curatorial efforts, since the audience has the right to interpret the exhibition as they want to. However, I strongly feel that in a photography museum, it is our task to inform viewers about the contexts behind images.

AKR How do you work when you have negatives or files which have never been printed? On the one hand, if they have never before been printed and displayed, there is no primary material upon which their presentation should be modeled. On the other hand, the conventions of exhibiting photographs are directly influenced by the way we think photographs on display should look, and vice versa. How do you make decisions about how to exhibit material that has never been exhibited, or even disseminated, before?

AW First I think about the ethics involved. What is the right context for framing the material? Then we try to find a balance between meeting a contemporary audience's expectations for how a photography exhibition should look while, at the same time, attempting to challenge visitors with unexpected material and curatorial approaches. We bring out and work with some of the primary material in our collection—some of the negatives and tangible historical artifacts we possess. But we have to be mindful. When we make new prints, and we decide to put the negatives on display in a vitrine as relics of a sort, is that a good or a bad thing? We have to protect the original material by exhibiting it in cases; but in the process we risk fetishistically transforming everyday objects into sacral relics. We can try to balance this by also including objects that a visitor can experience in a hands-on way. You can hold and feel something, smell it, inspect it closely without the interference of light reflecting off protective glass. So we have to find a balance between our audience's expectations, historical veracity, and our educative ambitions.

AKR You have also recently started collecting social media images. How do you approach this effort? From the perspective of collecting and preserving these images, how does the process differ compared to the work you have done with photographs predating the digital and Internet era?

AW The fact that photos being shared on social media are always moving and changing—that's the main difference. With social media photographs, there have been challenges that relate to technical hurdles in terms of, for example, archiving, server storage issues, etc. Of course, technical and logistical problems arising from

managing massive collections predate the digital era, so we are accustomed to dealing with them. What we are *not* accustomed to is photos just whizzing back and forth across the Internet and being perpetually transformed, all while being so dependent on contextual information. Context is so important here: these images have not only been produced but reproduced countless times, and then their reproductions are reproduced, etc., and all in a way that is impossible to track, capture, and truly "collect." Here, too, we know that curators and archivists have found it impossible to corral everything connected to one of the medium's developments. For example, we cannot really recreate the context within which nineteenth-century photo albums were used either; but that doesn't keep us from collecting them.

AKR When we talk about self-multiplying images, then we also have a multiplicity of contexts. Such contexts, even if influenced by digitality, nonetheless mirror the way photography has been used in the analogue past. For example, photographs have been used in the historical past as a way to maintain and develop social and community networks; to nurture and strengthen familial bonds; and to construct and shape personal histories and identities. But how do you deal with the meta levels of photography, like targeting and surveillance, and with the fact that unseen algorithms increasingly drive and determine the dissemination of images online?

AW I don't know yet! As a photography museum, our role is in part geared toward preservation. In all likelihood, future generations will be baffled by some of our decisions. Hopefully they will understand our reasoning even if they do not agree with it. But we have to start somewhere. At the moment, even though these issues are being actively discussed, the majority of museums do not collect social media images at all because they see it as too big of a headache. We have at least begun tackling this endeavor, beginning from the root level, with the Nordic Museum's Collecting Social Photo research project.

AKR It's interesting that you say that at the end of the day you are preserving photographs. As we know, the entire concept of photography has become very fluid, amorphous even. How is a photograph to be defined, much less preserved, if instead of a primary, tangible object we have instead a palimpsest of ephemeral contexts?

AW Maybe I should have said that we are collecting a "something" that is partially defined by a visual element. We start from something that is visual, but which is connected to—and *is*, period—many other things as well. In the Collecting Social Photo project, the starting point is users themselves: their idiosyncratic ways of doing what they are doing, and also their reflections on the meaning that photographs, and the actions of uploading, sharing, and re-sharing, have for them. I believe this is one way of approaching this material.

AKR How are you going to exhibit these social media photo collections?

AW Probably the most difficult challenge is the same situation we talked about in relation to negatives. Are we somehow betraying the original intentions of the photographer? One of the findings of the recent research project Why We Post, in which visual anthropologists spent a number of years studying social media use globally, was that we cannot generalize anything about social media practices.[1] For example, selfies that superficially look the same might have been used in completely different ways, and embraced completely different meanings, within the context of different cultures and subcultures. I hope that by providing the specific context of a shared image, we can help elucidate the scope of its meaning. For example, we are doing screenshot videos. Simple things like that.

There is a shift in power here. We need to work together with people. We can't make these curatorial and archival decisions ourselves. When it comes to collecting social media images, and to overseeing museum collections in general in the twenty-first century, I look forward to a more cooperative and transparent future for all involved.

1 The Why We Post global research project was initiated, in 2012, by University College London anthropology professor Daniel Miller. For more information on the project and its findings, see: ucl.ac.uk/why-we-post/discoveries [accessed September 10, 2018].

This conversation took place in Helsinki, on August 24, 2018.

In Conversation with Bettina Leidl

on Photography Institutions and Sustainability

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger When we first met some years ago, you told me that besides photography, the focus of your curatorial programming lies in environmental issues and sustainability. You are the director of Kunst Haus Wien, which is referred to as Vienna's first "green museum," with a program providing a space for artists who deal with topics such as "sustainability, climate change, recycling, urbanistics, or cross-generational responsibility."[1] What does this mean? How is photography part of this approach?

1
Kunst Haus Wien mission statement, kunsthauswien.com/en/about-us/kunst-haus-wien/mission-statement [accessed August 17, 2018].

Bettina Leidl Friedensreich Hundertwasser, the famous Austrian artist and founder of the museum, is omnipresent in the Kunst Haus. As one approaches the building, one sees the typical architecture, the trees which grow from the windows and niches; one sees the greenery in the courtyard and on the rooftop; one stumbles over uneven grounds—the building is distinctively shaped by its founder and his visions. In the 1950s and 60s, it was avant-garde to combine art, living, and ecology. Hundertwasser founded the Kunst Haus as a museum for his collection and his works. But from the very beginning, he had also planned exhibition spaces for contemporary art. Since 2007, our focus has been on contemporary photography.

I started my exhibition program four years ago, with Rinko Kawauchi. I was particularly interested in topics which are universal and affect contemporary society. What we do as individuals has an impact on the whole of humankind. One of Kawauchi's series, for example, is called *Ametsuchi*, in which she examines slash-and-burn farming traditions in Japan. Her work reflects the connection between nature and humankind on different levels. This was compelling to me, her reflection on topics such as ecology and sustainability, and the connection between art, life, and nature with which Hundertwasser as a visionary had been concerned.

In addition to monographic exhibitions dedicated to photographers such as Joel Meyerowitz, Martin Parr, and, most recently, Elina Brotherus, the exhibition program in recent years has focused on nature, ecology, and photography. In exhibitions such as *Visions of Nature*, various artists have dealt with the relationship between humans and nature, and the irreversible changes the Anthropocene has set in motion. Recent works by Austrian artist, filmmaker, and activist Oliver Ressler, or the minimalist animal and nature photographs of German photographer and biologist Jochen Lempert, are two such examples.

AKR The combination of artistic, activist, and scientific approaches can be highly effective because of the intertwined affective and intellectual potential. But when we talk about photography, and especially photography with a documentary approach, there is always the visual content of the image and the conditions in which the image is produced and used to consider. How do you communicate to your audience the different roles of documentary truth when you are dealing with works that are in between activism, science, and art?

BL From the very beginning of photography's history, scientists worked with photography because it was viewed as a medium that depicted reality. In their works, many artists refer to social and environmental issues, to human-caused destruction. They reflect on issues like the increase of prosperity, economic growth, consumption, and profit maximization at all costs—the excesses of capitalism—and are critical of the mindset that measures natural resources solely in terms of market value. These artistic projects are often rigorously researched. Many artists also work together with scientists and NGOs who understand that problematic developments and realities may be brought to the public's attention through artistic work. These organizations therefore often address their concerns directly to the artists.

AKR This is true; but do we need the institution to exhibit and contextualize such endeavors?

BL Which brings us to the question about the role of the museum or an exhibition space in contemporary society. As directors and curators, we have to think about how to involve ourselves in the debate. Museums are value producers. A century ago, when museums became public, they played a role in helping to democratize our societies. And I think this is also possible with the ecological issues we have to deal with now. When I took over the management of the Kunst Haus four years ago, I learned from conversations with visitors, especially the younger audience, that it was Hundertwasser and his visions on global warming, loss of biodiversity, and recycling that aroused their interest. I am interested in how contemporary artists deal with questions of ecology, sustainability, and the loss of biodiversity, but also in corollary sociopolitical questions.

AKR Can you mention some projects or collaborations which have been successful examples of value-making?

BL *Creating Common Goods*, *Visions of Nature*, and Edward Burtynsky's *Water* cycle. All three exhibitions focused on globalization, population growth, the decimation of the rainforest from deforestation, the great destruction caused by agriculture on Earth—all themes that are taken up and critically examined by the artists in their work.

The number of museums which, like the Kunst Haus Wien, deal with the themes of art and nature is also increasing. In Berlin, for example, the Haus der Kulturen der Welt is doing this.

AKR In my opinion, an environmental approach in exhibitions has at least three levels. First is the discursive level, of course, the programming dealing with issues related to the environment, post-carbon economies, sustainability, etc., which you have talked about. The second level is the educational level; thinking about how to educate the audience about ecological values within the context of seeing and exhibiting photographs. This discussion is important in order to understand different values of production. We can encourage the audience to think about the different ways of approaching images and photographs in a space. The third level is the material and practical level, which is focused on different means for producing and transporting exhibitions in a more sustainable way. Today, we are accustomed to transporting editioned photographs as sculptural objects around the globe, or to sending files to print and then mount on aluminum, on site, only to destroy prints, frames, everything, right after an exhibition. Instead of this as the default modus operandi, we could look for new ecological materials and ways of producing and mounting photography exhibitions. Should the order of these levels be the other way around? Should we start by paying attention to the ways we produce and transport photography exhibitions?

BL You know, I have really thought about this for a long time, and I have to admit that I do not have a solution that satisfies me. Nevertheless, I think it is the institution itself that should take responsibility and think about how exhibitions are organized, as well as how sustainable the museum itself acts in general. We have to decide if we should reprint or transport a piece of work; if we should print invitation cards; if we can reuse and recycle removable exhibition walls. We need to ask about how the museum restaurant deals with environmental issues, about which products the shop is selling, etc. Institutional self-reflection is the first required step before one can start to talk to the artist about their approach.

AKR Yes, first pay attention to one's own practices and then participate in the more general discourse. Practice and theory become connected, when one pays attention to how one treats other people in the professional field, and to the kinds of practices and working conditions one creates as a curator and a human being on this planet. However, I

think that we should create a discourse around more ecological ways of approaching photography exhibitions. These days, it could be a value in the same way as organic and ethical food are, for example. Art or photography institutions are certainly not the worst polluters on this planet; but there can still be a progressive attitude regarding these matters.

BL Exactly. Of course, it is a challenge to find the balance between the customary requirements for presenting art and the most sustainable ways of doing so. I talk a lot with photo laboratories, and in that market, basically everybody mounts on aluminum. One can make suggestions to the artists about the best way to present work both in ecological and artistic terms; but in the end, we have to find the best solution for the art and for the artist.

AKR I must ask you again: Do you really believe that actions taken in the field of art can have a real effect on, for example, political decision-making regarding the environment?

BL Of course I do. Hence the question, can art save the climate? Of course not, but art can sharpen our perception and change our perspective. Art can point out new approaches. It lets us see parallels, and to reflect on the global transgressions and detrimental developments that threaten our existence. When artists address the problems of our time, their artistic work often has a more direct effect on people than a scientific treatise on the same subject. Many artists combine their art with political commitment, and they can get us out of our comfort zone. With their artistic approach they work out sociopolitical connections and stimulate the discourse about them.

This conversation took place in Arles, on July 3, 2018.

Who's Narrating the Space?

Iris Sikking

Time Is a Luxury: Space of Flows in the Space of Places

In 2018, I was appointed guest curator for the sixteenth edition of Krakow Photomonth, a festival, organized by the Foundation for Visual Arts,[1] that collaborates with ten contemporary art museums, galleries, and dedicated spaces in the historical city center and its neighboring districts. My aspiration being to create a coherent group exhibition using these ten locations, my main concern was how a thematic approach could resonate throughout solo and group exhibitions staged in different venues, all within walking distance of each other. This essay is a reflection on my curatorial decisions in relation to the program I developed under the title *Space of Flows: Framing an Unseen Reality*.

The opportunity to curate Krakow Photomonth came out of an intense and rewarding collaboration during its fourteenth edition, in 2016.[2] Given the lack of tightly established and sustainable photography-oriented infrastructure in Poland, the festival is one of the nation's most important platforms for photography, along with the annual photo festivals in Łódź and Wrocław. The festival's choice to work with a mix of Polish curators and guest curators from outside Poland is meant to engender fresh influences with regard to trends and movements in the international field of photography. In past years, the festival has put itself on the map as an event that takes note of what is happening at the edges of the medium's practices, and welcomes an experimental and artistic approach more likely to be found in a contemporary art context.[3]

To undertake this reflection, I looked closely at my thought and work processes, and at the collaborations I had with the invited artists to explore appropriate presentation formats for their work. The festival team was, in 2018 as in 2016, fully engaged in helping me find what I was looking for.[4] Opening up a curatorial process that took place over a year fostered many considerations on how to exhibit photography and its extended practices. If one wishes to learn more about curatorship it is important to gain insight into this process, as curator Terry Smith argues in *Thinking Contemporary Curating*: "Much more is needed if a reflexive practice is to be maintained. I would love to see curators keeping detailed records of every stage of their thinking and planning and to read statements of how they pre-visualized exhibitions, including how these ideas changed during the hang."[5]

1
See, sztukawizualna.org/en.

2
Lars Willumeit, the guest curator for the 2016 edition of the festival, invited me to curate a group exhibition, an opportunity which I used to put together *A New Display: Visual Storytelling at a Crossroads*, Tytonie, Krakow, Poland, May 14–June 12, 2016; for more information, see, 2016.photomonth.com/en/program/a-new-display-visual-storytelling-at-a-crossroad [accessed August 13, 2018].

3
However, some critics in the Polish press were skeptical of this approach. Michał Dąbrowski, for example, wrote, "The festival is searching for its identity. Is the event organized by the Foundation for Visual Arts heading in the direction of Visual Arts Month or Art Media Month?" Michał Dąbrowski, "Miesiąc Fotografii w Krakowie 2018" [Krakow Photomonth 2018], Culture.pl (July 3, 2018), culture.pl/pl/artykul/miesiac-fotografii-w-krakowie-2018 [accessed September 8, 2018].

4
I am especially grateful for the support I received from Foundation for Visual Arts director Agnieszka Olszewska, with whom I discussed my vision and intentions, and who was instrumental in securing funding; Photomonth Main Program exhibition coordinator Joanna Gorlach, who provided critical feedback on all of my curatorial choices; and graphic designer Damian Nowak, who created a strong graphical layer for the Main Program.

5
Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012), 255.

To archive my process and what I achieved in relation to my ambition, I generated feedback through conversations with a number of artists and professionals who visited the festival on the opening weekend,[6] or attended its symposium[7] and portfolio reviews the weekend after. In addition, I gathered reviews from Polish and international newspapers, magazines, and online outlets. (Unfortunately, the festival's organizer was not able to carry out surveys with audience members this year, as it has done in the past.[8])

My background in film editing has definitely shaped my practice as an exhibition curator. Considering an individual artwork as a potential scene from a movie, I would try to sequence it between other works such that I created juxtapositions and constructed a possible narrative. In my opinion, sequencing different works can highlight remarkable aspects, multiply meanings, and raise unexpected questions. After all, it is the montage of a film that determines how an individual shot or scene is perceived and interpreted. However, this approach of drawing several works into a story created by the curator is rather contentious, as it stands to weaken the authorship of a single work. It is exactly this tension that I see as a puzzle that must be solved in the curatorial process: it is fascinating to select demanding works that could nevertheless benefit from an intentional curatorial frame. In her essay "What Is an Exhibition?", Elena Filipovic argues that the balance between a curator's ego and the independence of a work can result in a rewarding kind of comprehension: "If artworks are simultaneously the elements in an exhibition's construction of meaning while being, dialectally, subjected to staging, they can also at moments articulate aesthetic and intellectual positions or define modes of engagement that transcend or even defy their thematic or structural exhibition frames."[9] No question, I am aware that structure and narrative are strongly imposed on the individual elements of a film because of the medium's time-based nature. I am also aware that in an exhibition it is the visitor who decides how to navigate the space and how much time to spend looking at a given work.

Considering the aspect of space, and the question of whether an exhibition's layout can enhance the meaning of each work in relation to other works and to the overall theme, it is instructive to reference a PhD thesis written by Natalie

6
During the festival's opening weekend, May 25–27, 2018, eighteen of the Main Program's participating artists were present. The festival organized a chain of staggered openings over the course of the weekend, allowing for those involved to be present at each other's openings.

7
On June 1, the symposium *Why Exhibit?: Provoking Questions about Exhibiting (Extended) Photography* was held, at the Museum of Photography in Krakow, within the overarching festival program. The event served as a preview of sorts of this volume, gathering together many of the authors who have contributed essays and artists who have been interviewed. For a list of speakers, see, photomonth.com/en/symposium [accessed September 8, 2018].

8
However, information about the number of visitors was collected, from the participating institutions as well as festival volunteers stationed at exhibition sites, plus from notes of the events taking place at the festival's main hub and throughout Krakow. The numbers added up to a total of 35,000 visitors over the course of the festival.

9
Elena Filipovic, "What Is an Exhibition?", in *Ten Fundamental Questions of Curating*, ed. Jens Hoffmann (Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2013), 77.

Hope O'Donnell. In "Space as Curatorial Practice: The Exhibition as a Spatial Construct," O'Donnell articulates an overarching concept: "The practice of curating is fundamentally spatial, made manifest through the exhibition as a spatial construct."[10] In fact, only when an exhibition comes to full maturity might one be able to retrace the steps that led to its outcome. O'Donnell regards the curator as the architect of an exhibition, and takes into account how a specific building and exhibition space creates both the conditions and the restrictions for the desired placement of works of art. To analyze a completed exhibition, she proposes considering it through five key aspects: program, walk-through, argument, sequence, and interval. Such an analysis, she argues, should lead to the comprehension of "an architectural sensibility associated with the placement of objects in a space."[11] For the remainder of this essay, I will use these five criteria to shine a more detailed light on my Krakow Photomonth program.

Creating a Festival Theme: Space of Flows[12]

More than a decade ago, I encountered *The Rise of the Network Society*, a fascinating book, originally published in 1996, in which sociologist Manuel Castells introduces his view of a world to come based on the concepts of the "space of places" and the "space of flows."[13] Owing to the rise of the network society, a real virtuality has become visible, making us aware that we no longer live only in a "space of places," defined by Castells as a space in which we are familiar with every nook and cranny of our village, acquainted with all of our neighbors, and capable of tracing in our minds the jigsaw configurations of the horizon-bound fields. The digital turn, he argues, was responsible for the creation of what we might call a "space of flows," which, though invisible, has catapulted us into a fluid ecosystem in which all things come into relation with each other. "The space of flows," Castells writes, "is made up of movement that brings distant elements—things and people—into an interrelationship that is characterized today by being continuous and in real time."[14] Consequently, we are faced with a changing experience of time and speed, demanding a substantial shift in our perspective on humanity and the planet.

I wanted to find a way in which photography and video projects could make the "space of flows" more fathomable by

10
Natalie Hope O'Donnell, "Space as Curatorial Practice: The Exhibition as a Spatial Construct," PhD thesis, Oslo Centre for Critical Architectural Studies (OCCAS), 2016, available in PDF form at: brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/handle/11250/2398244 [accessed June 8, 2018]. O'Donnell is currently Senior Curator at the Munch Museum in Oslo, Norway.

11
Ibid., 80.

12
The following paragraphs are based on my curatorial statement for the festival, which can be read in full at: photomonth.com/en/main-program/space-of-flows [accessed September 18, 2018].

13
Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society; second edition, with a new preface* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), xviii.

14
Ibid., 497.

15
Michał Dąbrowski, op. cit.

humanizing its statistics, personalizing and particularizing its abstractions, and demystifying its technophilic enigmas. Therefore, taking Castells' "space of flows" as a starting point, I decided to focus on three topics. First, I gathered work dealing with migration within contemporary Europe, an issue we have recently faced but are still struggling with: how do we deal with people on the move in our globalized world? A second strand of projects covered environmental issues. It is important to be aware of the age of the Anthropocene and to take care of natural resources. (I have also been confronted personally with immensely polluted air in some parts of Poland.) Thirdly, I searched for artists who draw our attention to the invisibility and intangibility of digital data. In 2018, this was also a reference to the financial crisis that had taken place ten years earlier, which we can easily say showed us the use and misuse of (our) financial data and its global transference. Though these topics, along with the speed of information-sharing and image circulation in our current society, were addressed in the general exhibition text placed at every festival location, some journalists did not value my reference to Castells' twenty-two-year-old theory. Michał Dąbrowski, for instance, wrote, in a review for the Culture.pl web portal, "[…] the Krakow festival touched on important topics, but in a way that was too hermetic. Basing the curatorial text on a concept formulated in 1996 requires us to question its validity."[15]

However, in my view, one could say we live in exactly such a networked society as described by Castells: one that can be defined as an open, borderless, and intangible entity, constantly in flux and ever-shifting in shape. We feel we are all part of an enmeshed whole that provokes and confronts us on a near-daily basis with events unfolding in faraway locales. As we take note of them via our screens, in the form of tweets, images, or video clips, they evade traditional geographic boundaries and notions of localness. Moreover, the speed with which people move around the globe—as well as goods, information, and pollutants—makes it often impossible to distinguish between catalyst and consequence. How should we judge the messages on our screens? Can we really see and understand what is going on?

Katja Stuke and Oliver Sieber, *You and Me*, 2014–2017, two-channel video installation, no sound, 12′25″. Installed in the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art, as part of Krakow Photomonth 2018 (photo: Studio Luma)

How to Curate a Photography Festival

In my practice as a curator, and before as a film editor, I have always collaborated intensively with others, be they directors, photographers, or visual artists (abbreviated henceforth as "artists"), who take a certain position on a current political debate based on extensive research, and whose work is situated, one could say, on the border between art and journalism. In his book *Aesthetic Journalism*, Alfredo Cramerotti—against the background of a fractured mediascape and the waning influence of legacy news outlets in the twenty-first century—defines these kinds of projects thusly: "What I call aesthetic journalism involves artistic practices in the form of investigation of social, cultural, or political circumstances. Its research outcomes take shape in the art context, rather than through media channels."[16] By adding the subtitle *Framing an Unseen Reality* to the exhibition's main title, *Space of Flows*, I sought to explain the positions of the lens-based artists represented—frame being, apart from a reference to photography and video, a double reference to the statements these artists make via their work.

In my opinion, many photo festivals, despite having highlighted and promoted themes, lack a powerful curatorial approach. Quite often they show too many works and stage them in a uniformed design, which seems sadly to blur the well-chosen focus. Could this be explained by the fact that festivals feel the need to put "photography" as a medium on the map, the way many eagerly promote themselves as places to celebrate "photography"? As a tentative response, I would like to refer to the thought-provoking, self-described "moderately radical manifesto for future photo festivals" penned by the Dutch independent curator Hester Keijser.[17] She makes a plea for photo festivals to become "more exciting and transformative," and blames the lack of discursively compiled programs on the fact that not enough attention is paid, in the current field of photography (which encompasses curators, photographers, and critics), to the changes in the medium triggered by the digital era. I agree with Keijser that a photo festival, thanks to its flexible nature, could indeed be a place to discuss urgent matters relating to the image as we experience it today as part of our visual culture. For exactly this reason, I was very much inspired by the *Experience* edition of the Foto Biënnale Rotterdam, in 2003[18]; and, more recently, the *Farewell Photography* edition of the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie, in the Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region of Germany, in 2017.[19] In my opinion, both programs managed to interweave content-driven works, characterized by contemporary artistic approaches, with recent developments in photography. In doing so, they paid attention to the place of image culture in our lives, and did so while using lens-based media in whatever way was needed (including moving imagery and computer-rendered technologies).

As a curator, I am often inspired by these kinds of cutting-edge events. This was reason enough for me to look for artists who embraced experimentation, used a range of narrative strategies, and appropriated specific camera technologies to reflect on machine vision. This led in turn to projects that reflect on what a photographic image is, and what it means today. Take, for example, the project *Collateral Visions* (ongoing since 2016), presented in the ZPAF Gallery, for which Clément Lambelet produced portraits using a technique based on Eigenface, the first facial recognition algorithm, and presented the images as monumental portraits. Or *THE MARKET* (ongoing since 2010), a room-wide installation by Mark Curran, at the Szara Kamienica Gallery, which, informed by Curran's practice-led research on shadow banking and high-frequency trading, contained a video graphic with soundscape, a short movie, and complete transcriptions, assembled in archive folders, of interviews Curran conducted with stakeholders. On the other hand, the interactive sound installation *Elusive Noise: Unfolding the Virtual* (2014–2018), produced by Salvatore Vitale and presented at the MOCAK Museum of Contemporary Art, reminded us that the omnipresence of data technologies, digital services, and social networks requires a constant reflection upon the relation between humans and machines. As a final example, I will cite a selection of works by Jules Spinatsch, which were shown at the Starmach Gallery. Specifically for this exhibition, the festival produced a new presentational format for his *Vienna MMIX* project, from 2009, in which he chronicled Vienna's annual Opera Ball with programmed networked cameras.[20]

Although photography today exists in many formats—a younger generation, educated in a much more interdisciplinary way, is testament to this—the reality is that the classic format (framed, printed in black and white) is still the most popular among larger audiences. In *After Photography*, Fred

16 Alfredo Cramerotti, *Aesthetic Journalism: How to Inform Without Informing* (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), 21.

17 Hester Keijser, "Manifesto for Future European Photo Festivals," *Mrs. Deane* (December 5, 2017), beikey.net/mrs-deane/?p=9233 [accessed August 28, 2018].

18 This edition of the biennial, its fifth, curated by Bas Vroege, director of Paradox, and Frits Gierstberg, curator at the Netherlands Photo Museum in Rotterdam, was unfortunately the final edition of the event. For more on *Experience*, see, paradox.nl/project/experience [accessed September 8, 2018].

19 The Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie directly succeeded the Fotofestival Mannheim-Ludwigshafen-Heidelberg. It now takes place in the three cities every two years. For more information, see, biennalefotografie.de/en.

20 See, in this volume, "In Conversation with Jules Spinatsch on the Physical Confrontation with Images," 195–202.

Sander Breure and Witte van Hulzen, *The Shore of an Island I Only Skirted*, 2012, two-channel video, stereo sound, loop, 14′. Installed in Nuremberg House, as part of Krakow Photomonth 2018 (photo: Liudmyla Radyk)

Ritchin sharply observes that a photograph "is no longer a tangible object, a rectangle resembling a painting," but rather "a part of a larger array of linked dynamic media."[21] It is no surprise that many journalists singled out Agata Grzybowska's *9 Gates of No Return* (2018) as a favorite; of all the projects in the program, it was the most traditionally executed and presented. Grzybowska, a Polish journalist, undertook intensive trips to visit people who had turned their backs on civilization and gone to live in the Bieszczady Mountains, a remote and rugged range in the extreme southeast of Poland. A series of landscapes and portraits printed in black and white on barite paper was underscored by an intimate soundtrack, amplified in the space to lend the atmosphere Grzybowska sought. At the same time, the other project that appeared quite often in reviews was Anaïs López's *The Migrant: A Bird on the Run* (2018), a hybridized endeavor encompassing a theatrical performance, handmade book, and interactive web documentary for mobile devices.[22]

Apart from the accumulation of ideas that led to choices for spatial design, the staging of the shows ultimately came down to defining the exact hanging, placing, and lighting of works, as well as of objects such as chairs, tables, video screens, and projectors. Here I will return to the method proposed by O'Donnell, who states that the curator's program is what a curator intends to communicate about the individual works and the exhibition as a whole set.[23] In my curatorial text, I wrote: "In the heavily charged image culture of our contemporary societies, we are in need of artists who are able to frame complex realities in ways that push us out of our comfort zones, and that motivate us to reflect upon our own deep-seated and perhaps unacknowledged anxieties and attitudes toward the unknown, the unseen, and the overlooked, in our own geographical or virtual backyards."[24] With this argument as a foundation, I tried to create a cohesive spatial architecture for the exhibitions, in which the visitor could establish substantial connections between the works.

Narration in Space: Ethnographic Museum

The installations in the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum's annex were dedicated to the topic of migration. In the vaulted basement of the annex building, I used four rooms to make natural divisions between four interconnected projects.[25]

21
Fred Ritchin, *After Photography* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), 70.

22
For example, Manuela De Leonardis on Grzybowska, ilmanifesto.it/agata-grzybowska; and Arno Haijtema on López, volkskrant.nl/cultuur-media/krakow-photomonth-zit-vol-migratie-geweld-en-klimaat-maar-is-altijd-origineel-en-nooit-zwaarmoedig~b341e788 [both URLs accessed September 8, 2018].

23
Natalie Hope O'Donnell, op. cit., 80.

24
See fn. 11 for a link to the curatorial statement in full.

25
A short video of the installations at the Ethnographic Museum and Nuremberg House is available at: vimeo.com/276311408 [accessed September 22, 2018].

In the first, I introduced scale models of the imposing border fences that have been erected throughout Europe in recent years. *The Clinch: New Architecture of European Borders* (2016), by Łukasz Skąpski, showed miniature border-fence constructions, representing the defensive reaction of many European governments to the influx of refugees seeking sanctuary and security in Europe. However, I chose to move three of the nine pedestals bearing Skąpski's models into the next room, causing them to interact with the photographic series on display there: *Auspicia* (2018) by Daniela Friebel.

Friebel's pictures of a graveyard in Rome showed an astonishing accumulation of starling droppings, the birds having taken possession of the city long ago. In addition to this series, she presented delicately printed images that took a dreamy look at the starlings' collective and instinctively choreographed flight configurations. The juxtaposition of the emancipated flight of the birds with the erection of steel borders topped with barbed wire might be a simple one, but it created a dialogue in the viewer's mind. Looking back in history, the first starlings to roost in the immediate surroundings of Rome ended up in the leafiest areas in town—parks, graveyards, riverbanks—due to the city's huge expansion. Changing urban environments have consequences for the living conditions of many, and number among the factors that push people to migrate. My proposed narration continued with a more formally presented work in Eva Leitolf's *Postcards from Europe* (ongoing since 2006). Leitolf's long-running documentation of so-called "guilty landscapes" filled the third room: brief texts on postcards, neatly aligned alongside nine prints, led the images back to violent events and strict rules imposed by the European Union that significantly impacted the lives of migrants and refugees after they had passed through the borders of "Fortress Europe." Leitolf unambiguously showed the direct consequences of European refugee and migration policy by photographing abandoned landscapes and cityscapes. Her work immediately evoked an imbalance with the apparently free movements of Friebel's birds.

The fourth room was reserved for Tudor Bratu's demanding work *The Brutality of Fact* (2016–2018). Bratu, who left Romania when he was a young boy, addressed the topic of "otherness" from the perspective of his personal history. He traced the poignant and moving stories of his grandmother

and his father, their lives determined by political decisions. The visual essay was presented on two slide projectors and showed a time-based montage of philosophical texts, written by the artist, and images of, among many others, the atrocities in the country's capital, Bucharest, in 1989, the year of the Romanian Revolution. Bratu's profound image research led him to state that architectural decisions in the urban landscape express an ideology and reveal political beliefs, and thus play a role in how we frame and perceive "the other." Consequently, his project resonated with Skąpski's reinforced security fencing in the first room.

In O'Donnell's opinion, the program and argument of an exhibition come to life when the visitor navigates through an exhibition following his or her own preference. This is what she defines as the walk-through, the third aspect of her theory on the spatiality of exhibitions: "The curator's program is physically manifested as movement, in which the works in the exhibition form sequences that visitors encounter along their chosen walk through the gallery. The logic of the sequence of the exhibition gets its cogency from the idea of the exhibition as a whole."[26] Interestingly, however, many people navigated the museum's basement clockwise, starting in the "fourth" room, with Bratu, and ending in the "first," with Skąpski's border fences. Whichever path they took, they were never far from the Nuremberg House, diagonally across the street, where the evocative two-channel video installation by Sander Breure and Witte van Hulzen, *The Shore of an Island I Only Skirted* (2012), was on display. Partly recorded on the island of Utøya in Norway, where, in 2011, the extremist Anders Behring Breivik massacred youngsters gathered at a summer camp, the installation captured the eerie beauty of a landscape after a tragic event, juxtaposing it with found footage of refugees in small boats on the Mediterranean Sea. From one location to the other, I wanted to transfer the sense of unease that characterizes our society's general attitude toward people perceived as being transients.

Tracing the Invisible: Bunkier Sztuki Gallery

Another case in point is the spatial design of the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art.[27] The building, designed in a brutalist style and exemplifying Polish modernism of the 1960s, is eye-catching from the outside, especially located

26
Natalie Hope O'Donnell, op. cit., 80.

27
A short video of the installation at the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art is available at: vimeo.com/276262635 [accessed September 22, 2018].

as it is in the medieval historical center of Krakow. Inside, it is spacious and filled with architectural details and curved walls. I decided to situate Katja Stuke and Oliver Sieber's project, *You and Me*, as the first one visitors would encounter when they entered the gallery, as it was in fact a key project for the festival.

The project exemplified the festival theme in a straightforward way: *You and Me* (2014–2017) documented a road trip the artists undertook while looking for Indira, a Bosnian woman who, in the early 1990s, fled the war-torn Balkans. The artists got to know Indira when she lived in Düsseldorf, and thanks to social media—our shared databank in the digital ether—they were able to retrace her steps. After she was forced to leave Germany, Indira eventually managed to settle and retreat into a new "space of places," opening a restaurant called You and Me in Bowling Green, Kentucky, in the United States. The project mapped her whereabouts, thus demonstrating the great challenges migrants face in seeking to establish a stable and dignified home for themselves. For me, the project's title acknowledged the fact that "you and me" live in the same world at the same time, our stories intertwined on several levels. What happens in one part of the world can have a ripple effect on other places and people.

Throughout the festival, I proposed stories that were quite complex, and this particular work foreshadowed what I expected from the audience. *You and Me* consisted of a twelve-minute two-channel silent video, projected on a monumental, freestanding, six-meter wall in the center of the room. Visitors were also invited to browse the loosely folded four-hundred-page publication on a nearby table and take note of the pages (part of the same book) lining the wall, offering insight into the information gathered during the artists' trip through politically loaded places, intertwined with references to music, movies, and novels. The presentation format of Stuke and Sieber's work illustrated the investment of time and effort I asked for from the visitor. As one of the participating artists, Eva Leitolf, noticed during the guided tour I gave her students, "In relation to the exhibition layout and the choices of projects, one could say that time has become a luxury. Within the space of flows everything goes fast, but the appeal you make to your audience is to pause for a moment and take time."[28]

28
Eva Leitolf, during a tour of the Bunkier Sztuki exhibition I gave to her Master students from Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule, University of Art and Design, Halle, Germany.

Anaïs López, *The Migrant: A Bird on the Run*, 2018, live performance with handmade book, with silk screen prints, illustrations by Sonny Liew, design by Teun van der Heijden. Performance took place on Saturday, May 26, 2018, in Tytonie, as part of Krakow Photomonth 2018 (photo: Studio Luma)

In the second room of Bunkier Sztuki were projects by Rune Peitersen, Edmund Clark and Crofton Black, Armand Quetsch, Agnieszka Rayss, and Esther Hovers, all of which related to the topics I had chosen for the festival: migration, nature, and data. Like *You and Me*, they offered a look into aspects of today's world that are not easy to visualize. They examined in detail forgotten archives, as in Rayss's work on nuclear test sites in Kazakhstan, or let us reflect on the state of Europe, as in Quetsch's monumental landscape prints. Clark and Black examined evidential materials found on the Internet and used in their successful search for traces of extraordinary renditions. Hovers reechoed the images taken by automated cameras in public space, while Peitersen used actual video fragments to show the devastating effects of weaponized drones on their victims. Each work formulated a particular point of view, and all tried to seize a reality that is not easy to comprehend. The works of these artists might represent a fragment of a reality, but it is only a reflection or a recording, thus representing a certain moment in time. "This type of overarching idea," wrote photography critic Christiane Monarchi, "lends itself well to the lens-based practitioners within this festival, who work with and against the very possibility of capturing the ephemeral and making it visible."[29] Essentially, all six projects at Bunkier, though they responded to different topics, addressed the fate of individuals being secretly watched and treated as manipulable puppets rather than as human beings.

To encourage visitors to wander around at their own pace and along their own path, I divided the space with four diagonal walls detached from the actual gallery walls; this was a more dynamic way to let intervals arise between the works. An interval, O'Donnell writes, "determines the sequences and the relationship between the works—as singular entities—and the argument of the exhibition as a whole."[30] The walls created crossways and sight lines, and left visitors to decide where to go, where to look, and how long to spend with a work. O'Donnell continues, "The curatorial program—the intended movement through the exhibition space—can offer different options or be disrupted by the visitors themselves, who can choose to take a different route or to make detours."[31] It is this anticipation of a dialogue between the agency of the visitor, the overarching theme of the exhibi-

29
Christiane Monarchi, untitled review of Photomonth 2018, *Photomonitor* (undated), photomonitor.co.uk/27660-2 [accessed September 8, 2018].

30
Natalie Hope O'Donnell, op. cit., 80.

31
Ibid., 83.

tion, and the expressions of individual works that is especially challenging to explore during preparations, and to keep in balance while installing the works.

The Experiential Space: Szara Kamienica Gallery

I will conclude my analysis with the exhibition in the Szara Kamienica Gallery.[32] Despite the fact that this gallery is very small—again, a vaulted basement—it was described as the one space where the thematic approach felt very tight. Aesthetically pleasing images are a means to attract the viewer's attention, but just as important is the format used for their presentation, which can serve as an invitation to take the time to look for a deeper meaning in the work. This is another way in which O'Donnell uses the function of the interval, which she describes as "the space in which each work interacts individually with the visitor. It is an experiential field in which the signification of each work can interrupt, compliment, or complicate the exhibition as a whole."[33] Here, each work used specific aesthetic qualities and unfamiliar presentation, such as the use of a vertically formatted video in Susan Schuppli's *Atmospheric Feedback Loops* (2016), or the table setting in Curran's aforementioned installation juxtaposed with graphical video and a soundscape. Connections on the content level were made between Curran's work and Eline Benjaminsen's *Where the Money Is Made: Surfaces of Algorithmic Capital* (ongoing since 2017), which also addressed the invisible flows of money in our financial sphere. Benjaminsen, Curran, and Schuppli further questioned the technologies that drive our world by making use of them. Schuppli, for her part, took "creative license"[34] to visualize the movements of our air, wind, water, and particles through the atmosphere by enhancing her original materials with colors, sounds, and effects. A visual connection was noticeable to the work of the fourth participant, Axel Braun, since all used depictions of landscape to tell their stories. Braun produced the series *Noxious Interference* (2018) during his visit to the Białowieża Forest in eastern Poland. His landscape pictures and archival materials, which gave insight into the history of Białowieża, one of Europe's last primeval wildernesses and a UNESCO World Heritage site, showed a fragile and irreplaceable ecosystem imperiled by illegal logging enabled by a government intent on exploiting the forest.

32
A short video of the installation at the Szara Kamienica Gallery is available at: vimeo.com/276708935 [accessed September 22, 2018].

33
Natalie Hope O'Donnell, op. cit., 90.

34
Schuppli's words, from a conversation I had with her for this book. See, in this volume, "In Conversation with Susan Schuppli on Photographic Intelligence," 77–85.

In my effort to create an experiential space, I thought of Filipovic's argument that we must let go of those exhibitions where the works feature only as illustrations of a theme. "An exhibition should strive, instead, to operate according to a counter-authoritative logic," she writes, "and, in so doing, become a crucible for transformative experience and thinking."[35] For me, the Szara Kamienica Gallery was the place where I played with visitors' expectations, taking them beyond conventional strategies for photographic exhibition presentations and conventional visual approaches for documentary photography projects.

Artistic Expertise and My Position as Curator

As the festival was spread across ten locations, all within walking distance of one another, the exhibitions were brought together under the overarching title *Space of Flows: Framing an Unseen Reality*. Given the relatively small scale of the festival, many people experienced the walks from one location to another as refreshing moments that allowed space for association and further reflection. It was my intention to use compelling content and the artists' presentation formats, along with the three different topics, to take the viewer beyond today's hype and delusion. One critic wrote, "The festival establishes a natural link between contemporary issues that put artistic representation to the test."[36] Artists Robert Knoth and Antoinette de Jong presented a two-channel installation, *Tree and Soil* (2018), composed of long takes and delayed moving images of the deserted landscape around Fukushima, Japan. In an attempt to visualize the effects of radioactive contamination as cultural loss, these images depict subtle changes in the natural environment that make the original use of the land impossible.

In my view, the exhibition is only a beginning; additional events are necessary to mediate the content. For this festival, I organized, among others, guided tours, public interviews, and three panels with experts on the topics of the program. It was at the *Data and Power* panel, which took place at Bunkier Sztuki during the opening weekend,[37] that Rune Peitersen remarked how stimulating and rewarding it was to discuss his work in conversation with the invited experts. "As an artist, you use your research to put it in some kind of artistic mold, and translate in the end this knowledge into a work

35
Elena Filipovic, op. cit., 81.

36
Arno Haijtema, "Krakow Photomonth zit vol migratie, geweld en klimaat, maar is altijd origineel en nooit zwaarmoedig," *de Volkskrant* (June 21, 2018), volkskrant.nl/cultuur-media/krakow-photomonth-zit-vol-migratie-geweld-en-klimaat-maar-is-altijd-origineel-en-nooit-zwaarmoedig~b341e788 [accessed September 8, 2018].

37
A panel discussion entitled *Data and Power* took place, on May 25, 2018, at the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art in Krakow, Poland. Moderated by Alicja Peszkowska, it included the following artists: Eline Benjaminsen, Mark Curran, Esther Hovers, Clément Lambelet, Rune Peitersen, and Salvatore Vitale. Present were Dominik Skokowski, Director of Partnerships at the Kosciuszko Institute, in Warsaw, and Krakow Photomonth 2018 chief curator Iris Sikking. For a full video report, see, "Panel Discussion on Data and Power," YouTube (May 29, 2018), youtube.com/watch?v=_B-Myf4WEEs [accessed August 13, 2018].

of art," he said. "By so doing, you gain an artistic expertise which is different from practitioners and theorists in a certain field." And, indeed, this festival was not just about producing knowledge—here I agree with Filipovic—but also about creating an assembly of artistic work which as a whole is capable of interrogating the world around us. "An artwork can change (and often does change) what I think I know, and an exhibition is at its best when its curator can admit that," Filipovic writes. "Celebrated here, then, is the exhibition as a place for engagement, impassioned thinking, and visceral experience (and, of course, pleasure), but not necessarily as the platform for the sort of empirical knowing that we have all too often been led to believe is important to the artwork and the exhibition alike."[38]

The most important aim of this venture was to develop an open and inviting, yet also provocative and imposing, spatial architecture for the exhibitions. My earlier editing career inspired me to create a narration at the level of the festival's urgent topics, and to use the strength of the different artists' visual languages and approaches. As Monarchi noted, "An interesting sidebar to the exhibitions was that most of them were reassuringly 'old-school'—wall-based, sound-enhanced, video, and even a wonderful double slide show presentation of Tudor Bratu—meaning that the mechanics of the artistic delivery did not overpower the message itself."[39] A case in point is *Extraction* (2017–2018), a series of monumental, black-and-white portraits of coal miners made by Polish photographer Michał Łuczak, who got a grant from the festival to continue this project. The black, stone-like substance is still a widely used energy resource in Poland, and Łuczak managed to descend 510 meters into the Earth to capture a splendid photograph of a coal bed. The aesthetic element, as Cramerotti argues, is important as a means to catch and hold the viewer's attention, at least for a moment. The aesthetic appearance of an artwork is indeed able to entice the viewer. What is important for me, though, is that it also functions as an entrance into the artist's visual investigations, and, accordingly, touches the eyes, mind, and heart of the viewer.

38
Elena Filipovic, op. cit., 79.

39
Christiane Monarchi, op. cit.

Nicolò Degiorgis

Books As Spaces within Spaces

Illustrated by Five Case Studies

A few months ago, as I was having lunch with an artist in the cafeteria of the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, I experienced a clarifying moment I had long yearned for. After being introduced by another friend, the artist and I exchanged contact information. We wanted to get an idea of each other's artistic practice. We pulled out our phones and started tapping in our names. When I looked at the screen of his phone and saw the search bar suggesting I was an author, I felt both astonished and relieved at how easily my practice could be summed up in a single word. Until that moment, I had always struggled with the idea of pinning down my own practice. This was in part due to my educational and professional background, and in part due to the particular nature of my creative output: books, sometimes ascribed to the category of photobooks and sometimes simply referred to as artists' books. Despite the fact that the great majority of my work is composed of books, no curator had ever previously defined me simply as an author, nor listed my authorial practice alongside other practices such as photographer, publisher, editor, or curator.

The algorithm of the search engine managed to disregard categories and to look directly at what I was producing, whereas contemporary art discourse, despite its stated openness, still struggles to include the book-author creating book-work as an artistic practice in and of itself. Instead, it is defined as a publishing endeavor, which indeed is an essential part of the process, but neglects the most important phase, at least in my opinion: that of the creative moment of experimental writing rather than the distributional one. Despite a growing number of artists focusing their production on books, the tendency is still to publish books to accompany exhibitions, or to create exhibitions to accompany books, while treating books and exhibitions as separate entities, at least physically speaking.

My work varies in terms of output, but books are the core around which I am currently focusing my research, both formally and content-wise. Indeed, the only purpose for the research is for it to eventually exist in book form, which must be seen as the only and final result. I treat my books as containers of language and as physical spaces: not only their content but their shape as well can, and should, be read. Their physical presence enables them to acquire sculptural elements further emphasized once the books are installed within a

space, such as a gallery space or an open space, adding to the book the characteristics of an installation. These declinations of the initial work cannot exist without existing primarily in the form of a book. The reason behind this decision is tethered to artistic and ethical values, which in my particular case cannot be separated one from the other due to the topics treated in my books, as well as the language these books contain: that of photography.

In the nineteenth century, the term "photobook" was barely used, while "photographic literature" was a much more common descriptor. Since the term "literature" means written works, "photographic literature" does not merely define the formal nature of the book but intrinsically defines photography as a language. Being academically trained as a Sinologist and professionally as a photographer, my personal background leads me to be particularly acquainted with visual languages. Chinese is based on a logographic script. It uses characters which originated, and in part still represent, stylized pictographs. Compared to Western phonetic languages, a single Chinese ideogram can often assume myriad meanings while also serving several syntactic roles. Only its combination with further ideograms narrows down its definition and its purpose within a sentence. This is how I see and treat photography within my books.

Photography is generated by an instrument but can also be instrumentally adapted to a linguistic system. A single photograph carries little meaning to me, or too much, and only its sequencing along with other photographs creates a string of images that gain linguistic character. In order to allow the sequencing of images, or content more generally, to happen without design interference, I limit in my books the possibilities for material and graphic extravagance. I generally use only one type of paper, one font, one image per page, one size for all books which, for idealistic reasons, are initially sold all at the same price. This list of rules works to provide a framework for simplifying workflow and for orienting my initial focus on content. The rules can be disregarded at any point if narrative or formal aspects require it.

But books can not only contain language, they are also language themselves. One of the artists to theorize the book as a linguistic system was Ulises Carrión, in his manifesto *The New Art of Making Books*, published in 1975, in which he

describes the book as a sequence of spaces able to contain any language; and, even more importantly, in which he defines the art of making books as a linguistic system, expanding the role and notion of the writer to not only writing texts, but also to being in charge of the entire process of making books. Digital workflows simplify such endeavors, allowing artists to take charge of design and typographic processes previously limited to the purview of a few specialized individuals.

Graphical and formal uniformity among my books also pushes me to focus on conceptual elements. This is probably most apparent in the way a book is bound. While the visual reading process is driven by the sequencing of the content, the binding determines the conceptual hinge around which the physical reading process occurs. The way the pages are turned is synonymous with the way the book is handled. The differentiation of the binding allows each book to be understood as an independent codex open to multiple readings and interpretations.

The way a book's pages are displayed on a wall is as important as the way pages are bound in a book. The installed book should create a complementary reading to the original book, not a redundant one. I suggest a specific arrangement of the pages for each book. Once the pages of a book are arranged in the form of an installation, the space of the book is extended to the surrounding space. What we are experiencing now is a different space–time sequence; we are reading the book in its unity as an installation. The idea behind it is one of establishing a relationship with a reader rather than a visitor while simultaneously permitting collective experiences of the work.

Once acquired, anybody is entitled to "unfold" the book in the form of an installation. This is especially important when the book touches upon particular sensitive topics and the aim is to reach an audience, as well as to disperse the work. Who can afford to buy or exhibit it is as important as where it is shown. Since books allow for the equal distribution of intellectual and material property, each person that buys a copy is invested with the role of collector as well as that of curator, and is entitled to display it according to their taste and need. Due to the physical handling required by the reading process, over time books show a tendency toward becoming more rare and less seen than other types of artwork. Creating alternative displays for books in the form of installations allows the work to be preserved, exhibited, and read over the years, in public and private spaces, in institutions and galleries, as well as within particular environments and communities. Besides, books have the privilege of entering the public domain, generally speaking, between fifty and seventy years after the death of an author, after which point people are allowed to share the work as much as they want.

The following five books of mine are included here as case studies on how books can spring out of particular contexts and assume different functions depending on the topics they cover. These were published in collaboration with Museion, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Bolzano, Italy, where, in 2017, I was selected to guest curate an exhibition entitled *Hämatli & Patriæ*. The show interpreted the concept of "*Heimat*," a German word that finds no translation in other languages but is often defined as "homeland," and the concept of fatherland in the light of the current nationalistic political situation in Europe. One of the requests of the museum was to create parallel shows happening around the region before the final exhibition. We achieved this by publishing and installing, over the course of the year, five new books on the ground floor of the museum, as well as in various settings beyond the museum's confines connected to the topics tackled in the books.

1. *Heimatkunde* — A Book Set in a Public Elementary School

"*Heimat*" is a German word which comes from "*hämatli*," a term used, until the mid-eighteenth century, in juridical and geographical contexts to define the provenance of a person. Industrialization and the resulting migratory movements from rural to urban areas led the term to acquire a more abstract meaning over time, connoting not only a geographical place, but also the cultural, social, and historical setting an individual was born into. The word changed from a neutral "*das Hämatli*" into a feminine "*die Heimat*," both untranslatable into other languages though often associated with notions of "the homeland."

The first book, entitled *Heimatkunde*—a subject that explores social structures, local history, geography, and flora and fauna—was realized in collaboration with my former elementary school teacher, Christine Frenes, and was comprised of notes I, as a young student, had taken on this subject, which had been part of the curriculum in German-language schools in the northern Italian province of South Tyrol when I was growing up.

The book represented an introduction to the issues tackled in the main exhibition, but it was also an invitation to map out the geographical and conceptual elements of the places we live in, creating a personal, multilayered vision of our local dimension. The book was intended as a starting point to encourage us to rework and translate ideas into our own language.

The external setting chosen for *Heimatkunde* was the Alexander Langer school in Bolzano, the only bilingual school in the capital city of South Tyrol province, where German- and Italian-speaking pupils share the same building and thus have the opportunity to interact. The book was presented in the form of an installation: a little house built from 180 copies of the book. Each student in the classes involved in the project was also given a copy of the book, in order to create their own personalized *Heimatkunde* journal.

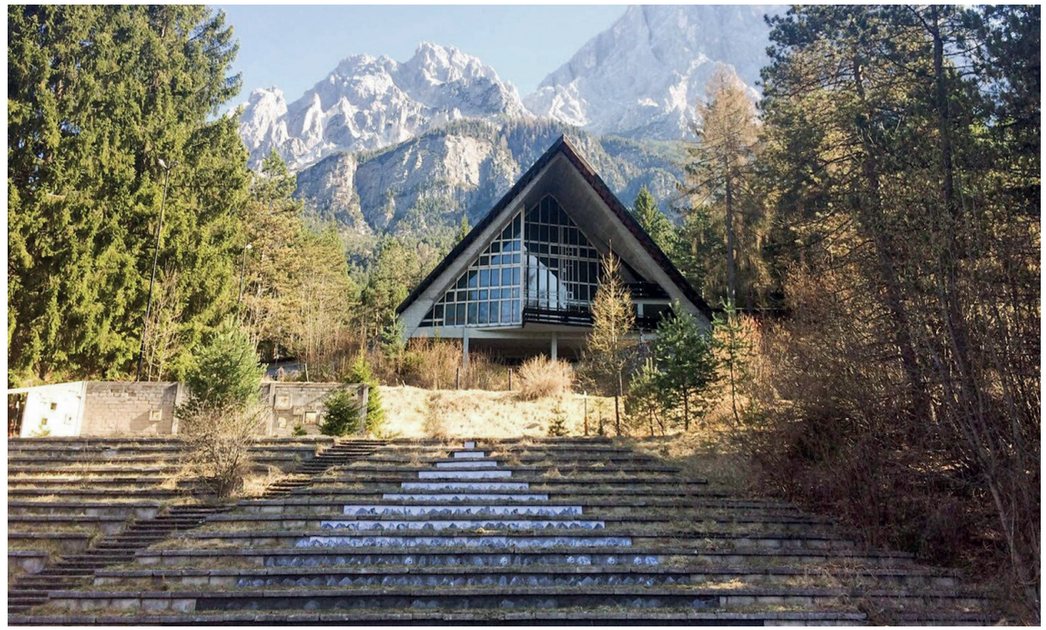
Nicolò Degiorgis, *Heimatkunde*, 2017. Installation view at the Alexander Langer school, Bolzano, Italy

2. *PEAK* — A Book Set in the Dolomites

The second book I presented, entitled *PEAK*, focused on the Dolomite Mountains, which are a defining element of the Alpine landscape in the northern Italian locales of Bolzano, Trento, and Belluno.

PEAK features images of two mountains sandwiched together on double-page spreads—ranging from dark, nocturnal views to dazzling visions of snowy peaks—that narrate the principle of cyclical seasonality that governs mountain life.

The external location chosen for the display of *PEAK* was the resort town of Borca di Cadore, where the book's images were taken; more specifically, the ENI Village, an impressive architectural project initiated, in the 1950s, by Enrico Mattei and realized by architect Edoardo Gellner.



Nicolò Degiorgis, *PEAK*, 2017. Installation view in the ENI Village, Borca di Cadore, Italy © Nicolò Degiorgis

Nicolò Degiorgis, *PEAK*, 2017. Installation view at Museion, Bolzano, Italy © Nicolò Degiorgis

3. *Hidden Islam* — A Book Set in a Religious Community

The project *Lo sceriffo e la moschea itinerante* (*The Sheriff and the Traveling Mosque*) focused on the Islamic community in the city of Treviso, and sprang from the research I carried out for my book *Hidden Islam*, which mapped the Islamic communities in the historical Triveneto region of Italy.

Lo sceriffo e la moschea itinerante related to events concerning the Islamic community in Treviso, between 2009 and 2011, in the form of an audio track complemented by images and texts culled from the local newspaper, *La Tribuna di Treviso*. The project connected the two seemingly distant dimensions alluded to in the title: on the one hand, the political decisions made by the town council during that period of time; and on the other, the obstacles the city's Islamic community encountered in attempting to find a place to gather for prayer.

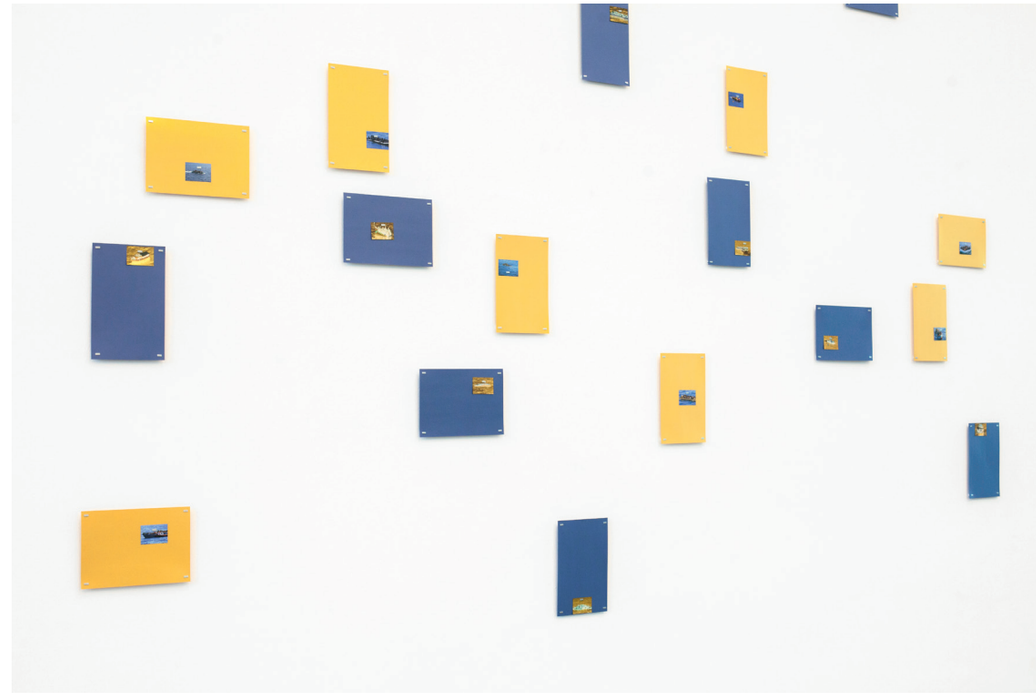
The Seminary of Bressanone was chosen as the external venue to host *Hidden Islam*.

Nicolò Degiorgis, *Lo sceriffo e la moschea itinerante* (*The Sheriff and the Traveling Mosque*), 2017. Installation view at Museion, Bolzano, Italy © Nicolò Degiorgis

4. *blue as gold* — A Book on National Borders

For the book *blue as gold*, created on the occasion of an artist residency I had, in 2017, at the Italian Cultural Institute in Paris, I used images I found on the Internet of boats carrying migrants toward Europe. Using a dialectical approach, the images are shown in their positive version and also converted into their negative. This turns the blue of the sea into its opposing color, creating a golden background.

The Plessi Museum, located at a rest stop along the Autostrada A22 motorway, at the Brenner Pass border between Italy and Austria, was chosen as the external location for *blue as gold*. It hosted a related project entitled *And if the horizon were not a border?* Postcards were also handed out with screenshots taken from a video of mine entitled *My head under water but still breath fine* (2017)—verbatim, a sentence I found spray-painted in a Dunkirk refugee camp—shot on a ferry while crossing the English Channel from Calais to Dover, in which the perspective continuously alternates between sea and sky.



Nicolò Degiorgis, *blue as gold*, 2017. Installation view at the Plessi Museum, Italy © Nicolò Degiorgis

5. *Prison Photography* — A Book Set in a Prison

Prison Photography was the last of five artist's books I presented at the Museion during the year leading up to the *Hämatli & Patriæ* exhibition. In conjunction with its Museion presentation, the book was also presented and displayed in the form of an installation at the penal institution in which it was created.

Prison Photography is a collection of photographs taken, between 2013 and 2017, by the inmates of the Bolzano-Bozen Penal Institution during a photography course I taught there for the Alpha Beta Piccadilly language school. The limits inherent to photographing in an isolated location such as a prison were the key point around which the entire course was based. Divided into various chapters dedicated to different photographic techniques, the book encouraged the reader to reflect on two things: the role of photography itself and the inmates' attempts to escape from the monotony of prison life.

Nicolò Degiorgis, *Prison Photography*, 2017. Installation view at the Bolzano-Bozen Penal Institution, Italy © Nicolò Degiorgis

Nicolò Degiorgis, *Prison Photography*, 2017. Installation view at Museion, Bolzano, Italy © Nicolò Degiorgis

Anna Tellgren

Exhibiting a Collection of Photography

How should large collections of historical photography be exhibited? Why is it important to produce exhibitions on early photography in a contemporary world in which artists, photographers, and activists currently working with various kinds of lens-based media can rapidly display their work through exhibitions on the Internet, online journals, in various forums and networks, and at photo festivals? How do digital platforms, the Internet, and social media affect the presentation of physical works (prints) in the exhibition space? And in that context, is the question of continuing to have access to our history of photography an entitlement?

These are some of the burning issues that institutions exhibiting photography are confronted with. Nowadays, major photography exhibitions of a few well-known photographers tour the world at fairs, festivals, and exhibition centers. It is predominantly newly made digital prints that are shown—often on a huge scale. As a reaction to this, many photographers use film and combine analogue and digital techniques while also discovering and exploring old photographic materials and techniques. Another consequence is the need to show so-called vintage prints: photographs printed by the photographers or under the photographer's close supervision shortly after he or she exposed the negative that the print was made from.

The Moderna Museet Collection of Photography

This article deals with various aspects of working with and exhibiting a major photography collection, and is based on experience in this field working as a curator of photography at Moderna Museet in Stockholm.[1] Moderna Museet is the national museum for modern art in Sweden, with a mission to collect, preserve, exhibit, and inform about nineteenth- and twentieth-century art in all its varieties. The sole exception is the photographic image; here, the museum is responsible for the entire history of photography from the 1840s to the present day. The collection comprises approximately 100,000 photographs and includes images produced using all the early photographic processes, such as daguerreotypes, calotypes, and albumen silver prints.[2] It is largely composed of black and white gelatin silver prints by both Swedish and foreign photographers. Since the 1990s, more and more artists are producing photo-based art, and this has led to an increase in the collection of various kinds of color photographs and digital images.

The photography collection is mainly comprised of positive prints produced or approved by the photographers themselves, and it consists of both so-called vintage prints and modern prints.[3] The term "modern print" indicates that the photograph has been produced or approved by the photographer many years after the image was taken. Opinions have differed on whether the museum should collect negatives. A powerful argument for only collecting prints has been that new reproductions may distort the original artistic intentions of the photographer. Printing is a form of craftsmanship. Some photographers are expert printers, others print in close cooperation with a printer or a printing laboratory. This also has to do with the market and the high value of vintage prints. Today, many photographers work with a limited edition and they are often connected to a gallerist or an art dealer. There are numerous arguments for collecting negatives; they can, for example, give a wider view of the total production of a photographer, a style, or a group, and function as a form of research material. They provide the curator or photo historian with the possibility of presenting other versions of a well-known image, or an image that no longer exists as a vintage print. A present-day trend in retrospective exhibitions of the work of famous photographers is for more archival material to be included; for example, books and picture magazines in which the photographs were originally published, contact prints, and negatives.

A Department of Photography

The way in which photography has been exhibited at Moderna Museet has to do with the history of the museum, but it has also been determined by changes in the photographic medium itself.[4] In 1976, the photography department was given a permanent exhibition space in the west wing of Moderna Museet's previous building on Skeppsholmen, one of Stockholm's islands.[5] Being awarded a gallery of its own was obviously vital for maintaining a continuous program of exhibitions, and the department thereafter staged four to five shows every year of both international and Swedish photography.[6] Classic black and white photography dominated the program, as in the work of photographers such as Ralph

1
The issue of exhibiting a collection is closely connected to the ways in which it is expanded via acquisitions. How a collection comes to grow as a result of acquisitions and donations is, of course, a topic that many people are involved and interested in. For a detailed analysis of acquisitions, see, *The Pencil of Culture. 10 ans d'acquisitions de photographies au Centre Pompidou*, eds. Clément Chéroux and Karolina Ziębińska-Lewandowska (Paris: Centre Pompidou; Paris: Filigranes Editions, 2016). The book contains a survey, "Faire collection: une enquête," that was responded to by the following individuals associated with various museums and institutions: Quentin Bajac, Simon Baker, François Cheval, Ann Decker, Florian Ebner, Ute Eskildsen, Peter Galassi, Virginia Hecker, Azu Nwagbogu, Nissan N. Perez, Sandra Phillips, Timothy Prus, Adam Sobota, Anna Tellgren, Ann Thomas, Roberta Valtorta, Matthew Witkovsky, and Akram Zaatari.

2
The development of the Moderna Museet collection of photography is intimately linked to the history of the establishment of the department. The Swedish state purchased the Helmut Gernsheim Duplicate Collection, in 1964, and the Helmer Bäckström Photohistorical Collection, the following year, as the foundation for a museum of photography in Sweden. As a result of these acquisitions, some of the most celebrated photographers in the history of photography are represented in the collection, such as Julia Margaret Cameron, Oscar Gustaf Rejlander, and Carleton E. Watkins. The historical background to both these acquisitions is linked to powerful pressure groups that arose in the 1940s and that were behind the founding of Fotografiska Museets Vänner (the Friends of the Museum of Photography, or FMV). The Fotografiska Museet (the Museum of Photography, or FM) was set up, in 1971, as a department of its own within Moderna Museet. The department existed until 1998 when, following a reorganization, the photography collection was made an integral part of Moderna Museet's collection and the term "Fotografiska Museet" was discontinued. The private and commercial institution Fotografiska, which opened in Stockholm, in 2010, has no connection with Moderna Museet. See also, Anna Tellgren, "Photography and Art: On the Moderna Museet Collection of Photography from a Historic Perspective on the Institution," in *The History Book: On Moderna Museet 1958–2008*, eds. Anna Tellgren and Martin Sundberg (Stockholm: Moderna Museet; Göttingen: Steidl, 2008), 121–152.

3
A small number of photographers have, however, donated their entire artistic legacies, including their negatives. There are some 300,000 negatives in the collection. Several organizations have also donated their picture archives containing several thousand items, such as the Fotografiska Föreningen (the Photographic Association), the Swedish Tourist Traffic Association, and the Press Photographers Club.

4
From an international perspective, it is evident that photography became institutionalized during the 1960s and 1970s with the establishment of several photography museums and the opening of art galleries with an emphasis on photography, all of which made for a larger market and greater opportunities to see photography. The activities of Moderna Museet in Stockholm, in relation to photography, contributed to this development. See, Stuart Alexander, "Pho-

Gibson (exhibited 1976), Josef Sudek (1979), Duane Michals (1980), Helen Levitt (1985), Larry Clark (1986), and Roy DeCarava (1988). An exhibition during this period that would be of major importance for the collection was *Tusen och en bild* (*A Thousand and One Pictures*, 1978).[7] It presented a cross section of the history of photography from 1840 to 1978, and was made up of works both from the collection and on loan to the museum. The exhibition is representative of the way photography was installed and presented up until the end of the 1980s. The photographs were matted and glazed but not framed, and the works by the 139 photographers were hung on dark brown screens. At the center were display cases containing images, with the screens placed so as to surround them.

Since 1998, when the new museum building by architect Rafael Moneo was opened, the photographic image has been shown as part of the presentation of the permanent collection together with painting, sculpture, prints, drawings, film, video, and installations—all of the forms of modern art that make up the Moderna Museet collection.[8] There are no longer any galleries specially set aside for photography. This decision evolved following changes in the art world. From the beginning of the 1990s, what is known as photo-based art had taken on a prominent position in contemporary art in the Nordic countries, which reflected the shift on the international scene from modernism to postmodernism.[9] Sources of inspiration included artists such as Barbara Kruger, Louise Lawler, and Cindy Sherman, whose works would be included in presentations with other artists in the collection from the same generation.[10] This remains the guiding principle for the way in which we exhibit photography from the collection at the museum. It means that visitors to Moderna Museet are always able to see photographic images as part of their visit to the museum, even if they do not have a special interest in, or knowledge of, photography. The photographic medium is not separated off or treated differently from other forms of art in the Moderna Museet collection.

And yet, the fact that the photographic image is integrated with the rest of art and arranged by style in relation to movements such as Surrealism, Concretism, and Pop Art has also been criticized. Lovers of photography have the feeling that classic black and white photography, documentary photography, and photojournalism, have disappeared and

tographic Institutions and Practices," *A New History of Photography*, ed. Michel Frizot (Cologne: Könemann, 1998), 695–707. See, too, Duncan Forbes, previously the director of Fotomuseum Winterthur, reflecting on the photography museum of the future in his essay "Fotomuseum 2050," *C Photo 10: Don't Call Me a Photographer!* (Madrid: Ivorypress, 2015), 70–83.

5
Two curators were employed in the photography department at the same time. Åke Sidwall had been working with the photography collection since 1971. He was employed as superintendent and curator, in 1976, and continued working at the museum until 1990. Leif Wigh had various commissions at the department from 1973 on. He was given a permanent position as curator of photography, in 1977, and remained in that position until he retired, in the spring of 2004. From 1992 to 1997, Jan-Erik Lundström was director of the Fotografiska Museet. For an account of the history of the museum based on Leif Wigh's recollections, and his reflections on his role as curator, see Niclas Östlind, "Intervju/Interview," *Bländande bilder (återuppförd)/Dazzling Pictures (reenactment)* (Gothenburg: Hasselbladstiftelsen, 2010), 39–107.

6
For a compilation of all the photography exhibitions held at Moderna Museet (until 2008), see, "Chronology of the History of Moderna Museet," *The History Book*, op. cit., 347–372.

7
Tusen och en bild/A Thousand and One Pictures, eds. Åke Sidwall and Leif Wigh, Moderna Museet exhibition catalogue no. 157 (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1978). See also, Åke Sidwall, "Fotografiska Museet: Kort historik om samlingarna," *Moderna Museet 1958–1983*, eds. Olle

become invisible at the museum. One way of responding to this criticism is to work with different types of exhibition and forms of presentation. At Moderna Museet, photography is shown in exhibitions based on the collection and in exhibitions of loaned works, as well as several solo exhibitions by well-known artists and photographers.[11] Moderna Museet has shown photography both as part of established art history and as a visual medium with its own history, techniques, and aesthetic.

Another Story

A radical rehang of the collection with only photographs, entitled *Another Story: Photography from the Moderna Museet Collection*, was launched in 2011.[12] Carried out in three stages and based on an inverted chronology, it was also adapted to the architecture of the building. The first part of *Another Story*, "Possessed by the Camera," included photography from 1970 to 2011. The second part, "See the World!", showed mainly classic black and white photography from 1920 to 1980. The third section presented the birth of photography under the heading "Written in Light," with photographs from 1840 to 1930.

The presentation was developed around various themes in the history of photography. The introduction discussed issues concerning identity and role-playing; it made use of works by artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe, Annika von Hausswolff, and Cindy Sherman. A selection of some fifty photographs from the collection on this theme was shown on one wall in a salon hang. The other themes were photography from Eastern Europe following the fall of the Berlin Wall, New Topographics, abstract photography, the documentary tradition, photojournalism, surrealist photography, pictorialism, landscapes and nature, experiments and science, and early portraiture. Amidst the overarching themes, smaller rooms focused on a single photographer each, one artist, such as Diane Arbus, Julia Margaret Cameron, Eva Klasson, Duane Michals, Irving Penn, August Sander, Christer Strömholm, and Hiroshi Sugimoto. Even if the presentation was broadly chronological, the various themes offered a way of including early photography in the first part, "Possessed by the Camera," and of incorporating contemporary photographers among the early photographic works in the third part, "Writ-

Granath and Monica Nieckels (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1983), 159–165.

8
Moderna Museet has a department of exhibitions and the collection in which all the curators with responsibility for the collection take part. There are additional departments for administration, communication, conservation, learning, and technology.

9
This is also related to ideas about photography in "the expanded field" and the entire theoretical construction of post-structuralism. The concept is based on Rosalind Krauss' celebrated 1979 essay "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 277–290. See also, Peter Osborne, "Photography in an Expanding Field: Distributive Unity and Dominant Form," *Where is the Photograph?* (Maidstone: Photoworks, 2003), 63–70; and Jonas Ekeberg, "The Expanded Field of the Museum of Photography," *Moderna Museet c/o Dunkers Kulturhus. EyeWitness*, eds. Ann-Catrin Gummesson and Kirse Junge-Stevnsborg (Helsingborg: Dunkers Kulturhus, 2006), n.p.

10
A piquant detail in this context is that the first work by Cindy Sherman that was acquired for the collection (*Untitled #123*, 1983) was purchased, in 1989, for the painting collection, as revealed by its inventory number, "MOMB 139." The works in the Moderna Museet collection of photography acquired before the year 2000 have an inventory number beginning with FM. For example, the photograph *Gina and Nan, Paris* (1962) by Christer Strömholm, purchased in 1982, has the inventory number "FM 1982 001 006."

11
Over the course of the last ten years, the museum has shown several exhibitions based on the collection, including: *Reality Revisited: Photography from the Moderna Museet Collection* (2009), with a selection of photographs from the 1970s; *Irving Penn: Diverse Worlds* (2012), at Moderna Museet Malmö; *The New Objectivity: From Paul Strand to Anna Riwkin* (2013); *A Way of Life: Swedish Photography from Christer Strömholm until Today* (2014), in Malmö and Stockholm; *Ernest Cole: House of Bondage* (2015); and *Golden Sunset* (2017), which focused on photographic works from the last decade. Photography exhibitions since 2008: *Moderna Museet Now: Inta Ruka* (2008), *Andreas Gursky: Works 80-08* (2009), *Jean-loup Sieff: Photographs* (2011), *Moment: Cecilia Edefalk* (2011), *Moment: Gerry Johansson* (2012), *Wolfgang Tillmans* (2012), *Cindy Sherman: Untitled Horrors* (2013), *Moment: Gunnar Smoliansky* (2013), *Francesca Woodman: On Being an Angel* (2015), *Akram Zaatari: Unfolding* (2015), *A Good Home for Everyone: With Anna Riwkin and Björn Langhammer in the Shadow of the Welfare State* (2015), *Comparative Vandalism: Photography from the Asger Jorn Archive* (2016).

12
This marked the beginning of Daniel Birnbaum's tenure as director of Moderna Museet, a role he would serve in from 2010 to 2018. The presentation of photography in the collection was followed by a similar focus on the moving image and sound art. Anna Tellgren was head of the *Another Story* project. The other curators who took part in the project were: Lena Essling, Iris Müller-Westermann, John Peter Nilsson, Magnus af Petersens, and Cecilia Widenheim. For more on the project, see, *Another Story: Photography from the Moderna Museet Collection*, ed. Anna Tellgren (Stockholm: Moderna Museet; Göttingen: Steidl, 2011).

From the exhibition *Tusen och en bild* (*A Thousand and One Pictures*), 1978
(photo: Hans Thorwid/Moderna Museet)

ten in Light." The title of the project, *Another Story*, alluded to the fact that there are many histories of photography, with this particular presentation being one such history of photography from 1840 to the present, based on the Moderna Museet collection of photography.

The lessons learned from *Another Story* were many. Once the front of house staff and regular visitors had recovered from the shock that paintings by Pablo Picasso and other modern classic artists would not be on view, the project was very well received. It was the strength and depth of the photography collection that were emphasized in articles and reviews. Attention was drawn to the collection both externally and internally. The photo lobby—the people who frequently complain that the museum does not show enough classical photography—were of course overjoyed. Another lesson was that although the interest in early photographic processes was considerable, additional pedagogical aids were required. Knowledge about the general history of photography and about the lives and works of photographers is relatively lacking. Given the large size of its collection, the museum has a major responsibility in commissioning research and providing education in this field.

The project resulted in our being able to show close to a thousand works, while also drawing attention to less well-known photographers and genres. The collection as a whole is constantly being classified, catalogued, and photographed. As only a small part can be found with an accompanying image in the museum's database, staging presentations from the collection means we have to do most of the selecting of works within the confines of storage spaces. It is also vital to actually see the works to get a feeling for their scale and for how they should be mounted and framed. The curators work closely with the technical staff (storekeeper) and the photography conservator in this regard. Most of the photography collection is housed in special storage areas with the correct temperature, humidity, and light levels. The works are stored unframed, which means that all the photographs have to be framed prior to being exhibited and then unframed when the photographs are taken down.

The collection both provides an opportunity but also, extensive though it may be, is bound by a limitation. A limitation to the extent that you may not always be able to show

13
In the 1990s, curatorship became increasingly professionalized with the emergence of numerous specialized study programs. A vital research field has also emerged internationally with regards to twentieth-century museum and exhibition history. Examples of literature in this field are *Salon to Biennial: Exhibitions that Made Art History, Volume 1: 1863–1959*, ed. Bruce Altshuler (London: Phaidon, 2008), and *Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions that Made Art History, 1962–2002*, ed. Bruce Altshuler (London: Phaidon, 2013). Famous curators of contemporary art have, for example, been interviewed by Hans-Ulrich Obrist for his book *A Brief History of Curating* (Zurich: JRP-Ringier, 2008). However, relatively few curators of photography or photo exhibitions are included in these and other books on the subject. One of the most researched photo exhibitions is Edward Steichen's seminal *The Family of Man* (1955), at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Paul Hill and Thomas Cooper's *Dialogue with Photography* (Manchester: Cornerhouse Publications, 1979/1992) includes early interviews with the photographers, photo historians, and curators Beaumont Newhall and Helmut Gernsheim. See, too, Nina Strand, "The Shape of Things to Come," *Objektiv* 17 (2018), 14–29, for Strand's interviews on the practice of exhibiting camera-based art with the following curators and directors: Antonio Cataldo, Diane Dufour, Florian Ebner, Lucy Gallun, Marta Gili, Emma Lewis, Shoair Mavlian, Anna Planas and Pierre Hourquet, and Nadine Wietlisbach.

14
Another significant aspect of all exhibitions and presentations of the collection, and one that may get overlooked, are the labels. All museums have various types of labels and different rules as to their appearance and content. At Moderna Museet, we employ a system of plastic holders in A4 or A5 size. Information about the artist's name, title of work, date of creation, technique, year of acquisition, and credit line is drawn from the museum's database, The Museum System (TMS), and is in both Swedish and English. All titles are also given in the original language. The display, the distance between photographs, must be adjusted aesthetically to ensure that there is room for the labels. The need to cordon off some works to ensure their security is another aspect that must be taken into consideration when working on an installation.

15
Moderna Museet opened a branch in Malmö, in 2009.

16
See, for example, Aaron Scharf, *Art and Photography* (New York: Penguin Books, 1968/1983). A more recent book on the subject is David Campany, *Art and Photography* (London: Phaidon, 2003).

17
Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Calotypomania: The Gourmet Guide to Nineteenth-Century Photography" (1983), in Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 4–27.

18
For more on vernacular photography, see, Geoffrey Batchen, "Vernacular Photographies," in Geoffrey Batchen, *Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 57–80; and Clément Chéroux, *Vernaculaire. Essais d'histoire de la photographie* (Paris: Le Point du Jour, 2013).

the most celebrated photographers, or the most well-known images by a photographer, because they are simply not part of the collection. Though this can be challenging, it is also one of the most interesting and creative aspects of your work as a curator. The definitive selection always comes into being in the exhibition space, where you can see how the images work, how they "talk" to each other. This feeling is of course very personal and subjective. Curating is a combination of theory and practice.[13] In the selection process you often have access to a huge number of photographs in a relatively small format and the risk is usually of displaying too many works.[14] But the most important aspect in curating a collection is always the photographs that you have selected to exhibit. You have to adapt the installation to the content of the works, their format, conservation, mounting and handling notes, or to instructions from the artist.

A continuation of *Another Story* was provided by the exhibitions *Written in Light – The First Photographers* (2017) and, subsequently, *Written in Light – Early Photography* (2018) at Moderna Museet Malmö.[15] In 2017, the highlight was on a larger selection of daguerreotypes. To show early photography at a museum of art inevitably leads to the raising of the old question about whether photography is art or not.[16] Are Carl Jacob Malmberg's gymnastics images, Rosalie Sjöman's *carte de visite* portraits, or Nils Strindberg's documentary images of Salomon August Andrée's attempted 1897 flight to the North Pole art? The problematic nature of this phenomenon has been discussed in an essay by the art historian Abigail Solomon-Godeau, in which she discusses the way in which older photography is frequently over-aestheticized, and gives an example of how a small number of collectors of French and English calotypes shaped the historiography of the medium.[17] "Vernacular photography" is a term academics and photo-historians have begun to employ in recent years in order to focus on photography from a broader perspective and make it visible at museums and as a subject for research at universities. The term covers popular and local traditions and the various areas in which the then-new technique was used in society.[18] All early photography can be described as "vernacular," and the practices that were developed then are in many ways still a part of contemporary photography. Museums can use their collections to show both different types of images as well as

From the exhibition *Written in Light – The First Photographers*, 2017
(photo: Åsa Lundén/Moderna Museetenal Institution)

prominent practitioners from a historical perspective, while making interesting distinctions between amateur photography, commercial photography, and art.

Before and Behind the Lens

In 2017, Moderna Museet launched the project *Before and Behind the Lens*, which examines the role of photographic images in art and the transformations of the medium since the early experiments of the nineteenth century through to today's explorations of the potential of the optical lens. It includes exhibitions, guided tours, discussions, symposiums, and artist talks. *Before and Behind the Lens* has provided a means of collating all the current activities at the museum that have to do with the photographic image. Although it may be practical from a communicative perspective to combine the myriad aspects of a sprawling operation under a single heading, the key thing when it comes to photography at the museum is to continue to work on and research the collection while also continually exhibiting it. This is the fundamental prerequisite for developing and creating exciting photo exhibitions that provide knowledge about, and generate interest in, historical and contemporary photography.

One model that has proved successful in several exhibition projects having to do with early photography, is to link it to contemporary photographic practice. In tandem with *Written in Light – The First Photographers*, the exhibition *Jielemeguvvie guvvie sjisjnjeli – Film Inside an Image* was shown, featuring the work of Irish artist Gerard Byrne.[19] This work, which deals with the diorama technique developed by the French theater designer Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre—one of the pioneers of photography—served as the basis for an active engagement with, and discussion of, the museum's daguerrotype collection. Some of the most interesting discussions about early photography have been held with contemporary artists and photographers, who have studied how we can interpret what their colleagues from earlier eras worked on, and how we should look at their images. Museums, with their massive collections, are in a unique position to make far-reaching and wide-ranging connections, and to display the forerunners in the history of photography through the flexible medium of the exhibition. Indeed, this is one of their most important tasks.

19
In this 2015 piece, Gerard Byrne filmed inside the Biologiska Museet (Biological Museum), erected, in 1893, on the Stockholm island of Djurgården. He regards the natural history museum as a kind of camera in which panoramic paintings by the Swedish artist Bruno Liljefors, together with the taxidermic animals on display, create frozen moments of the Nordic landscape. See, Gerard Byrne, *Jielemeguvvie guvvie sjisjnjeli – Film Inside an Image* (Coventry: Mead Gallery, University of Warwick; Melbourne: Monash University Museum of Art, 2016).

As previously noted, lens-based or camera-based art has become increasingly established in contemporary art ever since the postmodern breakthrough of the 1980s. Currently, documentary and narrative traditions continue to live on, albeit frequently in hybrid forms. Artists reflect on the fundamental conditions of the photographic image and on the nature of the image as a construction. Photographers often work within a more artistic praxis, but one which does not preclude commercial assignments. This has resulted in interesting links and shifts between socially-oriented reportage, documentary projects, portrait photography, advertisements, and photo-based art. The possibilities open to photographers at this time are vast when it comes to publishing online and through self-publishing. In art museums, we have to look forward and follow developments in relation to Post-Photography and other movements. This is the major challenge facing all institutions with a focus on photography: to continue to be able to reflect, collect, and exhibit what is happening in photographic culture.

In Conversation with Lisa Barnard

on the Fragmentary Structure of Today's Societies

Iris Sikking Thank you for having this conversation. As one of the speakers at the symposium at Krakow Photomonth 2018,[1] you talked about the value of documentary photography and your concern that many artists seem to leave the field of photography because they don't feel at home there anymore. I would like to elaborate on that later, but as a starting point, could you give us a brief introduction to *The Canary and the Hammer*, your multifaceted project about gold and its contemporary and historical value? Where does your fascination with gold come from?

Lisa Barnard What we don't realize is that we are surrounded by gold. It is, for example, concealed in much of the technology we use. And most fundamentally, it's a potent symbol of value, beauty, purity, greed, and political power. My *Gold Depository* website[2] shows the connections between these very different stories, allowing you to navigate through them at your own pace. For me, the structure of the storylines mirrors the complexity of the task of representing the world in these fragmented and troubling times.

I started getting interested in gold by reading about Pocahontas. King James I, through the Virginia Company of London, sent additional colonists to the Colony of Virginia to look for gold during the first financial crisis, in the early seventeenth century. He thought, "Let's go and plunder the Americas for gold." The Jamestown colonists didn't find any gold, but they did find Pocahontas—the rest is history, as they say. In addition, I'm fascinated by gold as a valuable element in the economic system. The canary in the title is a metaphor for financial markets. In the past, canaries were taken down into mines; if there was a release of gas, the canaries would die first, which would warn the miners of the presence of lethal gas in the air. When the financial market is bad, the price of gold goes up, so it's a barometer for the state of our society.

The hammer is connected to Heidegger's idea of the tool as "ready-to-hand." When you use a hammer, you don't recognize it as a hammer, but if the end were to come off you would become very aware that it was a hammer, because it wasn't doing what it should be doing. In this respect, I was very interested in our relationship to the screen and the computer, because they are so embedded in us. We don't recognize them as being outside of ourselves. Only when something goes wrong do we become aware that what we take for granted as reality is actually just a very slim piece of technology.

I wanted to make something that represented the complexity of gold, and I was keen to see whether it was possible to engage individuals, or a group of people, in the same way that an experience in a physical space could. It was important for me that you be able to revisit it, so I continued to upload work over a longer period. Each time you went to the website, it would be different.

IS You talk about the "fragmented and troubling times" we live in today. Owing mainly to the digital sphere, information has become increasingly fragmented as it circulates at high speed. However, instead of serving us a straight storyline that gives us something to hold onto, you choose to present the content of the website in a very fragmented manner. What was your motivation to use such an editing style?

LB Our understanding of fragmentation and how it works was integral to the website; but if work becomes too fragmented the editing can alienate the audience. Fredric Jameson talks about this idea of the fragmented society, and what he means is that the absence of depth in our Information Age leads to a society where surface meaning and appearance are all that matter. And Jacques Rancière wrote about the idea of using a fictional narrative in order to tell stories that are real and engaging at the same time. Or we could talk about Adam Curtis, who is so brilliant because that's what he does—use found footage from all kinds of places and events to construct a particular narrative, seemingly with a beginning, middle, and end, as in a classic film structure. However, he says, about his films, that you can dip into them at any point, which underlines the fragmentary nature of our world today. I've always

1 On June 1, 2018, the symposium *Why Exhibit?: Provoking Questions about Exhibiting (Extended) Photography* was held, at the Museum of Photography in Krakow, Poland, within the overarching Krakow Photomonth 2018 festival program. The event served as a preview of sorts of this volume, gathering together many of the authors who have contributed essays and artists who have been interviewed. For a list of speakers, see, photomonth.com/en/symposium [accessed September 8, 2018].

2 See, thegolddepository.com.

imagined him sitting for days on end with the BBC Archive, thinking, "Okay, I've got a sense of what I want to be doing, but how do I make this engaging and accessible and interactive for a viewer?" I think we're all looking for other human beings to tell us it's all okay.

IS Next year, a book version of the gold project is going to be published, by Mack. I know you have been struggling with the decision to make it a book at all, and then with how to deal with the design. Can you elaborate on the process of making this book?

LB I'm trying to look at it as another outcome. I want to try and make something that will work as an additional element to the website. Thinking about incorporating people's essays and other interesting things about the work, there's no capacity for that on the website, so the book could do something there. The other thing I'm interested in is the materiality of books. I've made some gold orotones; I've made some etchings; I've made some stereoscopic images. I'm probably going to bring that aspect into the book, so it will become much more of a material, precious object. There's the sense of literature as well. I do feel like I have to justify it to myself, but there is also a sense of the history of photographic publications within the documentary tradition, and I feel it's very important to continue that. Books are amazing material objects that house great literature. You can take them to bed. If they're done really well, they're beautiful objects. Literature is an amazing thing. I'm becoming much more confident saying, "It's a beautiful thing."

IS As an artist, you want to engage people with certain topics that you find important. What is the meaning for you of an art space, a museum or public space, and how would you like your work to function in it? What does "documentary" mean to you?

LB For me, the best documentary work is traditional photojournalism and art-based work that reflects entirely on the medium. I think that's what documentary does at its best: it bridges those gaps between realist work, which

is photojournalistic, and self-reflexive, subjective, gallery-based photography practice not based in documentary. Like the work of Omer Fast, Robert Knoth and Antoinette de Jong, Hito Steyerl, James Bridle, and Alfredo Jaar.

Unfortunately, I think the photography world has become a bit of a security blanket. Photographers are not very good at breaking outside of that. The problem is that we don't facilitate the work of artists like Mishka Henner or Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin in the photographic community. They feel like they have to leave it. That's something I'm very keen not to do. I'm finding ways to engage in things that are non-commercial, because that's obviously about making money as well. It's very frustrating that the art world facilitates only work that has commercial value.

For me, the exhibition process is always quite painful. It's incredibly expensive to exhibit work, isn't it? Unless you promote yourself, the work won't go anywhere else. I had a great exhibition of the drone project in Krakow, and now it's just sitting in my studio, and will continue to sit there unless I go out and say, "Please, can you show my work?"

I don't have a gallery and I'm not motivated to have a gallery. But I also have a conflict with that, because—I'm talking purely personally as an artist here—I think it's really important for your journey as an artist. You're working with a curator and the aspect of aesthetics becomes much stronger within a gallery space than it is in an editorial, book form, or on a website, where you can move quite quickly. You're looking for big-impact works that people will interact with and engage with and stand in front of. It also provides you with an opportunity to show that you're an expert in how you make work technically, because the work is at the highest level it can be. I think that's important because it gives you confidence and autonomy as an artist, and I think the gallery space facilitates that process.

If you go back to the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London, in 1851, almost six million people went to see that exhibition. Which, at that time in Britain, was extraordinary. But the only means they had to learn about the world was to actually physically go into a space. The

approach the Surrealists took to exhibiting was to treat it as a space that took you outside of reality. And I think that's what I want from an exhibition space as a viewer: I want to be taken outside of my everyday experience. I want to enter the world of fantasy, in some respects, and also learn something about the world, which is why I'm a documentary photographer. What you want to have in an art gallery or exhibition space is that sense of an artist really battling with the reality of existence.

The best work for me is work where I feel that a pair of artists, or one artist, has really, really, really tried to form a piece of work about the world, about our existence in the world, that I can be challenged by but also access and relate to.

This conversation took place via Skype, on July 20, 2018.

In Conversation with Robert Knoth

on Strategies in Contemporary Documentary

Poppy: Trails of Afghan Heroin,[1] created by Robert Knoth and Antoinette de Jong, is a story for our times: just as globalization has forged new connections in industry and business, creating new opportunities for millions worldwide, it has also provided new openings for organized crime and terrorist groups. Released as a four-channel audiovisual installation and published as a book,[2] *Poppy* tracks heroin from its source in Afghanistan's remote mountains to the streets of Europe and beyond. The old Silk Road, which once brought pearls and porcelain to the West, now brings death and destruction. Drugs have become an integral part of modern warfare, and the drug trade an integral part of our economies.

In the process of making *Poppy*, Knoth and De Jong sought ways to blend the hyper-realism of journalism and documentary with the abstract qualities of art and literature. The result is a kaleidoscopic impression, illustrating the chaos, urgency, and elusiveness of what takes place along the way. It evokes a sense of submersion in multilayered or parallel worlds where different events and developments are related and interconnected, forcing viewers to reposition themselves accordingly.

Iris Sikking The creative process for the production of *Poppy* marked a considerable change in your practices. Both you and Antoinette recorded the images, sound, and video in the years between 1993 and 2011. First you decided to select from these materials gathered over nearly twenty years, and later you chose to be more present as authors, including Antoinette as narrator in the installation and as writer in the book.

Robert Knoth After years of working for international news media in Afghanistan and many other conflict areas, we realized that "Afghanistan" had become part of a much bigger story, one in which we had been walking around for almost twenty years. The necessity of using our own photography, audio, video, and writing was to illustrate the broader historical developments for which we had been present as reporters. The attack on the Twin Towers, in 2001, was a trigger to start digging further. Antoinette, in particular, knew instinctively that something like 9/11 was bound to happen, one way or another. The reason we used Antoinette's voice to guide you through the story is that *Poppy* is told from our point of view: it's what we think the consecutive wars in Afghanistan are about.

The basic response to the installation and book is that a lot of information is thrown at you at a very fast pace, its details often relating to each other only vaguely. However, if you literally put a girl in Ukraine next to a person in Afghanistan, your gut feeling tells you there is a link. The younger generation, especially, immediately understands what this is about. It is much more involved in working online, with many windows and screens open at the same time, so it is able to digest footage quicker. David Simon's television series *The Wire*, produced between 2002 and 2008, influenced us because of the construction of its story. Over five seasons, primarily about heroin trafficking in Baltimore, the series shows five different perspectives without coming to a conclusion—it is up to the viewer to do so.

IS At a certain point you decided to include footage found on YouTube. What made you decide to do this, and how do you use this material? This also leads to another question: To what extent are you still photographers? Or, rather, have you become curators of images?

RK Apart from the fact that we needed to use third-party materials for events where we obviously were not present, like 9/11, we did research on the East London heroin trade. On YouTube, I discovered clips posted by gangsters and drug dealers, filming their own lives and car races in the streets; but also clips from average people who were affected by the drug trade, secretly filming drug deals on their doorstep. Since you'll never get access to those people, I had a very strong feeling that I would never be able to produce material as meaningful and emotionally intense as those people who were directly involved had. It was completely unfiltered.

1 *Poppy: Trails of Afghan Heroin* was presented as a part of *A New Display: Visual Storytelling at a Crossroads*, Krakow Photomonth group exhibition curated by Iris Sikking, Tytonie, Krakow, Poland, May 14–June 12, 2016; for more information, see: 2016.photomonth.com/en/program/a-new-display-visual-storytelling-at-a-crossroad [accessed August 13, 2018].

2 In 2012, Iris Sikking was responsible for the production and curation of *Poppy* for Paradox, a Netherlands-based foundation for documentary projects. The book version of *Poppy* was published, in an edition of 2,100 copies, the same year: Robert Knoth and Antoinette de Jong, *Poppy: Trails of Afghan Heroin* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012). For more information, see: paradox.nl/project/poppy/#work and hatjecantz.de/robert-knoth-und-antoinette-de-jong-3104-0.html [both accessed July 21, 2018].

The appropriation of this material is a gray area, to put it bluntly. The Internet, for us and for many artists, is a new tool with which to create stories. Digital technologies make materials easily accessible and allow us to collect a lot of essential data about drug trafficking, conflict, violence, politics, etc. Bringing these together is probably one of the novelties of *Poppy*—that we were able to condense such a huge amount of information.

It's often when I'm reading a certain article in the newspaper that I sense that this is just one angle on what is probably a much bigger story. It's probably the most fundamental way news has changed: twenty-five years ago, you would look at what was in the newspaper, in magazines, or on television, and take it at face value. You weren't able to collect more information about Somalia other than by going there yourself. And now, with one click you're in Somalia.

IS Recently, *Poppy* was launched as an interactive documentary.[3] What motivated you to produce this, and how did you manage to get the story in all its complexities onto a digital platform? As a matter of fact, you added another six years of material. How did you produce these stories?

3
Poppy Interactive is available at: poppy.submarinechannel.com [accessed July 23, 2018].

RK When the Internet took off, everybody thought, "Oh, we can all publish now on our own terms and conditions, and attract an audience of millions." But you can only do that if your name is Kim Kardashian. However, one of the key differences from working for news outlets is that, as in literature, you have a very direct narrative on the surface, but underneath there is space for all sorts of other layers. With the technical tools at hand, you can now paste those layers onto your story. For me that's where the real fun is: it is a story that surpasses the simple drug trade. In fact, it's about the point where conflicts, money, trade, and global crime meet.

With the interactive edition we wanted to make an even stronger case for how the war in Afghanistan is replicating itself around the world. The link between organized crime and war has become clearer than it was while we were working on *Poppy*. The whole thing

4
See, Alfredo Cramerotti, *Aesthetic Journalism: How to Inform without Informing* (Bristol: Intellect, 2009).

in Central Asia as well as in Russia can potentially explode, and that's what might be in store for us in the near future. The interactive *Poppy* is about more than just heroin trafficking, because the narrative we made in 2012 became an entirely different ballgame through the war in Syria, which felt for us like a turbocharged version of what we had witnessed in Afghanistan.

The greatest challenge was providing another frame to present the story. Although the storyline isn't linear, you have to suggest a kind of structure. We created three major "routes" for this interactive version: the northern and Balkan routes were part of the original work, but we incorporated Syria and added the southern route to Mali. Most locations were simply too dangerous to travel to, so we constructed new stories entirely from our desktops. We included extensive interviews with certain people to explain what exactly was happening. Again, Antoinette's voice became important in order to explain why cocaine trafficking in Mali has something to do with the war in Afghanistan.

Our motivation was to make *Poppy* more accessible to a broader audience and easier to share. Schools, for example, use our project when they teach about drug-related issues. It functions like a library, or a starting point, and it's almost endless. If people are interested they can spend as much time as they want. I'm not so worried about people wanting to sit through all the footage. If you click on five or six clips, you get the complexity of the story and the different layers. It could be statistics, facts, or a tangential YouTube clip that keeps you engaged.

IS Alfredo Cramerotti uses the notion of aesthetic journalism to propose that long-term investigative work, unable to find its place in news media anymore, is turning to the museum space instead.[4] Can you explain from your own practice how you have experienced this turn?

Robert Knoth and Antoinette de Jong, *Poppy: Trails of Afghan Heroin*, 2012, four-channel installation, Dolby stereo surround, loop, 44′. Installed in Tytonie, as part of Krakow Photomonth 2016 (photo: Studio Luma)

RK

There was no space for us other than the contemporary art field where *Poppy* ended up.[5] For us it is the only environment where one can show the full scope of a project. Which is noteworthy, because all the material is hardcore journalism, and we turned it into something else that was not feasible for any media outlet.

Two days after 9/11, there were 4,500 journalists crawling over each other in Pakistan with no story. And we instinctively knew that this was the end of the good old days, when we had been with three journalists covering "Afghanistan." It turned out to be a fruitful move for us, as *Poppy* was highly praised within the art world but received lukewarmly within the traditional photo and media worlds.

I've actually come to realize that exhibitions are the only place where you can really make comprehensive, in-depth stories, because of the incredible amount of freedom you have without being crammed into certain formats. As a documentary maker, you do have this credibility problem: you have to show that this story you're telling is part of a much bigger one that you can only gesture at.

5
Poppy was launched, in 2012, at the Nederlands Fotomuseum Rotterdam (NL). It subsequently traveled, between 2013 and 2016, to the Grand Duke Jean Museum of Modern Art (LU); the Beijing Photo Biennale (CN); the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (NL); the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney (AU); Krakow Photomonth (PL); Griffin Art Space, Warsaw (PL); and CO/Berlin (DE).

IS

As a consequence, you don't become extensively informed on complex matters from the daily news?

RK

True. And most people who watch forty-five minutes of *Poppy* hold their breath. Once we did a presentation for a group of high school teachers, and they were silent for two minutes, and then somebody finally said, "We know that this is happening, but when you see it in full, you actually realize how bad it is." It's a story we do not like to hear.

This conversation took place in Amsterdam, on June 15, 2018.

Where to Meet?

Tanvi Mishra

The Afterlife of a Photograph: Recontextualizing Images and Influencing Public Memory

The use of the photograph as a tool of evidence, particularly in the realm of forensics, dates back close to its invention in the mid-nineteenth century. A central aspect of photographic realism, that it often relies on what is seen rather than what is imagined, lends itself well to the notion of proof. A collection of "proofs," as delineated by way of multiple photographs, can then form an archive, which in turn can come to be seen as reflective of fact. The existence of a photograph of an event is often seen to be evidentiary in nature, with the tangible image serving to legitimize its occurrence and to verify its scale and subjectivity. Photographic archives are frequently seen as storehouses—of the histories of communities, regions, and nations, as well as their respective politics. Photographic documents lay dormant in these archival collections until they are reactivated for research or citations or repurposed for exhibitions. Are the truth claims of photographs questioned or reevaluated during this repurposing? Does the selective extraction of certain images from the archive change their meaning? While archives can be private, the exhibition is a site for public discourse. By reviving these images for public consumption, can they be seen as affecting a public conscience or influencing collective memory?

Photographs as Histories in the Indian Context

The introduction of photography in India occurred close on the heels of its invention in Europe, as India was then a British colony. In their colonial capacity, the British began to document the vast land then enfolded within its Empire, with members of its government and army recording the land and its people as they saw it, or perhaps as they wanted it to be seen. This documentation, though appearing to be neutral, came to serve as a political tool. While this is evident in photographs that were made in an ethnographic style, in which a people of a nation are typified as case studies rather than sentient beings with emotions and perceptions, in images of events such politicization manifested as a harder-to-trace undertone. Felice Beato's well-known photograph, *The Interior of Secundra Bagh, Lucknow 1858*, for which he allegedly exhumed corpses to amplify the impact of the scene, was made during the Indian Rebellion of 1857–1858, in the aftermath of which British rule was established in the country.[1] The timing of the photograph was crucial—it served as evidence of the power

1
The Indian Rebellion of 1857, or the Sepoy Mutiny, was an uprising in India against the rule of the British East India Company. It began on May 10, 1857 and ended on June 20, 1858. In the aftermath of the rebellion, which was extremely violent and led to the deaths of countless civilians, the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act 1858, whereby the British East India Company was dissolved and India came under the rule of the British Crown.

and prowess of the British Army over its Indian opposition. Considered to be one of the first staged images made in India, it is apparent that, closely following the medium's invention, the photograph came to be used as a tool to influence political narratives. While its most important use was immediate, it is worth contemplating whether the preservation of Beato's photograph was a concern at the time of its creation.

This was not an isolated incident. Almost a century later, when the movement for independence in India was at its peak and the glory of the British Empire was fading, the moving image was used as a medium for obfuscating facts and censoring politically sensitive events. In March 1947, Lord Louis Mountbatten was assigned as the last British Viceroy of India, and was responsible for facilitating the country's independence after a century of colonial rule. In this role, he was to supervise the partition of India, and the creation of the separate state of Pakistan, an event that prompted one of the largest migrations of people in human history. His lesser-known task was to monitor how the Partition was depicted on film and, by extension, how its bloody memory was preserved as a document of proof. As someone familiar with the value and impact of visual material—having himself acted in and directed multiple films, many of which were biopics about his time in the British Army—Mountbatten played a central role in controlling the production of imagery associated with the Partition. To this end, he personally appointed John Turner, a newsreel cameraman from Gaumont-British News, to be responsible for deciding what was to be recorded about this seminal historical event and who the person to record it would be. This task often fell to Turner himself. The result was concerted censorship of the brutality of the riots and violence that occurred during the Partition, which in turn skewed the narrative that was preserved for posterity and protected the visual legacy of Mountbatten's tenure in India.[2] Had the photograph been an object that was perishable, would the nature of this documentation have changed? If certain events are manipulated in their representation, or censored from being recorded altogether, can this absence of information be reflected in an exhibition at a future date?

It is this idea of posterity and preservation that informs the premise of the exhibition. If one were to consider the role of exhibitions in the life cycle of a photograph, they could

2
See, Manik Sharma, "Director's Cut: The Cinematic Myth-Making of Louis Mountbatten," *The Caravan* (November 2017), caravanmagazine.in/essay/louis-mountbatten-legacy-fim [accessed July 25, 2018].

be seen as constituting its "afterlife": a stage where the photograph has the ability to step outside of the confines of its initial manifestation within the photographer's body of work. Once it is juxtaposed with other works or repositioned by a hand other than that of its author, it may well assume another life that is vastly different from that which may have been initially plotted for it. In the case of historical photographs like those of Beato, readings may continue to evolve as new information surfaces; and the exhibition, in its contemporary capacity, becomes capable of provoking new responses. In instances like that of Mountbatten and footage of the Partition, this imagined future, the prospect of the preservation of images over time, and an author's subjectivity and agenda could well influence the nature of the visual material itself.

Since the exhibition has the ability to either present the image in a context which may align with the initial intent of the photographer or expand well beyond it—depending on factors such as, but not limited to, the curator's vision, other works in the exhibit, and the exhibition's location—it presents the possibility of revising narratives that have long been held to be authoritative. If we are to consider the colonial history of India, the "proof" available to us in archives may need to be reexamined in order to reflect the passage of time and the emergence of new knowledge since India gained independence, in 1947. What remains of these histories, in large part, are documents that legitimize their veracity. If an approximation of these histories is made based on the images that have survived, the narrative that would unfold could be inherently inaccurate. A contemporary audience, unaware of the strategic decisions made during the production of certain images, or of the convenient conservation of collections or archives that support preferred narratives at the expense of others, is likely to accept the images as fact. Does the exhibition have the power to subvert that narrative? Given that several historical facts have come to light since India's independence, providing new insights into colonial imagery and its framing, the question remains as to whether this new information can be incorporated in the shift of the image from archive to exhibition; and whether, having undergone the process of exhibition, reappraised photographs return to the archive with additional material and responses appended to them.

Impact on Public Memory

Photographs, whether personal narratives in family albums or public narratives of the histories of nations, have an inherent ability to reactivate memory and evoke nostalgia. Often, images are exhibited on the walls of homes as well as those of institutions in an effort to commemorate an event, person, or incident that may have been crucial to the history of the place. How does one memorialize crucial events which were never recorded at all? In the context of an exhibition, how is memory shaped or altered when addressing issues of public importance? It is debatable as to how photographic reconstructions, when exhibited, would shape public memory in cases where events were not recorded in real time but recreated at a future date.

In her series *By An Eye-Witness*, Azadeh Akhlaghi, an Iranian artist working with photography, reconstructs seventeen tragic deaths spanning Iranian history, from the time of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911) through to the 1980s. The scenes she depicts are of the deaths of figures such as political writers, revolutionary poets, leftist politicians, artists, and student activists—individuals embedded in the collective memory of the Iranian people. In fact, an incident one of her images is based on is even officially recognized in the country: the killing of three students at the University of Tehran, who, in December 1953, were fatally shot by the Shah's police force during a student protest against a visit to the country by then–Vice President of America Richard Nixon. The students' deaths are commemorated every year on Student Day, on December 7, the day of the shootings.

Akhlaghi painstakingly reconstructs each of the seventeen deaths, which she researched for close to four years, drawing upon archival evidence, news reports, and eyewitness accounts from family members or people associated with the deceased. The most compelling aspect of Akhlaghi's work, aside from its cinematic quality and technical finesse, is the fact that no photographs exist of any of the events she chose to recreate, making her images the first visual "record" of these incidents. Upon the opening of her exhibition in Iran, a country in which the censorship of politically sensitive art is standard practice, Akhlaghi received an emotional reception from the public. She spoke to me about how one woman was moved to tears while looking at some of the images; the

experience of beholding popular histories that had until then never been visualized was overwhelming. The deaths that Akhlaghi reconstructs, in images produced with a level of precision that teases the thin line between fact and fiction, range from assassinations and suicides to suspicious and natural deaths. The exhibition served to rekindle the memories of these deaths in the minds of Iranians when they were confronted with these images in a physical space.

I was first introduced to Akhlaghi's work, in 2013, on a research trip to Tehran for a special issue on Iranian photography of the *PIX* quarterly.[3] The work was subsequently featured, within a *PIX* exhibition, in Tehran, and later in India, in New Delhi and Mumbai. I had also exhibited Akhlaghi's work as part of my guest curatorial venture at Photo Kathmandu, in Nepal, in 2016.[4] The venue for the exhibition in Kathmandu was a community center in an area named Chyasal, which incidentally has a mythological, and etymological, history rooted in death. Chyasa, which translates to "800" in Newari, the language of Nepal's indigenous Newar people, refers to the number of warriors that died in a battle in this area circa 250 AD. Situating Akhlaghi's work in a public space, amid a community that has had a shared ownership over the land and its legends for decades, created a unique juxtaposition of histories. Just as the alleged deaths of the Kirat warriors remained etched in the memories of the local community of Chyasal, I wondered whether Akhlaghi's images represented an image of the Iranian people to the Newars—which, over a period of time, might come to be regarded as a realistic association.

For me, as an outsider—first as a viewer and then as a curator—I found my prolonged engagement with the images beginning to influence my perceptions about their truth value: repeated viewings built and compounded an assumption of veracity. If the images left a lasting impact on me and built a visual association to these seventeen Iranian personalities, it would be worth examining the impact they have had on other members of Akhlaghi's audiences. For much of the Iranian public, which shares a historical valuation of these personalities and their deaths with Akhlaghi, could these images become representative to them of the actual incidents?

As a subtle disclaimer to the audience, Akhlaghi employs an artistic ploy to make apparent that these recreations of the

3
PIX is an editorial and display practice that aims to archive contemporary photographic practices in South Asia. Its focus is on emerging photographic work in the region, which it compiles in a series of publications and exhibitions. The author is a part of the *PIX* editorial team. For more information, see, enterpix.in.

4
Azadeh Akhlaghi, *By An Eye-Witness*, Chyasal Manka Khala Hall, Kathmandu, Nepal, October 21–November 3, 2016. Photo Kathmandu is Nepal's first and only international photography festival. Its first edition took place in 2015. Since the 2016 edition, it has been on a biennial timeline. It is organized by photo.circle, a collective of photographers focusing on education and archiving. For more information, see, photoktm.com and photocircle.com.np.

depicted events are as seen from her subjective perspective. Despite having scrutinized multiple documents and personal accounts in an attempt to construct a factual recreation, she realized that testimonies of people inevitably differed. To account for these discrepancies, Akhlaghi inconspicuously positioned herself within the frame of each image—always donning a red headscarf and blending into the scene among its ensemble of characters. This insertion of a detail not drawn from fact, while subtle, lifted the burden of truth from these images and the author.

However, a viewer who is confronted with these large and imposing prints can very well miss this detail, and retain a visual in his or her mind that would thereafter be synonymous with the depiction of these deaths. How does this visual retention impact public opinion and memory? Had these been actual photographic documentations of the events, and not artistic reenactments of a part-documentary, part-cinematic nature, would their exhibition have been permitted in Iran?

Exhibition as Site of Collective Experience

In India, despite the relatively early emergence of the photographic medium, the craft has long struggled for recognition as an art form. The acquisition and exhibition of photographic work by state museums is a recent and rare occurrence. With the exception of a couple of galleries solely dedicated to photography, most other contemporary art galleries have begun displaying an active interest in photographic works only over the last decade.

In August 2016, Exhibit 320, a private gallery in New Delhi, in collaboration with Tasveer Gallery in Bangalore, exhibited a series by the Bangalore-based photographer Mahesh Shantaram entitled *The African Portraits*. The work consists of a series of formal portraits that Shantaram created of Africans living in India, many of whom came to the country seeking affordable educational opportunities. The African community in India has been subjected to virulent racism, which has manifested in violent incidents and the creation of an atmosphere of fear and hostility toward them. Shantaram's work was created in the wake of an incident, in January 2016, during which a mob attacked and assaulted a Tanzanian girl in Bangalore. Since Africans in India for the most part live and suffer in silos, shunned by mainstream Indian society,

Azadeh Akhlaghi, *By An Eye-Witness*. Installation view at Photo Kathmandu 2016
(photo: Rocky Prajapati/Photo Kathmandu)

this incident was an anomaly in that it received immense publicity from national and international media, and even sparked public discourse and protests.

The timing of the production and exhibition of Shantaram's work was political in nature, a response to a spike in hate-crime incidents against African minorities in the country. With the country becoming increasingly polarized around issues of identity, religion, and ethnicity, the showcasing of these images in a physical space allowed for a confrontation between the viewer and the prevailing reality. While the work negotiated notions of belonging and emotions of hostility and isolation, for me the exhibition presented a mode of access into a community that had been living in our midst but which had assumed an outlier status. Regular interaction with African residents in Delhi is rare for me, despite the city hosting large numbers of students from various African countries. Shantaram's exhibition was akin to an alternate reality: not only were there only images of Africans on the walls, but the majority of attendees were African as well.

The making of an image—which can begin well before the actual triggering of the shutter—can be an intensely personal experience for the photographer, whose process may be informed by his or her cultural, political, or emotional conditioning, relationship to the subject, and personal motivations, in addition to myriad other factors. An exhibition, on the other hand, with its ability to expand the image beyond its author, can transform the private, individual experience into a public, collective one. The public experience in Shantaram's work blurred the distinction between the subject and the viewer, and became a site of possibility—of simultaneous acceptance and resistance. While the images were made as a response to the fear experienced by the community, the display of these images in a physical space at a time in India ridden with anxiety and prejudice related to issues of ethnicity, race, and identity, generated an atmosphere wherein it appeared that those present had acquired some agency. It appeared that the act of positioning these images in a gallery validated the presence of these minority communities (and perhaps even afforded them respect) in a country in which they frequently come up against ridicule and even the threat of violence when interacting with the mainstream population.

For me, the experience of inhabiting the exhibition space contrasted with the images on the wall. The photographs—portraits of individuals in their own spaces, identified by their name, the African country they hailed from, and the city in India where they lived—embodied a stillness that privileged the individuals' identity. But the exhibition, when experienced collectively with the subject as viewer, became a place for the celebration of collective identity. While the single images were made against the backdrop of the harsh reality of vilification and discrimination, the atmosphere in the gallery embodied courage and persistence, and perhaps even recognized a sense of freedom. It is here that the exhibition became distinct from an interaction that would have materialized through a print publication or on the Internet. The essence of the work manifested itself in the experience of collectively occupying the gallery space, with Shantaram's images serving as reminders of painful political and cultural realities.

Exhibition as Resistance

If one were to imagine the exhibition as a site of repurposing and repositioning claims made by images, is there a possibility for political narratives to be reimagined and reassessed? The impact on the viewer would conceivably be quite different if Felice Beato's image of exhumed corpses was included in a show on staged photography, as opposed to an exhibition tracing the history of the Indian rebellion. Similarly, it would have a different effect if the story of India's freedom movement and the Partition was told through the footage that Mountbatten commissioned, but with a caveat about his political motives included. What if the exhibition were to allocate a space in the narrative for the *absence* of footage that was censored at the time of the event? Can the exhibition set up an encounter with an alternate course of history or the possibility of another reality that is diametrically opposite to what is familiar to us?

In the case of Iranian photographer Newsha Tavakolian's work, the format of the exhibition enabled the audience to partake in the experience of the subjects. Her portrait series, titled *Listen*, in which she photographs female Iranian singers, addresses the ban on Iranian women singing as solo artists or entering the music industry independently. Tavakolian photographed these women in a studio as if they

A viewer during the opening reception for Mahesh Shantaram's *The African Portraits* (photo: Tasveer Gallery)

were indeed singing. She also photographed them for what she calls "dream CD covers," in order to imagine a utopia in which they could be solo singers. While exhibiting the work, Tavakolian distributed these "dream covers," but with no CD inside. The object in this exhibition became the act of political resistance. The photographs themselves, if otherwise viewed within a frame or a projection, would not have allowed the audience to experience the silence that the work addresses: that of the state silencing the voices of its women. It is here that the element of absence is crucial to the narrative of the exhibition, allowing the audience to experience a denial of access and opportunity similar to that experienced by the female singers.

In 2016, as part of my guest curatorial role at Photo Kathmandu's second edition, I curated a show titled *Measures of Loss and Memory of War*. The show opened twenty years after the beginning of the Nepalese Civil War, in 1996, which was fought between the government of Nepal and a Maoist insurgency; and ten years after the Comprehensive Peace Accord was signed, in 2006, between the two parties, formally ending a conflict which had resulted in the deaths of more than 16,000 people, including thousands of civilians.

The idea of the exhibition was to reactivate public memory while expanding the conversation around conflict. While most Nepali visitors were familiar with the Maoist revolution in Nepal, knowledge of similar insurgencies in neighboring countries was rare. The exhibition juxtaposed four series: two of them focusing on the civil war in Nepal; one focusing on the Sri Lankan Civil War (1983–2009) fought between the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a militant separatist group; and one delving into the ongoing Maoist insurgency in India (1967–present). While the four series focused on different regions, the exhibition aimed to find parallels between these conflicts across the subcontinent, with a primary focus on civilians becoming collateral damage during these struggles. Kunda Dixit's book *A People War: Images of the Nepal Conflict 1996–2006*, which serves as an archive of photographs by various photographers documenting the human cost of the Nepalese civil war by picturing those that were inevitably caught in the violence, was the springboard for the exhibition. The intent, however, was to expand upon its narrative by supplementing it with

other allied works in the group show. As such, its narrative of the Nepalese civil war was complemented by Jonas Bendiksen's video projection titled *Nepal's Maoist Revolution*. While Dixit's work had been shown extensively in the country, through various traveling exhibitions at the time of the launch of the book, the works from India (Ishan Tankha's *A Peal of Spring Thunder*) and Sri Lanka (Stephen Champion's *War Stories*) had yet to be displayed in their respective country of focus.

Photo Kathmandu presented a unique space for these works to be shown, most of them for the first time on the subcontinent, the region that has been racked by these conflicts. Each series was curated with its individual narrative in mind, but together they were "re-contextualized" by being positioned next to each other. The exhibition as a whole attempted to trace the value of these rebellions, strikingly similar in their intent and strategy, and the rationale for separatist ideologies. While civilians suffer the killings in times of conflict, the exhibition attempted to address the fact that it is often the civilian, when subjected to prejudice, systematic societal discrimination, and the dispossession of land and other natural resources, who embraces separatist ideologies and takes up arms in response to the actions of the state.

For the Nepali public, there appeared to be a sense of solidarity when presented with other revolutions, albeit failed in a sense, from neighboring countries. While nationalities may differ, the sense of suffering as well as the resilience of the civilian population resonated across the four works. All works had their designated areas within the exhibition space, but the "common ground" was positioned to accommodate the civilian presence. Ishan Tankha's portraits of villagers affected by the Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh, India were printed to life-size dimensions and interspersed across the space connecting the four series. The intent was for viewers to confront and navigate around these identities, which represented not just the conflict raging inside their country, but stood as a representative identity for all those that have been affected by these movements, irrespective of national borders. The exhibition enabled these political histories to be seen in conjunction with each other, thereby compounding their relevance and deliberating on common themes of loss, suffering, and memory.

Conclusion

Photography as a medium has, nearly since its inception, been used for propaganda as much as for generating empathy and understanding amongst its viewers. Given the meteoric rise in the ubiquity of photographs, especially on the Internet, images have become pervasive and occupy the minds of the general public on a constant basis. The exhibition presents a form, which enables the consumption of this information at a slower and more measured pace. It presents an opportunity to sieve through these large archives—physical and digital—that are storehouses of information, in order to create an atmosphere in which the viewer can reflect and engage with the image.

Today's polarized political climate, in which vulnerable communities across the world are being targeted, scapegoated, and made to suffer the indignity of having their homes, citizenship, and long-defined identities impinged upon and threatened, presents a unique conundrum. More and more images are generated of suffering, engendering a sense of encroaching apathy in the mind of the viewer, while there is a simultaneous pressing need to use the medium of the image in the interests of informing public opinion by privileging truth. It is worth examining whether the exhibition can fill this gap, while motivating an audience to stay with an image for longer than the swipe of a finger. The public nature of the display, whether confined to elite circles within the gallery space or shown to a larger and democratic audience in a public space, would lend itself to contradicting the isolated experience of consuming images while scrolling through digital devices. The physicality of the image—both in its two-dimensional format or when it is reconfigured to become an object, a photographic sculpture, or an interactive work conceived to stimulate sound, smell, and touch—is a tool that influences the psyche of the viewer. The exhibition and the experience that it generates then becomes an event in and of itself. Its presentation of the possibility of alternate or non-mainstream realities, and the re-imagination of histories, deserves to be recorded and documented for posterity, as it itself transforms into material for the imagined future.

Lars Willumeit

Why Not…Gather Together?!—Imagineering the (Un-)becomings of Photography as Arenas and Communities of Collective Meaning-Making and Collaborative Agency

Nobody can commit photography alone.
— Marshall McLuhan[1]

Visual thinking is something we do not simply study; we have to engage with it ourselves.
— Nicholas Mirzoeff[2]

While we collaborate, we invent ourselves.
— Mark Terkessidis[3]

Openings: Becoming and Unbecoming

This essay addresses "collaboration" and "collective" as progressive notions of expanded "authorial practices" in the field of exhibiting photography at a time when many parallel processes of unbecoming and becoming are converging on the meta-level of social, economic, and political formations that articulate with the photographic field itself.[4] Among these are the recent global economic crisis and its impact on cultural funding structures and institutions, but also increasingly populist demands asking to be catered to in the field of cultural policies. Additionally, the essay looks into possible biases in the discourses from, on, and in the photographic field that are related to its historicization.

It also attempts to at least map out reasons for the phenomenon of "curatorial lateness"[5] in the photographic field as compared to the field of contemporary art. In contemporary art discourses, be they institutional or non-institutional, the understandings and definitions of what constitutes an artist and what constitutes a curator, as well as their functional cooperation models, have been described as hybridized in multiple dimensions and constellations for a number of decades now. Yet this has not been the case for the photographic field or for the exhibiting practices of photography.

On Reaggregating and Reassembling the Photographic and its Institutions

If we want to understand something about current image ecologies and economies, we need to widen the analytical scope to allow for new forms of visual literacy. One way to achieve this is via forms of collective image critique, with this contribution addressing ways in which collaborative and collective practices can find or lose form in the spatiality of

1 Marshall McLuhan, "The Photograph: The Brothel-without-Walls," *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 183.

2 Nicholas Mirzoeff, *How to See the World* (London: Penguin, 2015), 289.

3 Mark Terkessidis, "Während wir kollaborieren, erfinden wir uns selbst," *Kollaboration* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2015), 329.

4 The preliminary research and thinking for what is dealt with here was initiated and carried out, within a much wider historical and topical scope, in my master's thesis: Lars Willumeit, *The (Un)becomings of Photography—On Reaggregating and Reassembling the Photographic and its Institutions under Networked States of Perpetual Acceleration, Hyperconnectivity, and Ubiquitous Distribution* (Zurich: Zurich University of the Arts, 2015). My conclusion back then was that current conditions of the networked image require expanded systems of reference and contextualization for producers, refiners, and consumers of, in this context, photographically-created images. The thesis, as well as its follow-up in the form of a publication, for the 2016 Krakow Photomonth festival, entitled *The (Un)becomings of Photography*, ed. Lars Willumeit (Krakow: Foundation for Visual Arts, 2016), aimed at "[…] making available a range of re-thinkings of the multifaceted nature of the photographic complex, presenting a broad range of artistic practices and research strategies that engage the 'becomings' and 'unbecomings' of photographic media, and their discursive and exhibitionary complex." In this essay, I will attempt to propose a preliminary and incomplete typology of current collaborative and collective engagements with the photographic.

5 Duncan Forbes, "No More Good Life—Post-Photography and the Institution," in *The (Un)becomings of Photography* (the 2016 publication in fn. 4), op. cit., 76.

6 Sunil Manghani, *Image Studies: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2013), xxviii.

7 Elena Filipovic, "The Global White Cube," *On Curating* 22 (April 2014), on-curating.org/issue-22-43/the-global-white-cube.html#.W6oWqy-B3-Y [accessed August 8, 2018].

exhibition environments. It also reflects the entailed roles, models, and functions of collaboration between curators and artists, especially inside and outside of institutional contexts. We can thereby begin to question common understandings, norms, and definitions of what an artist is and what a curator is. In contemporary art praxis and the discourses on it, these have, for some time now, been fused and/or hybridized. And yet in the world of photography and exhibition practices pertaining to photography, there seems to be a definite lateness to their arrival and belated institutional acceptance.

My contention is that we need to develop both an expanded grammar of exhibiting practices, as well as models of collaboration between producers, human and spatial mediators, and consumers of photographic images as well. This is needed in order to react to the exponential expansion of the field of photographic practices—both in the arts and, especially, beyond. As I understand it, exhibiting is not an end in itself; an exhibition shouldn't be an end, but rather an opening for something. My activities as a curator, dovetailing with Sunil Manghani's stated agenda, aim to offer, "[…] *ways of thinking about* and *ways of engaging with* images in a critical, reflexive fashion; to include not just the analysis and manipulation of images, but also their making too. Or at least […] to set in motion a train of thinking about what happens when we make, manipulate, and respond to images in all their variety and complexity."[6]

Rather than looking at aspects of how the triumvirate of digitization, democratization, and economization has impacted, for example, the materialization of the photograph or its truth claims, we shall instead concentrate on the "social life" of photographic production and consumption. This is accomplished by looking into collaboration, participation, and sharing in the physical and perceptual interface of the exhibition space. If exhibitions, "by their forms, entangle the viewer in a space at once physical and intellectual, but also ideological,"[7] the task for me would be to explore how the "exhibitionary act" of "giving to see," as well as the processual, if not even transactional and performative, acts of reception and their recursive feedback loops, are enabled by spatial, intellectual, and ideological articulations and constellations.

By focusing on forms of collaboration and collective agency, we can, during the process of exhibition-making, explore

the potential for dissolving the traditionally-embedded hierarchies of curatorial and artistic functions, and the "[…] divergent, complex, and dialectical relations between the curator and the artist as co-producers."[8] The exhibition space as such enables forms of "intervision" and "supervision," and thereby creates potential settings for co-authorship between artists, curators, and visitors. In the case of photographic exhibitions, the aesthetic constructions of reality operate on at least three planes: that of the photographic image itself; as an exhibition object in a spatial configuration that reframes perception; and as the cognitive product of the audience's reception. Such a systems-thinking-based perspective enables one to grasp "[…] notions of exhibition-making as a form of collaborative artistic practice with multiple actors and agencies at work together."[9]

Typologies in the Arts of Working Together, or, Working Together in the Arts

There are, of course, early historical precedents for collectivity in the arts. As Okwui Enwezor notes, "Over the centuries there have been different kinds of groupings of artists in guilds, associations, unions, workshops, schools, movements."[10] As a loose and broad statement, one could say that at the moment when, in the 1960s and 1970s, collective and collaborative art practices began to thrive, the photographic field and its agents were still far too preoccupied with entering into, and gaining acceptance in, this larger system while still very much arguing for medium specificity, rather than developing new modes of collectivity. It was at that moment, too, that a new wave of artistic strategies related to debates of the "death of the author" and individualist ideologies came to the fore. By the late 1990s, it seemed as if every self-respecting curator in the field of contemporary art had declared a new "turn" for the field. Since the late 1990s, we have, with accelerated cadence, been informed of many such turns: the social, the collaborative, the relational, the educational.[11] But critics such as Claire Bishop at the same time conceded that, in the words of Daniel Palmer, the "prevalence of collaboration and participation in contemporary art practice merely echoes the consumerist logic of neoliberalism."[12]

Without examining either side of the discussion in detail, I wish to first explore relevant modes and concepts of gathering and acting together by placing them into the context of an expanded photographic field. This is done by considering three case studies, which are based on the evolution of my own curatorial thinking and research, and which reflect these ongoing and evolving concerns as activations in various exhibition formats.

8
Paul O'Neill, "Co-productive Exhibition-Making and Three Principal Categories of Organisation: The Background, The Middle-ground, and The Foreground," *On Curating*, op. cit., 38.

9
Ibid., 40.

10
Okwui Enwezor, "The Production of Social Space as Artwork: Protocols of Community in the Work of Le Groupe Amos and Huit Facettes," *Collectivism after Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination after 1945*, eds. Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 224.

11
Maria Lind, "The Collaborative Turn," *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*, eds. Johanna Billing, Maria Lind, and Lars Nilsson (London: Black Dog, 2007); Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Paris: Les Presses du réel, 1998); Lars Bang Larsen, "Turn! Turn! Turn!", *Mousse Magazine* 35 (October 2012).

12
Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012). Quoted in Daniel Palmer, *Photography and Collaboration: From Conceptual Art to Crowdsourcing* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), Kindle positions 3402–3404.

Case Study 1: Unseen CO-OP

In 2017, together with Emilia Van Lynden, the artistic director of Unseen in Amsterdam, I co-conceived and curated the format of CO-OP as a multitude of multiples. Unseen CO-OP 2017's participating collectives were: Britto Arts Trust (Bangladesh), Colectivo +1 (Colombia), Dead Darlings (The Netherlands), Der Greif (Germany), GUSH Collective (Belgium), Huber.Huber (Switzerland), Klara Källström & Thobias Fäldt (Sweden), Live Wild (France), Nepal Picture Library (Nepal), POIUYT (Italy), Radical Reversibility (The Netherlands), Ruang MES 56 (Indonesia), and Tendance Floue (France). And so the 700-square-meter entirety of the Transformatorhuis was dedicated to collaborative formats of artistic research, production, and dissemination, with these thirteen initiatives from around the globe invited to present their work, creating a lively and exciting social hub for exploring current collective practices as well as their matters of concern in the form of thirteen exhibition displays.

The show's curatorial statement, which follows, set out to establish both the historical contexts and diversity of approaches taken by the collectives:

Nobody, No Body Is an Island—And No Image Either

Most art forms are in some way of a collaborative nature, requiring more than one creator. Nevertheless, since the Renaissance, notions about the visual artist or literary writer have predominantly skewed toward the lonesome (white, male, and often starving) genius archetype. This was so even back in the day, when many artist studios—look at Rubens' and Rembrandt's, for example—were in reality creative factories based on collective endeavor, albeit with a single author taking all the credit.

Things have changed, and in the visual arts, at certain moments during the twentieth century—the period of 1920s–30s modernism and the high tide of the Cold War come to mind, as well as the onset of post-modernity in the 1960s–70s—group identity and collective forms of practice came into their own, embedded in differing sociopolitical constellations. More recently, critical interest in collaboration returned to prominence, in the late 1990s, with curator Maria Lind declaring "the collaborative turn" in contemporary art.

So much so that, as art theorist Boris Groys has stated, in recent decades, "multiple authorship" has become the predominant authorial paradigm, and "authorial praxis as it functions in the context of art today is increasingly like that of film, music, and theater."[13]

13
Boris Groys, *Art Power* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 97.

Visual Joint Ventures

Collective forms of collaboration and cooperation became apparent in a plethora of formats—be it as artist couple, artist duo, artist collective/coalition, or artist-run spaces/initiatives—all questioning the nature of canonized concepts of authorship, originality, and what should be considered a work of art. Collaborative art, then, defines itself not by style, medium, or materiality, but through social processes and relationalities between artist, subject, and viewer, and their common world.

Academic and institutional interest in this type of still under-explored analysis is a recent phenomenon and, in comparison to the general field of contemporary art, a belated one, too. The long struggle for this "mechanical medium" to be recognized as an expressive art, and its corollary conception within both art history and the art market—the latter which may be roughly defined as an art form carried out by individual geniuses with their distinctive styles, producing "original" signed and numbered prints—have often been responsible for hindering a more relational type of analysis.

Images (Un)Incorporated

During 2017's edition of Unseen, the whole of the 700-square-meter Transformatorhuis will be dedicated to collaborative formats of artistic research, production, and dissemination. Under the title "Unseen CO-OP," thirteen initiatives from around the globe have been invited to present their work, creating a lively and exciting social hub to explore current collective practices, as well as their matters of concern in the form of thirteen exhibition displays.

This premiering format as a meta-collective is an attempt to foster and build more inclusive forums for social encounter and democratic negotiation of contemporary image practices, as well as important contemporary societal thematics, as proposed by each of the thirteen participating parties.

Both Unseen CO-OP and many of its participating initiatives are interested in the social and relational ontologies of the photographic and its artistic and political practices. The concept of the "agora," a place of assembly in ancient Greece and a marketplace where both ideas and artifacts can be assembled and exchanged, and that of Mark Terkessidis' "parapolis," a non-integrable multiplicity, served as curatorial inspirations for Unseen CO-OP.

To Gather Together—Facing Complexity!

So the title claim of collecting collectives can be understood on multiple levels: one referring to the fact that the collectives will be offering artwork for sale; the other focusing on the basic curatorial gesture of collecting collectives in one physical space as a meta-collective.

But in a third sense, it also refers to Bruno Latour's recent research project, enquiring into possible "modes of existence" as a way of practicing a "symmetrical anthropology of the moderns." This implies an investigation of, and engagement with, new regimes of diplomatic mediation and meta-communication that can enable the engagement of a wide range of publics in terms of generating new "collectives" of cohabitation consisting not only of humans but also of non-human objects and concepts.

The medium and disciplinary field of photography is a fertile testing ground for these relationships, as it has, from its very beginnings, been both implicated in, and inscribed by, mediations of sociopolitical decision-making processes and techno-scientific regimes of knowledge production.

The case study and the previous statement are at least a partial testimony in support of the argument that, be it cooperative agencies, resource pools, research groups, communes, production collectives, temporary coalitions, meta-collectives, fictional collectives, artist duos, or artist-run initiatives, and self-organized platforms or spaces, the phenomenological diversity of collaborative and collective practices and structures is vast and extremely heterogenous both in terms of their interests and goals, but also in terms of temporal stability, which is often connected to issues of financial sustainability.

A Belated Interest Grows: Genealogies and References

In terms of exhibition activities, there has been an increasing amount of attention paid to this topic. The 2014 Brighton Photo Biennial, for example, themed "Communities, Collectives, Collaboration," explored "the prominence of collaborative modes of production, dissemination, and reception encountered across areas of photography in recent years."[14]

The need to "create communities through photography"[15]—both online and offline—that are reflective of wider cultural and social spheres beyond the photographic field, served as the main theme of the exhibition *Collectivism: Collectives and their Quest for Value*, curated by Kim Knoppers, in 2016, at Foam. The show, which was part of a whole year of programming at Foam dedicated to "collaboration," was followed by the project *Collaborate! Foam × Arles*, for which students from ECAL and KABK, under the institutional coordination of Foam, cooperated and exhibited during the Rencontres d'Arles, in 2017. Another curatorial phenomenon has been an increase in curatorial collectives being invited to curate photography festivals, such as the 2017 edition of the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie, in Germany. And yet even if collaborative and collective curatorial and artistic initiative has been on the increase for some time now, its theorization has been sparser.[16] This concerns the whole complex of photography exhibitions and their curation.

However, the publication, in 2017, of Daniel Palmer's *Photography and Collaboration: From Conceptual Art to Crowdsourcing*, represents a first major step toward exploring and synthesizing the specifics of collaborative practices within the field of the photographic over the past sixty years. But while it does a good job of pulling together material from many

14 *Photoworks Annual: Collaboration* (Brighton: Photoworks, 2014).

15 Kim Knoppers, "What's in a Name," *Augmented Photography* (Lausanne: ECAL, 2017), 141.

16 This is not the case for reflections on artistic production in general. For a good overview, see, Sandra Chatterjee, "Rethinking Collective Artistic Production," *p/art/icipate – Kultur aktiv gestalten* 10 (October 2015), p-art-icipate.net/cms/rethinking-collective-artistic-production [accessed August 1, 2018].

decades, its focus leaves out the presentational collaborative practices of both artists and exhibition makers, instead solely exploring intra-photographic production processes. Palmer cites a number of earlier formats such as exhibitions, conferences, and symposia in his introduction, and notably highlights three happenings: *1+1=3: Collaboration in Recent British Portraiture*, curated by Susan Bright, at the Australian Centre for Photography, in 2007; "Photography and Participation," a series of discussions organized by Ben Judd and Anthony Luvera, at The Photographers' Gallery in London, in 2011; and "Collaboration: Revisiting the History of Photography," a discussion-based workshop led by Ariella Azoulay, Wendy Ewald, and Susan Meiselas, at Aperture in New York, in 2013.[17]

Typologies of Collectivity and Collaboration in Exhibiting and Curation

In order to delve deeper into possible ways of classifying forms of collaboration and creating a typology of collectives, we first need to differentiate between the sites, temporalities/durationalities, functionalities, and relationalities of collaboration, but also the conditions of interest and power involved. The meta-categories employed here to structure them will be the processes of photographic production, those of dissemination and circulation, as well as those of consumption and reception. Of course, depending on their formatting, photography exhibitions sometimes touch on all three meta-categories.

Collaboration in … Photographic Production

According to Daniel Palmer, within the realm of photographic production, a useful categorization of collaboration can be carried out as follows: 1.) collaboration as social encounter, for example between photographer and photographic subject; 2.) intentional collaboration, such as when artists operate as duos or collectives in producing works; 3.) unintentional collaboration, as in "[…] the story of Lee Miller assisting her mentor and lover Man Ray to accidentally 'discover' the solarization effect in 1929," which led both to savor "[…] the unexpected beauty of the resulting tonal reversal, and […] to make numerous other experiments using the procedure, whose essentially uncontrollable effects might be understood

17 Daniel Palmer, op. cit., Kindle positions 3454–3464.

as a metaphor for such unintentional collaboration"[18]; 4.) instrumental and/or technical forms of collaboration, such as when a post-production studio is paid to retouch a photographer's images; and 5.) coerced collaboration, such as in practices of appropriation where the image of one photographic author is used by another author in order to reframe it in a new context, yielding a new creation in the process.

Collaboration in … The Dissemination and Circulation of Photographs

Before looking at how images are disseminated and circulated through the medium of the exhibition, we need to take a historical perspective, as there have been paradigmatic changes in the past and it seems there are more to come ahead.

If the distribution of photographic images in the earliest days of photography was exceedingly limited, functioning exclusively through the medium of exhibiting them to either specialist peers or to members of the burgeoning interested public, photography's endless reproducibility, which soon became technically possible with the negative/positive process, exponentially expanded its versatility and reach. Even so, cost remained an issue, as did the time-lag it took to mail images. Lithographic printing processes established a second paradigmatic change by expanding the possibilities for having one's work seen in books or the printed press, with all the consequences of making photography an extremely mobile and affordable medium. Of course, all of the above was only possible via the collaboration of different specialists building up an image-industrial complex, with its complex division of labor, which would come to define how images were received and consumed for the larger part of the twentieth century.

The exhibitionary complex of photography was one small part of this total system that consisted of stratified sub-systems serving agents in governmental, scientific, promotional, journalistic, diaristic, and artistic functions. So photography was not "just" Art—it is here that it becomes clear that photography's "specificity" is exactly its "non-specificity"—meaning even in its early history it operated within so many contexts, functions, and relations—from the world exhibition to the prison file—that it is almost impossible to grasp it at the highest systemic meta-level. The historiography of photography has therefore only recently begun to create these meta-narratives, likely in reaction to current phenomena of acceleration and circulationism in the face of the digital revolution and its onslaught of images.

18 Daniel Palmer, op. cit., Kindle positions 239–243.

Collaboration in … The Consumption and Reception of Photographs

If socially privileged producers and collectors, such as affluent individuals or institutional ones such as museums (back then), were the sole important gatekeepers to photographic objects in the beginning, we then begin to see a democratization of access to the medium through the possibility of its reproduction. Even today, the role of the consumer of photography, such as a visitor to an exhibition, remains, in my view, a black box, with too little research having been focused on the historical development of the photography exhibition, or on the actual processes of cognition and meaning-making taking place for visitors in the exhibition space.

But as a general narrative that focuses on collaboration in the reception of photography in an exhibition context, one might say that even today, the gallery space, with its highly ritualized social norms, continues to serve as a passivizing and isolating force on the average visitor. Collaboration in these contexts is usually dissuaded rather than welcomed, except in guided tours, which remain the only standard format in most institutions in which the intentions and messages of artist and/or curator are even superficially opened up for a possible dialogue with the audience.

Expanding the Photographic and its Exhibitionary Complex

While discussions surrounding the term "post-photography," "understood here as 'after' but not 'beyond,'"[19] have mainly been framed by phenomena of digitization and its disruptions, I propose reframing the debate in terms of social, functional, and institutional relationalities. I aim to do this by looking at the functional and relational "unbecomings" of the professions and institutions in the expanded field of photography. What is evident here is that changing forms of agency by multiple actors and actants impact the filter function of artists, curators, publishers, gallerists, and festival and fair directors, as well as of educators, researchers, and critics.

19 Geoffrey Batchen, *Each Wild Idea: Writing, Photography, History* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 109.

Digitalization, democratization, and economization as the triumvirate narratives of disruption are major social metaphenomena that have been exploding as well as imploding the public spheres of modernity and its old guard of influencers and gatekeepers. It is an era in which the democratization of the means of production, and a reduction in distribution costs compared to the last century, have resulted in the empowerment of the prosumer. But this has also resulted in a situation in which freedom and control commix. The paradoxical paradigm of the digital panopticon has arisen, in which we are free to share for free—but not without paying a price.

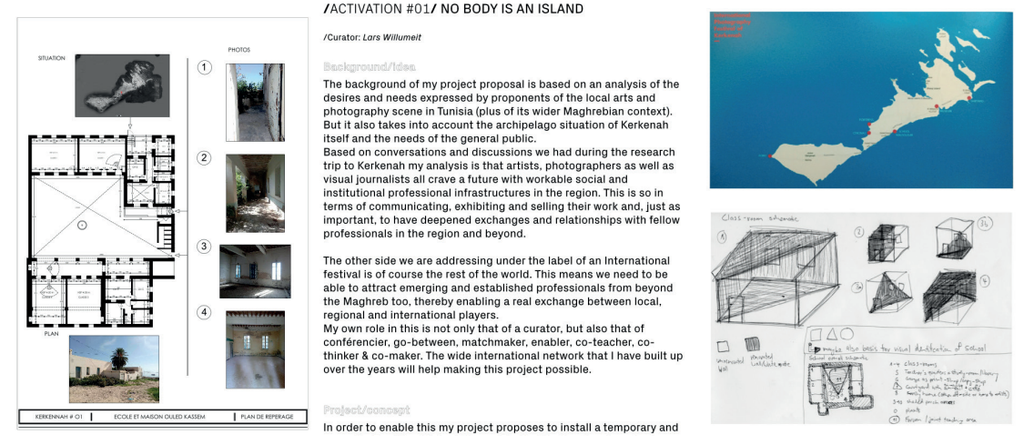
As part of that, terms such as agency, actor, author, subject, audience, community, and prosumer are currently being renegotiated. The "critical mass" of disruption we experience on individual, collective, and institutional levels is a call to action for us to organize ourselves as "critical masses." Here, collective action serves as a counter-strategy to the atomization or "granualization" of society. When we collaborate in the field of photographic images, we need to analyze our collective and planetary image metabolisms, and to generate and/or imagineer new forms of visual literacy which enable us to decode these images beyond just their intended visual programs of production and circulation.

It is within these specific articulations of capitalist transactionalism that resistant forms of collective thinking and action are needed to regain and/or retain forums of autonomy for reflection and critique. Of course, exhibition-making can only ever be a very small element in all of this; and yet its possibilities lend themselves well to these types of projects. Here, the potential for collective experience and debate, which in the long-term might lead to specific new forms of visual grammar and literacy, can be developed through direct interaction in the context of an exhibition space.

In a recent article on rethinking collective artistic production, Sandra Chatterjee cogently reviewed concepts of collaboration and collective authorship, as well as production in the arts.[20] She began with Howard Becker's fundamental sociological analysis of "art as collective action" that depends on a division of labor and its attendant protocols and agreements. Becker thereby hints at the "interconnectedness of aesthetic convention and available infrastructure for the coming into existence and circulation of an artwork."[21] Chatterjee goes

20
Sandra Chatterjee, op. cit.

21
Ibid., 2.



Elements of a concept study, from 2016, for an as yet unrealized iteration of the Imagineering Institute of Image Studies, on the Kerkennah Islands of Tunisia.

on to make an important observation hinting at mechanisms of discursive capture in two opposing ideological directions (a "paradox of collaboration," as observed by writers such as Eyal Weizman and Oliver Marchart): on the one hand, the collectivity and collectivism based on authoritarian systems of hegemonic power on both sides of the political spectrum, which in continental Europe has given the above terms rather negative connotations, at least until recently; and on the other, the managerial team paradigms of neoliberal organizational structures aimed at meritocratic individualist achievement, which have similarly been internalized in cultural policy regulation globally.

There is a danger of falling into the traps of capitalist capture logics in institutional frameworks both in relation to artistic production but also in terms of paradigms of participation. It is a minefield full of paradoxes, and it seems nearly impossible to fully escape these capture mechanisms. The two following case studies attempted to activate and transpose these thought processes in the arena of the exhibition space.

Case Study 2: Imagineering—
(Re)activating the Photographic

I conceived the exhibition *Imagineering—(Re)activating the Photographic* together with three featured artistic research collectives—the Swedish duo Klara Källström and Thobias Fäldt, the Dutch/Spanish *Werker Magazine*, and the Italian collective Discipula—whose works are all joined by a common and strongly felt belief that the interpretation of visual messages depends on social and political contexts as well as a viewer's convictions. The exhibition presented a laboratory of sorts, in which the viewer could discover his or her role in the process of generating meaning and representation.

As hinted at above, these collectives could all be characterized as collaborative research platforms operating in the fields of contemporary photography, visual culture, and self-publishing. Their artistic practice aims at the rethinking, reimagining, and remaking of photographic media and cultures beyond current mainstream paradigms of (re)presentation, as well as the relation between photography and history and their respective dominant narratives.

Using the concept of imagineering, a portmanteau of "image" and "engineering," the title provided a way to connect the artistic strategies and concerns of the three collectives. Imagineering—a term appropriated from the Walt Disney Company, of all sources—pointed toward the constructedness of visibility or invisibility. It furthermore hinted at the embeddedness of images within wider ecologies of knowledge, visuality, meaning-making processes, and contexts of power relations on historical, politico-economic, and sociocultural levels. The exhibition provided constellations that attempted to enable a conscious reframing of a viewer's perceptions and meaning-making processes. It also made explicit the ideological and political investments inherent in photographic images, uses, and practices, and the regimes of the gaze with their ensuing politics of visibility.

The curatorial strategy here used the exhibition space to create situations in which visitors were engaged so as to actively reflect some of the transformations, paradoxes, and ambivalences prompted by technological and cultural changes in photographic practice and its distribution and consumption. As a consequence, the institutional space became an arena of contention, as well as a laboratory for thinking together

about/with/through photographic media, thereby enabling processes of visual literacy and collective image critique. And yet at the same time, all three collectives had distinct thematic focuses and modes of operation that set them apart.

The exhibition stood in the wider context of crisis photography relating to processes of its rethinking, reaggregation, and reassembly which are increasingly subsumed in, referred to, and thought of more through the paradigms of the terms "photographic," "camera arts," "lens-based arts," "photographic media," or "photomedia," than in terms of a monolithic term such as "photography." It could be argued that this semantic shift is based on the increasing convergence of still and moving images as generated by lens-based apparatuses and their by now dominant destination, i.e., the screens of computers or mobile communication devices so often fusing input and output technologies in real time.

All of this technological change is happening amidst, or as a part of, the wider phenomenon of a "third"[22] or "cognitive capitalism,"[23] in which data and information are new types of raw material and currency being circulated at ever-accelerating speeds—near the speed of light—through fiber optic cables or in wave form as satellite transmission signals.

Images and photographic practices play a major role in contemporary "attention economies," and it is important to contextualize photographic discourses in the wider discursive field of the visual, as well as to reflect upon the type of new visual literacies this requires of us. This also points to the "relationalities" of physical versus virtual space; of material versus virtual processes; and of human versus mechanical operation of cameras, and the resultant images, in terms of both production and cognition. Both this and the third case study were attempts to address these issues.

On Reaggregating and Reassembling
Photographic Institutions[24]

It is safe to say that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, institutional formats such as museums, festivals, fairs, and digital forums have become parallel and often integrated modes of a current exhibitionary complex[25] for the presentation of photography. All of these modes are increasingly competing for influence, resources, and audience attention, a phenomenon that is connected to larger neoliberal shifts in

22
If one counts its mercantile and industrial forms as the previous two phases of the capitalist system.

23
Cognitive capitalism is understood here as "an economic system characterized by the fact that 'the object of accumulation consists mainly of knowledge, which becomes the basic source of value, as well as the principal location of the process of valorization.'" See, Yann Moulier-Boutang, *Cognitive Capitalism*, trans. Ed Emery (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 57.

24
This and the following section of the text ("But Only to Look for New Weapons") are based on my introduction to *The (Un)becomings of Photography*, op. cit.

25
This phrase is used by Tony Bennett in his seminal book, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), and is here appropriated on my own terms.

The theme of photography in relation to labor and visibility/invisibility, and the search for forms of visual activism in the post-Fordist era, is at the center of artistic practice for *Werker Magazine*. That practice, based on self-representation, self-publishing, and image critique, is inspired by the international worker photography movements of the 1920s and 30s, although not in any nostalgic sense.

The installation *Werker 2 — A Spoken History of the Young Worker* focused on how photography can also generate modes of representation alternative to the dominant ones spread by media. *Werker* achieved this by establishing counter-histories that undermine the hegemonic narratives and regimes of the gaze about the body of the young male worker. See, werkermagazine.org/imageact/#popup1 [accessed August 1, 2018]. (Photo © the artists)

the political climate of the "cultural industries" and "cognitive economies" of the Global North and, increasingly, beyond. The goal should be to attempt to envision and activate the potential of current photographic media practices to serve as sites of reflection, learning, and critique, and as forums for various modes of collective visual activism and literacy—thus allowing us to open a dialogue regarding important questions about both techno-utopian scenarios and their dystopian counter-narratives, which often serve as the underlying binary mental horizons for current discussions of photographic media in general.

The first question is a general one: What is photography becoming today, and what is it doing to us and the way we perceive the world?

The question regarding these "becomings" of photography, as well as their concurrent "unbecomings," leads to the next one, which asks whether—and if so, how—the changes brought about through the transfer from analogue to digital media environments, and through photography's admission into the mainstream arts canon, have impacted institutions and curators in their exhibition-making practice and their thinking about photography.

One preliminary hypothesis here might be that, in order to successfully adapt to the accelerated changes within the field of photographic media, photographic institutions and their curators will need to pay closer attention to the question of how photographers and artists have developed new conceptualizations in order to work with(in) novel constellations.[26] Moreover, and perhaps even more importantly, we will need to ask how the often enigmatic figure of the visitor/consumer/user, and his or her position in processes of perception, interpretation, and consumption, has been complicated and reconfigured within a multiplicity of emergent spatial and virtual configurations for the exhibition of photography. These consist of screen-based devices, such as mobile phones and computers; temporary events arenas, such as festivals or biennials; and the permanently institutionalized white cube, such as museum, off space, or commercial gallery.

The question then becomes whether it is possible to make statements about the specific privileged position of the museum, the festival, or the digital domain as arenas for presenting these changes, themes, and strategies; it is also a question

26
In his essay "No More Good Life," op. cit., Duncan Forbes makes a cogent argument regarding this, calling them forms of "late curation." See, too, Forbes' essay "Fotomuseum 2050," *C Photo 10: Don't Call Me a Photographer!* (Madrid: Ivorypress, 2015).

of their respective qualities and limits in this respect. It seems quite clear today that the big challenges, particularly for museum-type institutions, involve ways of dealing with digitally-born works of art in a three-dimensional space in terms of exhibition, but also in terms of collection and conservation. This intensified interest in how we "experience" photography in the above contexts has triggered my questioning of how exhibitions of photography can be used to create situations in which audiences/visitors are engaged so as to actively reflect some of the transformations, paradoxes, and ambivalence entailed by technological and cultural change in photographic practices.

But Only to Look for New Weapons

We are currently living in a period that has been characterized as fluid and transitional in many ways; and on a sociopolitical level, we see phenomena that have been commonly grouped together under the label of globalization. Meanwhile—to focus purely on the fields of the photographic—we are living in a time that represents the completion of a transition from silver-based photography and its "recording of light" toward the age of digital and/or computational photography with its "recoding of light." The exponential proliferation and ubiquity of photographic activities in our daily lives, and the resulting floods of photographic information being "metabolized" by the networked clouds of the Internet, represent a definite threshold, requiring new forms of visual and media literacy from everybody—from exhibition visitors to museum staff. This requires alternative active modes of access, viewing, and analysis, but also interventional registers of competency via the reassemblage and modification of these banks of visual information.

The digital-commons and open-content movements are cases in point: they try to create modes of collective learning and knowledge production, for example through crowdsourced research activities and the burgeoning subcultures of self-publishing and Post-Internet art. Some of these activities result in new forms of, and strategies for, visual activism. Visual activism has been defined by Nicholas Mirzoeff, in *How to See the World*, as "[…] the interaction of pixels and actions to make change. Pixels are the visible result of everything produced by a computer, from words created by

Klara Källström and Thobias Fäldt have presented a number of projects that reflect on notions of uncertainty and the act of seeing as registers of both production and consumption. In their works, images, found or produced by the artists, are reactivated in new temporal, spatial, and material contexts. By such means they also manage to reflect on the role of emerging forms of the distributed and networked image, and its hyperconnected and accelerated patterns of mutation and migration. (Photo © the artists)

Discipula, as a collective, often engages in the deprogramming and reprogramming of images. As such, they operate on at least three levels of photographic discourse: as producers of photographic images; as "para-photographers," appropriating existing photographs to create narratives that reconfigure meanings through recontextualization; and as "meta-photographers," creating perceptual environments for the consumption of photographs under certain conditions and regimes. This enables self-reflection for the viewer both in terms of the process of perceiving an image itself, as well as for the biases contained in acts of seeing. (Photo © the artists)

a word-processor to all forms of image, sound, and video. Actions are things we do with those cultural forms to make changes, small or large, from a direct political action to a performance—whether in everyday life or in a theater—a conversation or a work of art. Once we have learned how to see the world, we have taken only one of the required steps. The point is to change it."[27]

This emerging creative potential for new forms of visual activism must, however, be considered against the dystopian foil of a complex of threats. These have also developed within this relatively novel infrastructural metabolism of visual data, and they concern the use of visual data and representations as means of collective control, surveillance, and propaganda not only by state players, but also by non-state actors such as commercial companies or movements fighting for their political and/or fundamentalist religious ideologies. The role of photographic media and technologies therein can be read either as an "apparatus of world improvement" (in German, a *Weltverbesserungsmaschine*) and transparency, or as an apparatus of delusion and asymmetric power. But, to end with a still relevant outlook from Gilles Deleuze, "There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons."[28]

An Open End: Join the Imagineering Institute of Image Studies!

So how to fulfill Deleuze's dictum, when today billions of images circumnavigate our planet every day as data packets, nearly at the speed of radio or light? The surface of our planet is covered in most places with multiple layers and deposits of visual representation, real and virtual. Most of these images will never meet a human eye but instead are read and evaluated as part of machine-to-machine communication processes. This phenomenological complex has naturally aroused great interest among artists and the mass media, and is beginning to be reflected in artistic and scientific forms of research and knowledge production.

This is the matrix for my last case study, one that has yet to be activated. Still in the planning stages, I am proposing to nomadically install and activate a temporary para-institute of Image Studies over the course of several years in various academic and non-academic contexts and framings, from universities and art academies to permanent art spaces such as

27
Nicholas Mirzoeff, op. cit., 298.

28
Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October* 59 (Winter 1992), 4.

a museum to recurring temporary ones such as festivals and biennials. Practically speaking, I propose to use the physical infrastructures of the collaborating partners as combined exhibition and discursive spaces. These would serve at the same time as workshop venues on different thematics represented by artistic positions, which in combination generate arenas of co-engagement and contention with various audiences and stakeholders.

The programmatic series of activations of the "Institute" and its mediation formats (such as reading groups, symposia, workshops, and residencies) thus creates the potential for various audiences to "update" media and visual literacy. In addition to critical spaces for reflection and criticism, these also establish "spaces of possibility" in which alternative models of the relations between art, science, and society can be actively experienced, and rethought and imagined collectively. Visual literacy here is understood not only as a passive image interpretation competence, but as an extended practice of questioning what can be thought, said, seen, and done based on visual offers (what becomes visible and what, excluded, will thus remain invisible). So it is also an activating basis, which makes an alternative world first conceivable and then realizable.

Terms such as laboratory, arena, or agora describe the intended type of space and exhibition characteristics well. In the process, everyone (curator, artist, visitor) questions existing frameworks of disciplinary expertise. Thus, gatekeeper functions are relativized by joint acts of visualization, and the way is cleared for collective forms of knowledge generation. The format of a para-institute appears here as a form of networked commons and as a "contact zone," in which the supposed paradox of communal doing versus artistic individualism is renegotiated. It is thus intended as a platform for exploring, communicating, generating, and producing images that, on the content level, reflect alternative forms of production of knowledge, goods, and, last but not least, art.

There is a difference of course between creating formats that reflect collective artistic practices and ones that fully generate an exhibition as a collective from scratch. The former makes these practices visible in the exhibition space in order to perform collective image critique in that space; the latter goes further in aiming for cooperative ownership over the means of production and ideation. With inspiration for

such utopian visions on the horizon, I would like to explore these potentials in the future. They include the establishment of production-collectives as ways of "making" exhibitions collectively from scratch, starting from the level of material production. FG2,[29] a recent Gothenburg initiative, presents a fascinating constellation, which creates new modes of display for each project enabled by access to a state-of-the-art carpentry workshop equipped with a CNC machine.

In conclusion, I want to finish with a concept that has guided me through the three projects, all dealing in different ways with collectivity. Along this path I have adopted and embraced the concept of *Komplizenschaft* (roughly, "accompliceship")[30] that has been proposed by Gesa Ziemer. According to Chatterjee, Ziemer proposes viewing "[…] collaborators as part of a subversive enterprise" of "[…] accomplices who get together in order to establish alternative orders."[31] Understood like this, the collective process of collaboration can then "render multiple voices audible"[32] and generate a "[…] 'we' who believe that contemporary art has a part in the formation of citizenship."[33]

It is this mode of accompliceship that has served, and will continue to serve, as an inspiration for developing my own practice further.

29
FG2 was founded by architect Per Nadén together with artists Klara Källström and Thobias Fäldt. Located at Föreningsgatan 2, Gothenburg, it functions as a hub for cultural activities. For more information, see, kk-tf.com/fg2.

30
Gesa Ziemer, "Komplizenschaft: Eine kollektive Kunst- und Alltagspraxis," *Kollektive Autorschaft in der Kunst: Alternatives Handeln und Denkmodell*, ed. Rachel Mader (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012), 123–139.

31
Sandra Chatterjee, op. cit., 2.

32
Mark Terkessidis, op. cit., 13; quoted in Sandra Chatterjee, op. cit., 3.

33
Irit Rogoff, "Wir: Kollektivitäten, Mutualitäten, Partizipationen," *I promise it's political: Performativität in der Kunst*, eds. Dorothea von Hantelmann and Marjorie Jongbloed (Cologne: Theater der Welt, 2002), 52–60; quoted in Sandra Chatterjee, op. cit., 3.

Gigi Argyropoulou

Where Do We Find Each Other?: Artistic and Curatorial Strategies in Transitional Times

Donna Haraway, in her book *Staying with the Trouble*, writes, "We […] live in disturbing times, mixed-up times, troubling and turbid times. The task is to become capable, with each other in all of our bumptious kinds, of response. […] staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings."[1] Lauren Berlant has argued that during times of crisis, glitches have appeared in the reproduction of life—a revelation of infrastructural failures. She then discusses infrastructures for transitional or troubling times, or "transformational infrastructures," to describe generating a form from within brokenness "beyond the exigencies of the current crisis, and alternatively to it too"[2]—a process she describes as one of "being in the space of broken form and as you proceed transformation can (perhaps) proceed."[3]

In recent decades, we have experienced continuous paradigm shifts through both economic and social crises. Especially since 2007, we have witnessed a series of political events as "responses" to social and economic crises and neoliberal hegemonic practices. From localized struggles over the commodification of public space to occupations, mobilizations, uprisings, and insurrections across different locations, people "stayed present" and reclaimed public space. Doreen Massey argued that neoliberal globalization as a material practice and as a hegemonic discourse is an attempt to tame the spatial, and proposed that attention be paid to the conceptualizations of space in seeking practices of resistance.[4] In 2007, the Invisible Committee, an anonymous collective, published a text titled *The Coming Insurrection*, which went viral online. The introduction concluded with a question which seemed a precondition for political action and change: "Where do we find each other?"[5]

In the ensuing years, as citizens formed, de-formed, and re-formed emergent publics and multitudes in streets and squares around the world, new sociopolitical horizons seemed to open up, and the Invisible Committee's question seemed to be finding, at least ephemerally, an answer as people rehearsed new social spheres.

In the arts, since the 1990s through the so-called social turn, artistic practice has sought to find ways to respond to

1
Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 1.

2
Lauren Berlant, "The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 34, no. 3 (2016), 393.

3
Lauren Berlant, "Interview with Lauren Berlant," IPAK.Center, YouTube (November 28, 2016), youtube.com/watch?v=Ih4rkMSjmjs [accessed July 12, 2018].

4
Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE Publications, 2005), 99–101.

5
Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007), 19.

the social conditions of late capitalism, experimenting with social encounters, urban interventions, and structures of relationality. At present, as more and more cultural workers engage with new political questions, we might be witnessing a political turn rather than a social one. Works in some cases take the form of critique and critical reflection; in others they direct involvement in social movements building autonomous and alternative ecologies of living. Artistic practice has attempted to find ways to intervene in the political while still in many cases being subordinated to neoliberal orthodoxies. Jacques Rancière argues that, "Despite a century of critique […] directed at the mimetic tradition," the assumption persists that "art compels us to revolt when it shows us revolting things, that it mobilizes when it itself is taken outside of the workshop or museum, and that it incites us to oppose the system of domination by denouncing its own participation in that system."[6] He then goes on to ask, "Which models of the efficacy of art govern our strategies, hopes, and judgments regarding the political import of artistic practice? And to which age do these models belong?"

Currently, in the face of new political challenges, we might question possible artistic and curatorial strategies for "staying present" in the current bleak sociopolitical landscape. What form might transformational infrastructures take through practices that "respond" to social phenomena? How might institutional and curatorial operations function as incomplete infrastructures and machines that repeatedly produce unexpected destituent spaces that question dominant imaginaries and modus operandi? The Invisible Committee, in its new book, *Now*, argues that, "In reality, what we need are not institutions but *forms*. […] Everything that lives is only forms and interactions of forms."[7] How, then, might artistic and curatorial forms operate today so as to embrace current "troubles" that exceed calls of functionality and professionalization? How might time-specific art practices be created, exhibited, and theorized as evolving social processes? "Form is born of the encounter between a situation and a necessity," writes the Invisible Committee. "Once born, it affects things far beyond itself."[8]

This essay will attempt to posit artistic and curatorial strategies as modes of social improvisation that operate in relation to social and political imaginaries. It will consider

6
Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum, 2010), 135.

7
Invisible Committee, *Now*, trans. Robert Hurley (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007), 70.

8
Ibid., 153.

compositional mechanisms of artistic work as models of intervention that bear the potential to produce critical instances of an ephemeral de-instituting. I will seek to develop further the term "destituent spaces" as a model for current curatorial and artistic practices in order to theorize on critical practices that produce new publics for discussion, contemplation, and reflection. Embracing challenges that emerge from contemporary practice as it engages with political and social realities, this text rethinks issues of framing, artistic process, and dissensus. Revisiting forms of exhibition, debate, and situatedness, this text problematizes the relation between form and content, composition and de-instituting, space and intervention in order to rethink models of situating, composing, and intervening as they relate to current conditions.

Intervention 1: In Waiting

Wu Tsang, as part of her year-long residency at Gropius Bau, in Berlin, curated a selection of works by Athens-based photographer and photojournalist Eirini Vourloumis, from her photo series *In Waiting*. The works were presented throughout the building.

In Waiting is a collection of photographs of institutional and urban settings in Athens. These settings grasp something of the current economic and social crisis and its histories while playfully unraveling the inherent contradictions embedded in bureaucratic structures that contest the Greek social imaginary. As Vourloumis herself writes, "This work is an examination of the city of Athens and its role as a physical stage for the economic crisis. […] For Athenians, the locations I chose are familiar microcosms that have now become the public stage for a forced renegotiation of Greek identity. From public offices to political headquarters to street scenes, I explore the urban landscapes that preceded the crisis but have now become its settings."[9]

These strangely familiar microcosms, carefully recomposed by Vourloumis, grasp and render visible the Greek imaginary while at the same time de-instituting it. That-which-appears-familiar performs in decay, making visible its incompatible elements. In this way, the familiar-seeming, transformed into an uncanny setting, becomes the surreal, the unexpected, the unfamiliar. As Vourloumis concludes, "Spaces that once seemed banal or unimportant

9 Eirini Vourloumis, *In Waiting* (Stuttgart: Hatje Cantz, 2017), n.p.

now reveal nuances of Greek reality and have social and political implications. Like the Greek people, these places exist in anticipation of their future."[10] This future is anticipated through the lens of a distorted here and now, contesting imaginings of functionality and social structure. It thus calls for a reimagining of change, of a change that is possible. This reimagining takes place in and through current institutional landscapes, posing questions as to how spaces perform otherwise in relation to past, present, and future orders.

Gropius Bau, originally built to house Berlin's museum of applied arts, is a Neo-Renaissance historical building from the nineteenth century. In this institution, which once stood between East and West Berlin, Vourloumis' photographs exhibit another reality, of other institutions. Distorted, uncanny landscapes of the Athenian institutions in crisis ghost the Gropius Bau's momentary empty state and produce unexpected dialogues with historic architecture and institutional aesthetics, presence and disappearance, "highlighting contrasts between transition and stasis."[11]

In 1977, Susan Sontag, in her influential and controversial book *On Photography*, argued that "photography has the unappealing reputation of being the more realistic, therefore facile, of the mimetic arts."[12] She referenced Feuerbach's assertion that his age preferred the photograph to the real thing, the appearance before experience. For Sontag, this argument was embedded in a modern culture that is constantly engaged with producing and consuming images to such an extent that photography has become essential to the health of the economy and the stability of social structures. Over the course of the decades that followed the publication of Sontag's book, photographic methods and culture drastically changed with the proliferation of photographic means and modes of "exhibition" through social media and online circulation. This proliferation serves only to intensify Sontag's proposition on the role of photography toward social structures. Thus photography, as she argued further, "is a form of supervision."

However, in this intervention, Vourloumis' images perform a double withdrawal: from ways of seeing, grasping, and experiencing the constant circulation of images, and at the same time from images implanted in our minds in relation to such settings. *In Waiting* challenges the mimetic, and thus our relation to both the real and the imaginary of these

10 Ibid., n.p.

11 *In House: Waiting: Wu Tsang in Conversation with Eirini Vourloumis*, Gropius Bau, Berlin, March 25, 2018.

12 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 51.

institutional settings. Contesting the function of photography as "a form of supervision" and the role of images in formulating social imaginaries, Vourloumis' images grasp and make visible that which is fugitive and out of sight, yet always present de-instituting what is there, inherent in social structures and notions of familiarity. Installed throughout Gropius Bau, Vourloumis' work provoked questions on forms and functions, on uses of buildings and institutions, and on modes of display and contemplation translating ways of seeing into forms of "staying present."

Forms of "Staying Present"

Both within the social and the political turn, curatorial and artistic practices rethought the relation between content and form, as well as the function and structure of the exhibition. New hybrid roles emerged to challenge the limits of the profession, including collective, self-organized initiatives, as well as the artist as curator or curator as artist. For Paul O'Neill, to study the practice of curating is to make visible the ways in which art has been displayed, mediated, and discussed as part of our histories of exhibition making.[13] Meanwhile, Barnaby Drabble argues that curating "is not about the display of work (be that in a gallery, or on the Internet), it is about the development of critical meaning in partnership and discussion with artists and publics."[14]

"Curate" is derived from the medieval Latin *curatus*, itself derived from the Latin for "care," as in, originally, caring for souls. Only subsequently would it come to be used in reference to the act of caring for a collection of inanimate objects. At present, the word has a wider meaning and refers to a broader sphere of activities, practices, and professions that may overlap with other professional fields. Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook, referring back to Drabble's words, describe curators as "acting as a kind of interface between artist, institution, and audience in 'the development of critical meaning,'"[15]and they suggest that new media is best understood as a set of behaviors that demand a rethinking of curatorial practices. Thus, contemporary curating can be said to refer to the care of implications between art and context and the critical meaning/practices produced. We may then ask further: What new forms of care can we imagine that seek to produce new relations between context and meaning? What

13 Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012).

14 Barnaby Drabble, quoted in Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook, *Rethinking Curating: Art after New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 10.

15 Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook, op. cit., 1.

forms of exhibition might be appropriate for artistic work that is interrelated with sociopolitical conditions? How can we de-institute dominant artistic models and find new ways in which artistic practice might respond to the here and now?

The Invisible Committee writes of the destituent process that it is one of "desertion and attack, creation and wrecking, and all at once, *in the same gesture*. […] It forms a linkage between the extended time of construction and the spasmodic time of intervention, between the disposition to enjoy our piece of the world and the disposition to place it at stake."[16] Perhaps such destituent processes might be fruitful as artistic and curatorial strategies, practices of (social) care that produce new critical meanings as interventions—within and against a specific milieu—inseparable from practices of social improvisation.

Intervention 2: Art Storage/Yafka

Eirene Efstathiou's work *Art Storage/Yafka* consists of a series of staged environments/in-situ installations. The work was initially created and installed inside the art department storage room in a high school at which Efstathiou worked as a part-time art teacher. In this disused storage room in the American high school in Athens, Efstathiou produced images of recreated safe houses used by Greek revolutionary guerrilla groups during the 1980s and 1990s. The images are easily recognizable within the Greek imaginary as they are based on photos and descriptions of these groups in the media when the safe houses were discovered.

"*Yafka* is the Russian word for a safe house or a secret address," Efstathiou writes. "In Greek, the term is used almost exclusively to refer to safe houses used by clandestine urban guerrilla groups. The main function of *Art Storage/Yafka* was simply for it to exist. It was a tactic for appropriating a free space from the institution as much as it was a critique levied against the institution."[17]

The project was featured, in 2015, in the artist's pages section of "On Institutions," an issue of the *Performance Research* journal. That same year, Efstathiou's images were exhibited, in Athens, as part of a program which ran parallel to "Institutions, Politics, Performance," a symposium at the occupied Green Park cultural space.

16 Invisible Committee, *Now*, op. cit., 88.

17 Eirene Efstathiou, "Art Storage/Yafka," *Performance Research* 20, no. 4 (2015), 140.

In House: Waiting: Wu Tsang in Conversation with Eirini Vourloumis, Gropius Bau, Berlin, 2018
(photo: Mathias Völzke)

Eirene Efstathiou, *Art Storage/Yafka*, clandestine in-situ installation and durational performance, 2015

DIY Performance Biennial, Green Park, Athens and Cythera, 2016

In these two different settings, Efstathiou's work rehearsed new dialogues between context and meaning. Reproducing familiar-seeming though imagined environments that dominated the Greek imaginary, the work creates an unexpected and unreal setting that questions institutional operations and re-appropriations. Sontag suggested that surrealism "lies at the heart of the photographic enterprise," and argued further that it functions as "the very creation of a duplicate world, of a reality in the second degree, narrower but more dramatic than the one perceived by natural vision."[18]

While Sontag's views are challenged today by the widespread use of photographic means, such thoughts might be usefully applied when examining Efstathiou's artistic practice. Efstathiou's use of cheap materials produces this duplicated reality through images of recreated environments in a forgotten institutional space that contest both the real and the unexpected, and how they formulate the contemporary imaginary.

Partly an intervention, partly an installation, partly a happening, and partly a collection of photos, the project questions where the work is, what the work is, and how it operates. Self-critical of its own position in the art market, Efstathiou's work uses the mimetic to contest images implanted in our minds and produce visual distinctions between what is there and what could be, as well as models of imagining intervention and guerrilla action. By reproducing, with everyday means, popular images of the revolutionary imaginary in a disused storage space in a school, Efstathiou's work questions operations of the political turn. Contesting assumptions that "art compels us to revolt when it shows us revolting things, that it mobilizes when it itself is taken outside of the workshop or museum," the work forces us to reflect on the role of art in the contemporary, and its critical situatedness relative to current conditions.

Forms of Intervention as De-Instituting

Lauren Berlant has asked how we can resist situations of "stuck-ness" without becoming ahistorical.[19] As you don't know how to move, the ways to move no longer work. One task then for theory and art, asserts Berlant, is to provide infrastructures for transformation. Infrastructures are not, however, to be confused with institutions. Infrastructures are defined by use.

18
Susan Sontag, op. cit., 52.

19
Lauren Berlant, "Q&A About Transformational Infrastructures," presented within *In Spite of Everything: Stubborn Returns and Urban Afterlives*, Athens, May 25, 2017.

Such ephemeral infrastructures and emergent publics have materialized in multiple ways in recent years, especially in places enduring crises. Producing time from within brokenness, they manifest in the form of artistic interventions and DIY exhibitions: practices that reflect on social phenomena and produce spaces for reflection and sociality; unforeseen moments that were not solely about art or politics but situations that produced new relations, new structures, new forms of life. The spatial dimension, as in the works discussed, appeared of critical importance. As the neoliberal imaginary seeks to control and tame the spatial both as imaginary and practicing field, perhaps art and curatorial practices might embrace processes of social improvisation for and within the spatial.

Judith Butler suggests that if performativity has often been associated with individual performance, it may prove important to reconsider those forms of performativity "whose condition and aim is the reconstitution of plural forms of agency and social practices of resistances,"[20] as she refers to the emergent publics that restructure ephemerally material environments. Such practices, which call for a reimagining of the ways the spatial operates, might function as evolving destituent processes that ephemerally constitute publics while questioning structures we both inhabit and are inhabited by.

Intervention 3:
A DIY Biennial

In the summer of 2016, in Athens, a DIY biennial took place under the title *No Future*. Six years after the government-debt crisis decimated social support structures and ushered in an era of austerity spending, and a year after voters used a debt referendum to reject bailout terms—as well as within the context of myriad self-organized social and artistic initiatives having been generated in response to the buckling of civil society—the event aimed to rethink artistic and curatorial practice in response to social and political phenomena. Emerging from, and questioning the potential of, self-organized cultural practices, in a present without a future, the event sought to critically interrogate the role of performance, both historically and contemporaneously, in relation to political and social materialities and imaginaries.

20
Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 9.

Engaging in ongoing disruptions between the institution and the self-instituted, between buildings and parks, between the center and the periphery, between urban and rural, the event began at the Green Park occupied space in Pedion tou Areos park and then proceeded, via boat, from Piraeus to the island of Cythera, geographically within the former Athens Prefecture. Playfully subverting the term "biennial" into a self-organized practice, it proposed a model of self-curation based on bringing together forms of artistic, political, and theoretical practice and discourse with a view toward investigating the potential of collective refusal to a referred futurity. The event had no public or private support or funding, and was realized through the generosity of participants, friends, and audiences.

The idea of self-curation was considered as a possibility for collectively examining forms of "caring" that might produce new critical meanings and structures appropriate for present-day transitional periods. Resisting institutional reappropriations and the proliferation of the term, the event proposed the practice of self-curation as an attempt to reorient it back to its root definition of "caring for," collectively exploring models of care and presentness through and beyond contemporary practice—with others, in space. Thus, each day prior to the public program, an assembly took place at which organizers, participating artists, and theorists alike met to plan the day's schedule and to collectively decide on how and where to situate works. Taking place in a cultural occupancy in the heart of the crisis, the project was open to diverse attendees and constantly affected by the urgent needs of its surroundings. The space was collectively managed, and the physical labor required to realize the program, instead of being allocated to outsiders (experts, technicians, cleaners), was instead deemed inseparable from the realization of the artistic/theoretical work itself.

The transparent, spontaneous, and vulnerable context of Green Park, and later the public space of the boat and sites on Cythera, drew together diverse and unexpected audiences as participants, passers-by, refugees, and locals mixed organically, reversing expectations, rejiggering the production of meaning, and contesting the narrative of what was taking place. The event also seemed to question its own potential, as it appeared insufficient to produce sustainable change in

the cultural landscape of the crisis and/or interrupt power regimes. Nevertheless, it functioned as an exercise on how an impromptu DIY infrastructure might operate, even if only for a time.

Improvised Infrastructures, Curated Forms

During the last couple of decades, we have witnessed radical paradigm shifts in modes of practicing politics and culture. From self-organized collective initiatives to mobilizations and large-scale exhibitions, art organizations sought to reconsider their position in the sociopolitical landscape, and to rethink and de-naturalize established modus operandi and models of action. Within the political turn, a series of events took place ranging from formalist appropriations to more congruent attempts to experiment with new ways of producing public discourse. Chantal Mouffe argues that artistic practice can play a crucial role against domination, but that this requires a thorough understanding of democratic politics. Such politics, I would argue, operate both inside and outside of the artistic work, and through the situatedness of artistic practice within a wider economic/social context that is itself political and involved in politics. As Rancière has argued, "Doing art means displacing art's borders, just as doing politics means displacing the border of what is acknowledged as the political."[21]

Perhaps one way to rethink the potentialities and challenges of the political turn, and new artistic and curatorial models for this moment in time, is through the production of what I call "destituent spaces": unfamiliar, unexpected conceptualizations and uses of space (within and without existing institutional structures), and spatial organizational models that are critically situated in relation to the sociocultural landscape; spatial reconfigurations that engage in processes of instituting through a rupturing of existing models of spatial, social, organizational, and cultural production; methods and practices, as forms of life that seek to unravel and undo ways of doing, sedimented practices, and horizons of expectations, critically situated and organized in relation to a specific environment. Polemical, destituent to it, and yet in it and implicated. Indebted. Broken open. Shifting methods. Glimpses of an elsewhere that cannot be realized within the existing social order.

21
Jacques Rancière, op. cit., 149.

Such practices, within and without institutional frameworks, might attempt to operate as (micro) social forms: unforeseen forms of political responsibility that take place between bodies in space belonging to no one. Inseparable from their conditions of production. Without antibiotic effects and therefore embracing their own telos, their own insufficiency. Improvising possible positions in a constant struggle between the personal and the public, strictures and making, continuity and stasis. As the neoliberal imaginary seeks to control and tame the spatial, perhaps the production of destituent spaces and reconfigurations might open up new terrains of practice to think, exercise, institute, and imagine that which appears as yet non-institutable, or non-institutable as a form of caring. In relation to a given environment. Evolving and shifting as rapidly as it does.

It is undeniable that by their very nature such practices are often impotential, ephemeral, precarious, insufficient, and vulnerable as structures of care and solidarity. They manifest as fugitive moments, events, exhibitions, interventions, and situations that might appear only to disappear, and yet still repetitively produce conditions of responding, improvising, sharing, organizing, failing, insisting, and studying with others through the specific strictures, stakes, and limitations of a "here and now." Embracing the impossibility of their being reproduced and yet simultaneously causing repetition of such moments and situations might begin to allow us to sketch across different locations transformational infrastructures through reimagined models of making, caring, presenting, and making public in ways appropriate for these current transitional times.

In Conversation with Ahmed Alalousi

on the Humanizing Potential of Personal Photos

In the spring of 2016, the Finnish Museum of Photography, in cooperation with the University of Helsinki[1] and the Festival of Political Photography,[2] launched a project called *Mobile Albums*, which collected together photographs taken by asylum seekers who had recently arrived in Finland, as well as testimonials from them in which they described the content and meaning of their personal images.[3] Project participants were asked to choose five to ten photographs, stored on their mobile phones, that meant the most to them.

Iraqi photographer Ahmed Alalousi—who, in the fall of 2015, at the age of 21, had arrived in Finland from Iraq seeking asylum himself—worked on the project as a photographer and interpreter, but also as an expert intermediary between the project's creators and its contributors.

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger We worked together, in 2016, on the *Mobile Albums* project. At that time, there were many refugees coming to Europe, including to Finland, and people in Finland did not know how to react. At the Finnish Museum of Photography, where I worked at the time, we realized that there were going to be many new residents in Finland whose visual histories were rooted in many countries and cultures. As the museum's collection is focused on a Finnish-oriented history of photography, we wanted to approach people whose visual histories were not yet reflected in the collection. You were the key person who made this undertaking possible because it was you who found the people whose stories the project helps tell (and who helped the project by sharing those stories); you did the interviews and collected the images that would become central to the project. Why did you want to be involved?

1
The following students from the University of Helsinki's museology study program participated on the project: Irene Alakopsa, Juuso Koskinen, Petra Lehtoruusu, and Lene Wahlsten. The project was also overseen by Finnish Museum of Photography curators Maria Faarinen, Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger, and Anni Wallenius.

2
For more information, see: pvf.fi/en/about.

3
The results of the project were exhibited as *Mobile Albums*, Festival of Political Photography 2017, Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki, Finland, February 3–April 9, 2017.

Ahmed Alalousi When I came to Finland, I was hoping that photography would help me to become part of society here. I thought that I could be the right person for the project about "mobile photography albums" from refugees, because I was not only a photographer, but a photographer who had been a refugee once myself. I know about the life of people who come from different countries in the Middle East, and about Iraqis especially. I thought that maybe some of the people would feel more comfortable talking to me because I was from the same country as them, and I could explain to them better why this project is being done. I believed, and believe, that through photography we can share knowledge and feelings about our histories and experiences.

Working for the museum, with museum staff and with students from the university, was a new working experience for me in Finland. We asked asylum seekers to share their most important images, which they had stored on their cell phones. We did not conceal anything when we approached potential contributors and told them what we were doing and why. It didn't matter if a photo was a "good quality" image or not. What was most important were the feelings an image evoked for the individual sharing it. For example, one man was showing all kinds of beautiful photos; but when I asked him to show me a photograph of something dear to his heart, he showed me an image of his family. And then he started telling me about his family. In sharing such photos with us, and in telling us the stories behind the images, people opened their hearts to us.

AKR What kind of photographs were the most important ones?

AA Mostly photographs of people—either friends or family. Some of them were also about the journey to Europe, from Iraq, or Iran, or Syria. These photographs were meaningful because people were afraid when they took them; they did not know what would happen to them. The journey was really significant to them. Some people shared photographs of family members and friends who they had lost to the violence of war. They shared images of those they wanted to remember every day.

AKR There were also photographs of photographs. One contributor had taken photos of the analogue contents of his family's photo albums. His phone became a "mobile album."

AA Yes, one man had photographed family photos kept in albums. He said that his family had been killed by a bomb, so he could not photograph his loved ones when he left home. He only had these photos of them. With his cell phone, he re-photographed the pictures in the albums because he was afraid that he would lose the original photographs on the hazardous journey to Europe.

AKR What were the most significant moments for you, working on this project?

AA The most important moment was when we had the opening here at the Finnish Museum of Photography. When I came to the museum for the opening and saw the great amount of visitors who wanted to see the exhibition, and when I saw the exhibition texts, the interviews, and the images, I felt that we had done something really special. I thought, people will come to see the show, to see the photos and the interviews, and they will better understand the feelings and experiences of the newcomers. I really wanted to have all the participants attend the exhibition, so that they could interact with and have an open discussion with the museum's visitors. Because when you have the images and the texts on the wall, you are seeing only one element of the story. The visitors do not see the actual person. I also felt that the project brought all of us on the project team so much closer together.

AKR Were there any difficult or uncomfortable moments when you were asking people about very personal things?

AA Of course. I was sorry about everyone's losses. I felt embarrassed because people were talking about personal matters, and I was afraid that I might say something that would accidentally hurt them. I had asked them to share these photographs that meant so much to them. Maybe they would think that I was just going to use the images for my own purposes. I made sure to explain carefully why we would like to have their pictures be included in our archive. When doing the interviews, I also talked about myself, shared my history, to let them know that in the end we were in the same situation. So they trusted that they could share details about their own situations. Also, I thought there was maybe the possibility for friendships to form.

AKR During the process, we on the project team discussed at length the power relationship to be aware of here: Finnish people, leading safe and comfortable lives, asking to make use of the personal images of refugees to include them in an archive, and to publicly exhibit them on the wall of an institution, with text, with their stories. You often said that the safekeeping of personal photos is something we all have in common. Whether stored in albums or on our phones, we all keep images that are deeply significant and even precious to us. With the project, we tried to tap into the feelings we all share when we think of our own most irreplaceable personal images, even if the project's contributors and viewers came from different backgrounds and experiences. But when, for example, we were shown one father's most important photograph, which was of his baby daughter in a tiny life jacket, and he told us that he took the picture because he was not sure if he would ever see his daughter again because she was put in another boat when crossing the sea, I asked myself how fair it was for us to ask for these intimate images, and to exhibit them in public. How did you feel? Do you think that what we did with this project was ethically okay?

Mobile Albums Project, The Finnish Museum of Photography, 2015 (photographer unknown)

Ahmed Alalousi and Petra Lehtoruusu discussing photos with Anas, 2016
(photo: Ahmed Alalousi/The Finnish Museum of Photography)

AA Yes, I do! Based on the feedback from the people that were involved, they were really happy to see the exhibition. I know that sharing these private stories did not affect them in any negative way. They wanted to tell these stories. Also, they were aware of the purpose of the exhibition. When you asked me to work on the project, to hear stories of tragedy and loss, and then to ask for permission to exhibit these images, I decided to separate some of my feelings from the task at hand. I thought that by sharing these individuals' stories and situations, it might be possible to find people that could help them here. Images might reach people that are in a position to help or even to effect change. Also, the material we gathered has not been used for any other purposes. The material has only been used for the project, for research, for the archive, for the exhibition. For sharing stories and promoting understanding. These people opened their hearts to share their stories with the community here in Finland, so that Finnish people could see who they are and where they came from.

AKR Even if the images were collected from cell phones, originally looked at on screens, and shared and transmitted from device to device, we decided in the end to print them carefully and frame them to be hung on the museum's walls. At the opening, I had a feeling that it was important for the project's contributors to see that their photographs had been treated with care, respect, and appreciation.

But I want to return to you, Ahmed, because as we have discussed many times, the so-called "migrant crisis" in Europe, in 2015, was also an unprecedented time regarding the visual documentation of what was happening on the ground. In addition to images produced by professional photojournalists, thousands of refugees seeking sanctuary in Europe photographed the situation with their cell phones and posted photos on social media. I think this context provided another layer of meaning to our project. Did you photograph your journey from Iraq to Europe?

AA I actually lost my phone at sea, but I used the phone of a friend. We took photos in every situation we went through, whether it was good or bad. It was important to document the journey. "Maybe this would be the farthest we would get; maybe this would be the last picture we would take." First I traveled through Turkey, to the city of Izmir, on the Mediterranean coast. Then we crossed the sea to one island, and then through Greece and all these countries, Germany and Sweden, until I came to Finland from Lapland. The journey took two weeks. We documented it with a cell phone. I photographed my friends, but also the camps, walking along highways, running across fields, sleeping on streets. Unique moments, I would say. Because we had never experienced sleeping on the street, or walking for two weeks straight, or being without food. It was quite a shock for us. At those moments, we did not know where we would end up. Could we make it? Could we make a life for ourselves if we did?

AKR Did you share the photographs you took with your family?

AA Yes, that was the purpose of taking them. I sent them to my family to show them where we were and how we were doing at that moment. Now, these images preserve memories of the journey.

AKR How would you compare how you used to use photography on social media in Iraq to how you work with the medium now? Has your approach to photography changed since you made the journey to Finland?

AA In Iraq, I did not take many personal photos because I didn't think that one day I would have to leave and I would not see my family and friends and the place where I was from anymore. When I came to Finland, I started missing my home and my family. I realized that photos are important because they were the only things that made me feel better. They brought back feelings and gave me hope. I decided then that I should always take pictures—including here in Finland, because maybe one day I will leave Finland and not return. You never know what is going to happen. I take photos here and I send them to my family, because they are interested in seeing the new life I am leading.

This conversation took place in Helsinki, on August 24, 2018.

In Conversation with Rune Peitersen

on Gray Zones in Visual Culture

At the heart of Rune Peitersen's twelve-minute video *The Operators and the Targets* (2017) is an imaginary relationship between operators in a military facility and their targets in a distant, undefined country.[1] As a consequence of ongoing technological inventions, bodily confrontation on the ground seems to have become optional. Peitersen's intricately constructed video delves into a gray area, visualizing the remote-controlled systems that provide an immediate and continuous sense of presence—as if distance has become "obsolete." The spatial presentation of this video is complemented by photographic prints showing victims of drone attacks moments before they are shot.

Iris Sikking I would like to talk about two specific aspects of the construction of this project. The video material you use stems from different Internet sources. Could you elaborate on the appropriation of this imagery in terms of ethics and in terms of its sometimes violent nature? And could you describe what led to your decision to write a partly fictional script for the video?

Rune Peitersen The question of how to appropriate an image, and the people in it, is something I struggled with. How much of a voice can you give to someone you know nothing about? I chose very specifically to use only online footage. There's plenty of drone-combat footage online, which intrigued me. Who releases it and why? I also used online footage from press briefings during the invasion of Afghanistan and the Iraq War, and promotional videos from the U.S. Air Force—de facto propaganda materials. It's fascinating and haunting material. I remember when we first encountered the idea of "smart missiles" in the nineties: we saw these movements on our TV screens of a building coming closer and closer, and then suddenly the image on the screen became snowy or blank, which meant that something "good" had happened. Somehow these images entered the collective visual culture. It's important to question them.

1
Rune Peitersen, *The Operators and the Targets*, Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art, Krakow, Poland, April 14–June 24, 2018. For more information on this project, see, runepeitersen.com/2017/04/2017-the-operators-and-the-targets [accessed August 13, 2018].

2
"I no longer love blue skies. In fact, I now prefer gray skies. The drones do not fly when the skies are gray." See, Alexander Abad-Santos, "This 13-Year-Old Is Scared When the Sky Is Blue Because of Our Drones," *The Atlantic* (October 29, 2013), theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/10/saddest-words-congresss-briefing-drone-strikes/354548 [accessed August 20, 2018]. See, too, "Drone Survivors Speak at Congressional Briefing Called by Rep. Grayson," YouTube (October 29, 2013), youtube.com/watch?v=L-hSe6-mK8wk [accessed August 21, 2018].

The question of authorship is interesting as well, but my approach is quite pragmatic: I simply see [video on the Internet] as available material. As soon as it's on YouTube, you're even legally allowed to use it for commercial purposes. For me, this footage has a certain documentary value, because of its presumed source. Although I trust the things I see, I don't really *know*. You might say it takes place within a semi-fictional universe. It was this reasoning that led me to write a script and use a voice-over to tell my own story based on my research on drone warfare.

There are tons of testimonies available online: for example, Zubair, a thirteen-year-old Pakistani boy, and his family testifying before the U.S. Congress, saying that drones have made him fearful of the blue sky.[2] The last part in the video, with the young woman, is more descriptive, and there I take the artistic liberty of adding the storyline about "her" parents. It's a way to close the story, and also hopefully to let it come back to the viewer.

IS Many visitors to your exhibition experienced a strong emotional impact because of the story's narration, which is in fact recorded in your own voice. Could you explain the color gray, which is a recurring concept in the work? The photographs based on stills from online video footage are quite unsettling, as they show what operators see on their screens just before an attack takes place: a blurred image of a person. Why did you choose to add these to the video?

RP It is a gray area, in many senses. It's a moral gray area, a juridical gray area. The terms of engagement you have on a battlefield are written with a traditional kind of war in mind: as a soldier you can be killed; on the battlefield your own life is at stake, and that's what gives you the license to kill. But now the positions on the battlefield have changed dramatically. The French philosopher Grégoire Chamayou argues that we're now dealing with a predator–prey situation on the battlefield instead.[3]

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Peitersen is referring to Chamayou writing, "A soldier wields violence and is also exposed to it, he is both an executioner and a victim. But what does he become once the very possibility of being exposed to violence is removed?" Grégoire Chamayou, *Drone Theory* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 103.

Rune Peitersen, *The Operators and the Targets*, 2017, single-channel video, stereo sound, loop, 12'25".
Installed in the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art, as part of Krakow Photomonth 2018
(photo: Studio Luma)

However, these people also find themselves in a gray area, perhaps even a lost area. It's not only the operators who suffer from PTSD: the targets do, too, as they suffer from the anxieties that follow from the knowledge of being under surveillance. Within a larger context, it's a consciously constructed gray area: the two protagonists are caught in a system where they don't have much to say. In the central part of the video, with the two operators in the tank, a voice from above says, "Do this!" That part is in black and white because gray is not allowed anymore: they have to push the button, basically.

The photographic prints indeed show "targets" just before they're killed. Those were the first images that came out shortly after an earlier project, *Safe Distance* (2015), where I took overall screenshots of combat situations. The images of the individual targets struck me as poignant, because of their ghostlike quality. I cut out the figures and expanded the gray behind them. One-third of the image in the center is untouched, but the rest is pure background color. This isolates the target, but also asks: What is an image? How "real" are the people in the images? What are the moral implications of soldiers not being in harm's way themselves? Of preying on a "target" in this manner? It's the absurdity of it, this surveillance part, the killing from above.

IS This is exactly what you make visible, and universally accessible, within this particular work. When a decision to kill takes place in a virtual zone, it feels like machines are looking at us and deciding whether we should become targets. I wonder who or what actually *sees* us within this system of war.

RP One of the things that came up during the panel discussion[4] the opening weekend of the festival, was that when we talk about machines, algorithms, and so forth, we tend to talk about them—"them"—as this large, more or less known entity, over which we humans have no control anymore. This certainly creates an even larger gray zone, where we give up some of

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A panel discussion entitled *Data and Power* took place, on May 25, 2018, at the Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art in Krakow, Poland. Moderated by Alicja Peszkowska, it included the following artists: Eline Benjaminsen, Mark Curran, Esther Hovers, Clément Lambelet, Rune Peitersen, and Salvatore Vitale. Present were Dominik Skokowski, Director of Partnerships at the Kosciuszko Institute, in Warsaw, and Krakow Photomonth 2018 chief curator Iris Sikking. For a full video report, see, "Panel Discussion on Data and Power," youtube.com/watch?v=_B-Myf4WEEs [accessed August 13, 2018].

our own potential agency. Maybe the word "watch" is simply wrong in this context. Machines don't "watch" anything: they are decoding certain information. Technology is being developed to allow the computers to simplify the decision-making process for the drone pilots, so you get computers being programmed in such a way that, if ninety-five percent of the boxes are ticked, a missile can be fired. But to say, "Oh, but then it's the drone *deciding*," I think, is the wrong way of talking about it. Even very complex systems make computational decisions, but I don't think we should attribute them conscious qualities, because a "decision" would entail that they could also *not* do it. So we shouldn't talk about artificial intelligence anymore; we should talk about algorithmic intelligence, as Mark Curran interestingly remarked on the panel. Because an algorithm—however intricate and however complicated—is still a human construction, and the responsibility for its actions is therefore ultimately human.

There is a horrible concept in drone warfare called a "kill box": the place where you position a theater of war. This concept stuck with me because it has a strong visual connotation as a three-dimensional designated area within which everything can, and probably will, be killed. Retroactively, after the attack, everybody who was there at that point in time is marked as a terrorist and is therefore by definition guilty. Imagine drones on autopilot setting up kill boxes whenever certain parameters are met…

IS The panel you refer to provided an interesting exchange of thoughts on many tough issues that the participating artists are dealing with in their respective projects. It also emphasized the importance of coming together to discuss art projects and the intentions behind them. This brings me to my final question: Why exhibit?

RP It's comforting to me that we still have this space, the "art world," where we can discuss complex or controversial themes. Just imagine if such a space didn't

exist! It's very important that it remain and that we feed this space, and that we meet each other within it to simply discuss what we see, think, and feel based on our gathered artistic expertise.

I believe the art world as a platform is very important in developing new concepts and new ways of talking about the issues of our time. Artists have a very important role in this: we need to tell and reflect on things going on, and we need to develop vocabularies, ways of seeing things in different lights, to counter the hegemonic narratives of governments and of capital. To imagine new utopias, new ideas, and show that it's possible to think differently.

To me, the role of art is to offer a way to look through someone else's eyes, to experience someone else's world, to connect with the other, thus making visible and tangible that we are not alone in the world. I think that's what art is about, and what exhibiting is about as well. However, it can feel futile sometimes, because nothing ever changes as quickly as you'd like. One has to realize that, just like complex public debates, change takes time.

There's an interesting development going on within the museum world that started a couple of decades ago. I remember seeing Allan Sekula's *Fish Story*, at Documenta 11, which was part of a movement within the arts when documentary-oriented art-making appeared. And you got this sort of hybrid movie, raising the question: What is it, exactly? Is it a real documentary, or is it art? The artist took a different position, almost as an activist, and engaged with the world in a different manner: after all, history had "ended," and there was a need to question where we were going. In my opinion, many museums have now become places to discuss politics and policies on a meta level. Perhaps the next step should be to introduce discussions, on a practical, political level, that extend beyond the art world.

This conversation took place in Amsterdam, on June 16, 2018.

Why Exhibit?
Positions on Exhibiting Photographies

Ahmed Alalousi was born in Mosul, Iraq, in 1992. He is a self-taught photographer and videographer currently living and working in Ekenäs, Finland. His interest in photography began, in 2012, when he enrolled at the University of Mosul. The creative atmosphere within the university's department of media stimulated him to explore the art of photography further, also outside of university, and he quickly developed his skills, achieving success in various regional and national competitions.

Gigi Argyropoulou is a researcher, curator, dramatist, and theorist working in the fields of performance and cultural practice. Based in Athens and London, she has initiated and organized public programs, festivals, conferences, performances, actions, interventions, and cultural projects both inside and outside of institutions. She holds a PhD from the University of Roehampton. She received the Routledge Prize, in 2012, and the Dwight Conquergood Award, in 2017. She publishes regularly in journals, books, and magazines, and was co-editor of the *On Institutions* special issue of the *Performance Research Journal*. She also co-initiated the DIY Performance Biennial and co-curated its first edition.

Taco Hidde Bakker is a writer and researcher. He completed an MA in Photographic Studies at Leiden University with a thesis on the crossroads of photo theory and visual anthropology. He worked as a researcher on the documentary project *The Last Days of Shishmaref* with Paradox and Dana Lixenberg. His writings have been published in catalogues, artist's books, and in periodicals such as *Camera Austria*, *Foam Magazine*, *EXTRA*, *British Journal of Photography*, and *The PhotoBook Review*. *The Photograph That Took the Place of a Mountain*, his first collection of essays, was published by Fw:Books, in 2018.

Lisa Barnard's photographic practice discusses real events, embracing complex and innovative visual strategies that utilize both traditional documentary techniques and more contemporary and conceptually rigorous forms of representation. She connects her interests in aesthetics, current photographic debates on materiality, and the existing political climate. Barnard is a Reader in Photography and Programme Leader on the MA in Documentary Photography at the University of South Wales. She has two publications, both with GOST: *Chateau Despair* and *Hyenas of the Battlefield, Machines in the Garden*. Her new project, *The Canary and the Hammer*, will be published by MACK, in early 2019.

Natasha Caruana is a London-based artist working across photography, moving image, and installation. She has an MA in Photography from the Royal College of Art, London. Her work begins autobiographically, exploring narratives of love, betrayal, and fantasy, underpinned by a performative and playful documentary approach. Significant to all of Caruana's work is the questioning of how today's technology impacts relationships. The series *Married Man* breaks with traditional portrayals of infidelity, whilst later works grapple with the institution of marriage—its promise and defeat. Her work is created by drawing from archives, the Internet, and personal accounts. Caruana recently produced the moving image and installation piece *Timely Tale*, using 360-degree technology to reposition the viewer, subject, and maker. The work develops photography as an expanded form and continues to push the specific boundaries of documentary photography.

Mark Curran is an artist-researcher living and working in Berlin and Dublin. Holding a practice-led PhD, he is Lecturer and Programme Chair, BA (Hons) Photography, Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT), Dublin; and Visiting Professor, MA in Visual and Media Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin. Incorporating multimedia installation informed by ethnography, since the late 1990s, he has undertaken a cycle of four long-term research projects, critically addressing the predatory context resulting from flows of global capital. These have been extensively published and exhibited. His most recent installations include at the Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris, France (2014); Noorderlicht | House of Photography, Groningen, The Netherlands (2015); Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto, Canada (2016); Museum of Capitalism, Oakland, USA (2017); Turchin Center for the Visual Arts, North Carolina, USA (2017); Le Bleu du Ciel, Lyon, France (2017); and Krakow Photomonth, Poland (2018).

Nicoló Degiorgis is academically trained in Sinology and professionally in photography. He is an author and publisher currently on residency at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. He runs the publishing house Rorhof and occasionally curates exhibitions.

Doris Gassert is Research Curator at Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland, where she co-curates SITUATIONS at situations.fotomuseum.ch, runs the blog *Still Searching…*, and is responsible for Fotomuseum's publications. With SITUATIONS, a research lab and exhibition format that investigates current changes in photographic media and culture, she helps develop Fotomuseum's program and understanding of post-photography. She holds a PhD in Media Studies from the University of Basel, Switzerland, where she teaches media aesthetics, with a focus on the intermediality and epistemology of photography and the politics of representation.

Marko Karo is a Helsinki-based visual artist. He is a lecturer in the MA program ViCCA (Visual Cultures, Curating, and Contemporary Art) at the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Helsinki, Finland. From museum collections to vernacular imagery and prison histories, Karo's work engages with archives as sites of rethinking and reanimating histories. He forms one third of the artist collective Gruppo 111 (with Mika Elo and Harri Laakso), which curated the Finnish ensemble of exhibitions entitled *Falling Trees* at the Venice Biennale, in 2013. Karo was also a co-curator of the Helsinki Photography Biennial, in 2012.

Kim Knoppers is an art historian at the University of Amsterdam and a curator at Foam. Since 2011, she has worked on solo exhibitions, including those by Melanie Bonajo, Broomberg & Chanarin, JH Engström, Anne de Vries, and Taiyo Onorato and Nico Krebs, and group exhibitions such as, most recently, *Collectivism: Collectives and Their Quest for Value* (2016) and *Back to the Future: The 19th Century in the 21st Century* (2018). She has contributed to various magazines including *Foam Magazine*, *Unseen*, and *Aperture*, and has written catalogue texts on Jaya Pelupessy and Sylvain Couzinet-Jacques, amongst others. She is also a lecturer in the MA Photography program at École cantonale d'art de Lausanne (ECAL) in Lausanne, Switzerland, where she initiated and developed the course Do Not Disturb – Curating in Progress.

Robert Knoth and Antoinette de Jong's work is characterized by an autonomous, modern approach with a focus on long-term documentaries that attempt to uncover the complexity of various socio-economic or political topics and their impact on the lives of "ordinary" individuals. In the resulting work, Knoth and De Jong seek ways to merge the hyperrealism of documentary with the abstract qualities of art and literature. For two decades, Knoth and De Jong have covered numerous conflicts through background stories and reportages for various international media outlets. Their projects have been exhibited worldwide; they have published a number of books; and they have received awards from World Press Photo and the Deutscher Fotobuchpreis.

Suvi Lehtinen is a Lecturer in Exhibition Studies and Spatiality at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki.

Bettina Leidl has headed the Kunst Haus Wien since March 2014. With the repositioning of the institution with exhibitions on art and ecology, as well as international photo exhibitions such as those of Elina Brotherus, Edward Burtynsky, and the survey *Still Life in Contemporary Photography*, the Kunst Haus Wien has succeeded in making itself one of the most successful exhibition houses in Vienna. Before that, Leidl was managing director of the Kunsthalle Wien for fourteen years, and, from 2007 to 2011, she oversaw the installation of art projects in public spaces in Vienna. From 2011 to 2014, she was in charge of Departure, the Creative Agency of the City of Vienna. She is a member of various juries and supervisory boards, such as that of the Vienna Film Fund and the Jewish Museum Vienna, and is Vice President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Austria.

Tanvi Mishra began her career as a documentary photographer, and currently works as an independent curator and photo editor based out of New Delhi, India. She is interested in observing changing trends in visual culture in this age of mass image proliferation, and in the representations of various communities in media and art within that culture. She was the guest curator at the second edition of Photo Kathmandu, Nepal's only international photography festival. She is part of the editorial team of *PIX*, a print journal and display platform observing photography, and its interaction with text, in South Asia. She was part of the curatorial team of Delhi Photo Festival, India's first photography festival, for its third edition, in 2015. She is currently the creative director of *The Caravan Magazine*, India's foremost journal on culture and politics.

Niclas Östlind is a curator and a PhD in photography. He is currently head of the research education department at Valand Academy, University of Gothenburg, and an expert on artistic research at the Swedish Research Council. His thesis, "Performing History: Photography in Sweden 1970–2014," is a curatorial study of the development of an institutional field of photography in Sweden. He is involved in a long-term research collaboration between Valand Academy and the Hasselblad Foundation. The most recent projects include the research project Photography in Print & Circulation and the exhibition *Published: Photobooks in Sweden*, shown at the Hasselblad Centre, in 2018, which will also be published in book form by Walther König, in 2018. Together with researcher Louise Wolthers, at the Hasselblad Foundation, and Mats Jönsson, at the University of Gothenburg, Östlind is working on a research project investigating lens cultures of the interwar period.

Marina Paulenka is Artistic Director of OrganRGAN VidaIDA—International Photography Festival, based in Zagreb, Croatia. She is an international juror/nominator, educator, and curator at many organizations, schools, festivals, and museums. She has a Master's degree in Photography from the Academy of Dramatic Arts, University of Zagreb, and a Master's degree in Graphic Design from the Faculty of Graphic Arts, University of Zagreb. She has had the opportunity and pleasure of curating photography exhibitions, meeting artists, and taking part in many discourses on current trends in contemporary photography in numerous countries. She has carried out portfolio reviews across Europe, and is an external associate lecturer at the Academy of Dramatic Arts. Recently, she curated the exhibition *Vigilance, Struggle, Pride: Through Her Eyes*, featuring thirteen female artists whose work reflects on contemporary women's perspectives and issues.

Rune Peitersen, born in Denmark, lives and works in Amsterdam and Brussels. In 1999, he received his BA from the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, and, in 2001, his MA from the Frank Mohr Institute in Groningen, The Netherlands. Since 2001, he has been represented by Ellen de Bruijne Projects gallery, Amsterdam. Peitersen's work has been exhibited internationally, and he has received awards from the Mondriaan Foundation. Alongside his artistic practice, Peitersen teaches at the Academy of Art and Design (AKV) St. Joost, regularly lectures on his work, and is a co-founder of several artists' initiatives, including the think tank Platform Beeldende Kunst (Platform for Visual Arts).

Krzysztof Pijarski is an artist working primarily with photography, but one interested in all forms of visual thinking, narration, and montage. In 2012, he participated in the Plat(t)form program at Fotomuseum Winterthur. He is the editor of the books *Object Lessons: Zofia Rydet's Sociological Record* (2017) and *The Archive as Project* (2011); and the author of *Archeologia modernizmu. Michael Fried, fotografia i nowoczesne doświadczenie sztuki* [An Archeology of Modernism: Michael Fried, Photography, and the Modern Experience of Art] (2017). He is currently an Assistant Professor at the Łódź Film School, and is also an editor for *View: Theories and Practices of Visual Culture*.

Karolina Puchała-Rojek is an art and photography historian, and the co-founder of the Warsaw-based Archeology of Photography Foundation, one of the first institutions in Poland dedicated to the conservation and study of photographic archives. For the past decade, she has overseen digitization projects, with a dual mission of preserving archives and enabling ongoing access to them. She has edited books, including *Zofia Chomętowska: Polesie, Photographs from 1925–1939* and *Wojciech Zamecznik: Photo-graphics*, the latter of which garnered the Paris Photo–Aperture Foundation Photography Catalogue of the Year Prize for 2016. She has written articles on the history of photography and co-curated exhibitions, including, with Karolina Ziębińska-Lewandowska, the *Wojciech Zamecznik: Photo-graphics* exhibition at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art, in Warsaw. She is currently working on an archive of negatives belonging to the late Marek Piasecki.

Tuomo Rainio is a visual artist working primarily with digital photography and video, combining conceptual and technical approaches into new forms of expression. He works with a wide range of lens-based media, and his practice also incorporates live media performance. His artworks often focus on the transformations of, and transitions between, mediums. With his latest projects, Rainio has become especially interested in the interflow between digital photography and computer programming. He has a master's degree in the arts from the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture. He has had solo exhibitions in Finland, Sweden, the UK, and Japan, and has appeared in several international group exhibitions. In 2015, he was awarded the Finnish Art Society's prestigious Ducat Prize. He is currently a lecturer in art and technology at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki.

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger, PhD, works as a Professor in Exhibition Studies and Spatiality at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki. She was formerly Chief Curator at the Finnish Museum of Photography. Rastenberger is an art historian specializing in contemporary art and photographic art. She has extensive experience in exhibition projects, curating practices, and the international exhibition scene of the contemporary arts. Her special interests are new forms of photography as contemporary art, exhibition as critical practice, and feminist practices in the art field. Rastenberger is also an artistic co-director and co-founder of the Festival of Political Photography, which seeks to examine what the word "political" means in contemporary extended photographic practices.

Susan Schuppli is an artist and researcher based in the UK, whose work examines material evidence from war and conflict to environmental disasters. Recent projects include *Trace Evidence*, a video trilogy commissioned by Arts Catalyst (UK) and the BildMuseet (Sweden), and *Atmospheric Feedback Loops*, a Vertical Cinema commission for the Sonic Acts festival, Amsterdam. She has published widely within the context of media and politics, and is author of the forthcoming book *Material Witness* (MIT Press). Schuppli is Director of the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, University of London, and previously worked on the Forensic Architecture project. In 2016, she received the ICP Infinity Award for Critical Writing and Research.

Iris Sikking is an independent curator, educated as a film editor and a photo historian. As a curator and author, she positions herself in the overlapping fields of photography and video art with a focus on a cinematic approach and creating narrative structures. For the past ten years, she has conceived exhibitions in the Netherlands and abroad. She has curated, among other projects, *Baby: Picturing the Ideal Human, 1840–Now* (2008) and the thematic group exhibition *ANGRY: Young and Radical* (2011), at the Netherlands Photo Museum in Rotterdam; *Space of Flows: Framing an Unseen Reality*, her Main Program for Krakow Photomonth 2018, of which she was chief curator; and the Krakow Photomonth 2016 group exhibition *A New Display: Visual Storytelling at a Crossroads*. In addition to her curatorial projects, she carries out portfolio reviews, serves on multiple competition juries, and sits on the advisory committees of the Mondriaan Fund and Stroom Den Haag. She is also a tutor at the Academy of Art and Design (AKV) St. Joost in Breda, The Netherlands.

Jules Spinatsch was born in Davos, Switzerland, in the Swiss Alps, and now lives in Zurich. After completing a course at ICP in New York, in 1994, he began working in photojournalism. Since 2000, he has presented his work in exhibitions, photographic installations, and books. For six years, he taught at the Geneva School of Art and Design (HEAD). He is best known for his *Surveillance Panorama Projects*, made with programmed cameras that generate hybrid panoramas composed of several thousand images: *Temporary Discomfort*, *Fabre n'est pas venu*, *Vienna MMIX*, and *Competing Agendas*. Other well-known projects include *Snow Management Complex*, a study on Alpine tourism (2001–2008), and *Asynchronous I–X*, a series on nuclear technology (2012–2014). Spinatsch's works are held in multiple collections, including those of Kunsthaus Zürich, MoMA (New York), Fotomuseum Winterthur, MAST, SFMOMA, the Bündner Kunstmuseum, Cnap, and the Nelson-Atkins Museum. Earlier this year, his work was featured at Krakow Photomonth 2018.

Anna Tellgren, PhD, has been Curator of Photography at Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Sweden, since 2004. She has curated numerous exhibitions, including *Arbus, Model, Strömholm* (2005), *Lars Tunbjörk: Winter/Home* (2007), *Moderna Museet Now: Inta Ruka* (2008), and *Francesca Woodman: On Being an Angel* (2015), which is touring internationally. In 2011, she was responsible for the project *Another Story: Photography from the Moderna Museet Collection*, a major presentation of photography throughout the entire museum. Previously, she worked as a researcher and lecturer at the Department of Art History at Stockholm University. She was the editor of *The History Book: On Moderna Museet 1958–2008* (2008), and is associate editor of the *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History*.

Penelope Umbrico is an artist whose work offers a radical reinterpretation of everyday consumer and vernacular images. She highlights moments of cultural absurdity in the pages of consumer product mail-order catalogues, travel and leisure brochures, and websites like Craigslist, eBay, and Flickr. Identifying image typologies, she brings the farcical, surreal nature of consumerism to new light. Umbrico graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto, and received her MFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York. She has participated extensively in solo and group exhibitions, including at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and MoMA PS1, New York. She is core faculty in the School of Visual Arts MFA Photography, Video, and Related Media Program.

Anni Wallenius works as Chief Collections Curator at the Finnish Museum of Photography in Helsinki, Finland. In her work she is interested in finding new methods and practices for bringing photography collections, collecting, and audiences together in meaningful, relevant ways. She is currently involved in the international research project Collecting Social Photo. Her interest in photography ranges from photographic art to vernacular photography, old and new.

Lars Willumeit works as an independent curator, author, and art educator. With degrees in Social Anthropology (London School of Economics) and Curatorial Studies (Zurich University of the Arts), his interests are in photography, documentarisms, regimes of representation, and visual cultures. Projects and contributions include: Salvatore Vitale, *How to Secure a Country*, Fotostiftung Schweiz (2019); Discipula, *How Things Dream: Morpheus*, jevouspropose, Zurich (2018); Jules Spinatsch, *SUMMIT*, Christophe Guye Galerie, Zurich (2018); *CO-OP*, Unseen, Amsterdam (2017, 2018); *Unfamiliar Familiarities—Outside Views on Switzerland*, Fotostiftung Schweiz, Winterthur, and Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne (2017–2018); *Crisis? What Crisis?!*, Main Program for Krakow Photomonth (2016); *Beyond Evidence: An Incomplete Narratology of Photographic Truths*, QUAD Gallery, Derby (2015); *Fabrik*, publication on the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, with curator Florian Ebner (2015); and *Deposit* by Yann Mingard (2014).

1
The symposium took place, on June 1, 2018, at the Museum of Photography in Krakow, Poland. See, photomonth.com/en/symposium [accessed September 18, 2018].

We are extremely grateful for the contributions of the writers who shared their thoughts and experiences in their essays in relation to the question WHY EXHIBIT? from the perspective of their own practices. Collaborating with them has been immensely rewarding and a great pleasure as well. Likewise, we wish to thank the artists and curators we spoke with for the robust conversations we had around the same question.

We wish to thank our generous supporters: the Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki; the Mondriaan Fund; and the Foundation for Visual Arts, the organizer of Krakow Photomonth, which, during the 16th edition of the festival, hosted the day-long symposium *Why Exhibit?: Provoking Questions about Exhibiting (Extended) Photography*,[1] which featured many of the writers and artists who have participated on this volume.

We deeply appreciate the collaboration and support of Joanna Osiewicz-Lorenzutti, who handled all matters practical with amazing patience; Stefan Lorenzutti, who took such good care of the language; Mariliis Rebane, who assisted us in busy times; Hans Gremmen, for the beautiful design of this volume; & Fw:Books, for trusting us on this adventure.

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The seed for making this book was planted during a coffee break, in the summer of 2017, when the two of us talked about photography curating and the changed landscape of exhibiting photographs in our contemporary societies. Since that conversation, it has been a pleasure to work together on this book. Shared responsibility and shared commitment during an intense year included hundreds of Skype conversations, and thousands of e-mails, smileys, photos, heads-ups, and "We-can-do-it!"s whizzing back and forth via the different communication channels of our present day. In the end, we can heartily recommend the collaborative way of working.

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger and Iris Sikking

Why Exhibit? Positions on Exhibiting Photographies

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Why Exhibit? offers a spectrum of views on how the myriad forms of exhibiting photographies can increase our understanding of how images operate today, as well as what they do to us when we interact with them. In the digital age, "photography" is best described with adjectives connoting a medium in constant flux: liquid, fluid, flexible, unstable. As such, there is no primary format for displaying photographs. However, with all of the medium's formats, modes, and approaches, it is important to question how we see photographic images—and to ask why, by whom, and for what purposes the images were produced in the first place.

By drawing upon the perspectives of a diverse group of curators, scholars, photographers, and artists based in the field of contemporary photography, this volume aims to provide a foundation for a wider discourse about exhibiting photographies in the twenty-first century.

Edited by Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger and Iris Sikking

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