

## Encounters (Florence, 12–13 Oct 17)

Florence, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut, Photothek in Palazzo Grifoni Budini Gattai / Villa Romana, Oct 12–13, 2017

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

Encounters: Handling, Placing and Looking at Photographs in Relation to Migration  
International Conference

organized by Costanza Caraffa, Eva-Maria Troelenberg and Anna Sophia Messner

In the last decades, photography studies have provided fertile grounds for debates about our understanding – and critical deconstruction – of notions such as indexicality, iconicity, objectivity or evidentiality. Moreover, both the material turn as well as the affective turn have contributed significantly to larger debates about the understanding of photographs as three-dimensional tactile and visual objects in their own right, as bearers of experience, knowledge and affect (Geismar/-Morton 2015), able to activate and perform relations between human beings (Olin 2012).

Elizabeth Edwards' definition of photographs as "raw histories", both "painful" and "unprocessed" (2001), can also be applied to migration experiences. Migration has been debated both as a historical-empirical reality and as a discursive concept in the wake of post-colonial scholarship. It involves ideas such as displacement and dislocation, exile and diaspora, trauma and memory, interruption and alienation, diversity and alterity as well as nationalism and transnationalism. Handling photographs in relation to migration emphasizes the multilayered encounters across time and space that are embodied in the photographs themselves.

This conference will analyze the entanglement between photography and migration by means of case studies as well as methodological, theoretical and artistic contributions. It seeks to investigate the "migration and photography complex" (paraphrasing Hevia 2009) in its aesthetic, material, affective, ethical, legal and archival dimensions by approaching important questions such as:

How have experiences of migration shaped and reshaped the production and uses of photographic images, their subjects and motifs, their iconographies, their aesthetics, their object character and materiality? How do photographs circulate (in)between private and institutional networks with regards to their collection and exhibition as well as popular and artistic practices? Who are the actors and agents in these socio-political and aesthetic migration processes concerning image production, reception, transmission, translation and distribution? How do migration trajectories of people and photographs intersect and thereby shape vernacular, artistic and academic photographic practices?

Due to the present state of emergency in its global dimension, recent and current migration processes, and the related production and circulation of images (e.g. digital pictures taken on smartphones circulating on social networks), we are constantly confronted with the "excess" (Pinney 2003) and the "noise" (Poole 2005) of photography. It is exactly these disturbing moments, however, that can constitute a point of departure for an interdisciplinary debate that we expect to be lively and dynamic.

## PROGRAM

THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER

Venue: Photothek in Palazzo Grifoni Budini Gattai

10.00

Introduction

Costanza Caraffa, Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Anna Sophia Messner

10.20

Keynote Lecture

Attending to Migration

Margaret Olin / Yale University, New Haven, CT

Chair: Costanza Caraffa

11.20 Coffee Break

## PANEL I ARRIVALS ?

Chair: Eva-Maria Troelenberg

11.50

Portraying Race beyond Ellis Island

Leslie Ureña / photography historian and curator, Washington, DC

12.25

Migrating Objects – A Suitcase as Photo Archive

Anna Sophia Messner / Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

13.00 Lunch Break

## PANEL II PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES

Chair: Jeanette Kohl / University of California, Riverside, CA

14.30

How To Self-Translate the Experience of Migration–Participatory Practices in Social Documentary Photography

Birgit Mersmann / Universität Basel

15.05

Born Immigrant

Morteza Khaleghi / artist, Rome

15.40

Photo-Monologues and Photo-Dialogues from the Family-Album: Belonging, Uprooting, Migration

Ya'ara Gil-Glazer / Tel-Hai Academic College

16.15 Coffee Break

Venue: Villa Romana

18.00

Roundtable

Whose Images / Whose Imaginations?

Moderators: Estelle Blaschke / Université de Lausanne

Angelika Stepken / Villa Romana, Florence

Participants: Fide Dayo / artist, Rome

Armin Linke / artist, Milan/Berlin

Rob Pinney / photographer, London

FRIDAY 13 OCTOBER

Venue: Photothek in Palazzo Grifoni Budini Gattai

PANEL III DIASPORAS, COMMUNITIES, IDENTITIES

Chair: Alison Boyd

9.30

Things We Lost in the Fire: Images from the Bamboo Club 1966 - 1977

Gavin Maitland / freelance writer, researcher and lecturer, UK

10.05

Photographer as Ethnographer: Visual Studies of Urban Migration in Germany

Elâ Kaçel / Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul and Humboldt-Fellow at RWTH Aachen

10.40 Coffee Break

11.10

Entangled: Contemporary Iranian Photography in Migration Context

Cathrine Bublatzky / Universität Heidelberg

11.45

Objects of Escape - Inventories of Migration

A joint art project by Massimo Ricciardo and Thomas Kilpper

presentation and tour of the installation in the Photothek with Massimo Ricciardo / artist, Turin

12.45 Lunch Break

#### PANEL IV ENCOUNTERS AND NARRATIVES

Chair: Shamooun Zamir / New York University Abu Dhabi

14.30

Pictures of Longing: Migration Photographs as Grass-Root Stories

Sigrid Lien / University of Bergen

15.05

Moving Pictures: Slavery, Anthropology and Cultural Resilience in Sudan

Katie J. Hickerson / University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

15.40 Coffee Break

16.10

Photographing Palestinian Refugees

Issam Nassar / Illinois State University, Normal, IL

16.45

Portraits of Unbelonging: Photographs as Sites of Encounters with the Ottoman State and Armenian Emigrants to the United States

Zeynep Devrim Gürsel / Macalester College, St. Paul, MN

17.20 Final Discussion

#### VENUES

Photothek in Palazzo Grifoni Budini Gattai

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

Via dei Servi 51

50122 Florence / Italy

Villa Romana

Via Senese 68

50124 Florence / Italy

#### ORGANIZATION

Costanza Caraffa / head of the Photothek, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

Eva-Maria Troelenberg / head of the Max-Planck Research Group "Objects in the Contact Zone – The Cross-Cultural Lives of Things", Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

Anna Sophia Messner / doctoral fellow, Max-Planck Research Group "Objects in the Contact Zone – The Cross-Cultural Lives of Things" Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Internet: <http://www.khi.fi.it>

Newsletter: <http://www.khi.fi.it/newsletter>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/khi.fi.it/>

Video: <https://vimeo.com/khiflorenz>

### Reference:

CONF: Encounters (Florence, 12-13 Oct 17). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 29, 2017 (accessed Dec 28, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/16345>>.