

## The Madness of Photography (Savannah, 10-12 Feb 12)

Savannah, GA

Deadline: Jun 15, 2011

Andrew Nedd, PhD

The Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) will host its fourth biennial Art History Symposium, The Madness of Photography, February 10-12, 2012.

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes defines the photograph as “a new form of hallucination: false on the level of perception, true on the level of time...a mad image: chafed by reality.” For Barthes, photography’s inherent madness makes it a “bizarre medium,” tamed by a society that either reifies it into art or banalizes it beyond distinction vis à vis the onslaught of images characteristic of modern life.

The “madness of photography” is thus both poetically and ontologically central to the medium, and is discernible from its very origins. This symposium will explore new perspectives on the many implications of madness in photography’s history, theory, and practice. By turning attention to the irrationality at the heart of the seemingly objective process of photographing, we hope to cast light on the paradoxes and possibilities of the medium. We invite papers that creatively address the relationship between photography and madness, including such topics as: the historiography of the medium, including writings on photography and madness, death, time, or memory; photo-“manias”; new modes of dissemination (blogs, virtual databases, image hosting sites); the place of photography in social networking; artists or movements interested in achieving or documenting states of madness; photography’s participation in the definition and construction of madness; photographs of or by the “insane”; the medium’s connections to scientific and pseudo-scientific fields, from phrenology and physiognomy to sociology and anthropology; and photography and madness outside of the Western tradition.

Andrew Nedd, Symposium Chair

Frederick Gross, Holly Markovitz Goldstein, and Lisa Jaye Young, Panel Chairs

Department of Art History

Please submit an abstract (300 words maximum) and a cv, including complete contact information, to [arthsymposium@scad.edu](mailto:arthsymposium@scad.edu)

Deadline for abstract submission: June 15, 2011

Notification of acceptance: September 1, 2011 via email

Symposium language is English.

Reference:

CFP: The Madness of Photography (Savannah, 10-12 Feb 12). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 11, 2011 (accessed Jan 22, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/1200>>.