

Material Practices of Visual History (Leicester, 18–19 Jun 18)

Photographic History Research Centre, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK, Jun 18–19, 2018

Registration deadline: Jun 11, 2018

Gil Pasternak

Material Practices of Visual History

Material Practices of Visual History addresses the rich relationship between photography and visual history at the intersection of material practices. Recent focus on materiality and material culture of photographs and films by such authors as Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Morton, Gregg Mitman, Paula Amad, Jennifer Tucker, Joan Schwartz, Steve Edwards and many others has resulted in the proliferation of histories that have at their centre a range of photographic processes. The actors in these histories could be said to belong to a sort of 'gestural collective' (Sibum, 1995), churning out the stuff of visual history.

For historians who have benefitted from increasing access to the materials of visual history, the gap in knowledge about material practices has been rendered more defined. At the same moment, it seems increasingly difficult to access these material practices as analogue is forgotten and digital is less well understood. Historians have examined the affective and fluid qualities of photographs, and have turned their attention to past chemical processes and processing, and have attempted recreating them. Photographic technologies such as cameras and lantern projectors have also experienced a renovated interest. Visual histories are more and more about the physical qualities of photographic production, circulation and dissemination.

Photography, video and film, however, are not only historical sources, but active research outputs. Historians like Gregg Mitman and Peter Galison have become filmmakers, producing films, websites, and documentaries (*The Land Beneath our Feet*, and *Containment* respectively). Their research is not only based on visual materials, but also articulated in a visual way. The visual is, in their case, a 'form of reasoning'. This is not the only way in which material practices have changed visual history. The multiplication of digitisation projects in all historical fields demonstrates a pervading interest in visualising data, opening new avenues for the exploration of large collections of images. Aware of the potential of this approach, many universities have started to teach visual history in a range of departments.

The PHRC Annual Conference 2018 will feature a large range of scholarly papers exploring questions such as, how can we do visual histories, and how can visual history account for the material aspects of photographic practices. They will address themes related but not limited to the following:

- Material archives
- Visual history and pedagogy
- Processes and practices of digitalisation
- Visual communication through photography and/or film
- Re-creating the past
- Material aspects of computer programming in visual history

Programme now available and registration open via the conference website:
<https://photographichistory.wordpress.com/annual-conference-2018/>

PROGRAMME

Monday 18 June 2018

9.00 – 9.50 Registration and coffee

9.50 Welcome (Kelley Wilder PHRC)

10.00 – 11.00 Keynote Lecture: Ludmilla Jordanova (Durham University):
Photography in Historical Practice

11.00 – 11.20 Discussion

Panel 1. History through Archives

11.20 – 11.40 Donna West Brett (University of Sydney):
The Stasi Archive as Visual and Material History

11.40 – 12.00 Jane McArthur (University of Edinburgh and Imperial War Museum) and Rebecca
Smith (PHRC and National Science and Media Museum):
Image, Caption and the Red Pencil: Two material readings of archival press photographs

12.00 – 12:20 Discussion

12.20 – 13.15 Lunch

Panel 2. Repurposing/Historicising Corporate Archives

13.15 – 13.35 Françoise Poos:
The Visual History of Luxembourg's Steel Industry from Glass plate Negatives to Archived Digital
Positives and Exhibition Artefacts

13.35 – 13.55 James Opp (Carleton University):
Archives, Exhibits, and the Modern Department Store: Visual Histories and the Hudson's Bay Com-
pany's Tercentenary

13.55 – 14.05 Geoffrey Belknap (National Science and Media Museum):
Rationalizing Photography in the National Science and Media Museum

14.05 – 14.30 Discussion

14.30 – 15.00 coffee break

Panel 3. Preserving Visualisations

15.00 – 15.20 Katharina Täschner (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz):
Who Keeps Track of Magazines? Approaching French Inter-War Photography via Printed Matter

15.20 – 15.40 Marta Garcia Celma (Technische Hochschule, Köln):
Title tbc

15.40 – 16.00 Discussion

Panel 4. Tangible and Intangible Histories

16.00 – 16.20 Nina Lager Vestberg (Norwegian University of Science and Technology):
Tangible photographs and intangible practices: on visual archives, oral history and digital materiality

16.20 – 16.40 C. C. Marsh (University of Texas, Austin):
Material politics: Unearthing UNESCO's Photothèque

16:40 – 17.00 Discussion

17.00 – 18.00 Wine reception and Artists' Talk by Toby Cornish and Johannes Braun. Projection of their film about photographs as objects and the behaviour of 4 photographic archives. Commissioned for "Unboxing Photographs" Exhibition, Kunstbibliothek Berlin 2018.

19.30 Conference dinner, Kayal, Leicester

TUESDAY 19 June 2018

8.45 Registration open

9.30 – 10.30 Keynote Lecture by James Ryan (Victoria and Albert Museum):
Rock, Paper, Metal: Materials and Vision in early British photography

10.30 – 10.45 Discussion

10.45 – 11.00 Coffee break

Panel 5. Practices of Modernity

11.00 – 11.20 Abiodun Akande (University of Lagos):

Concentration of Photography Studios in Particular Neighbourhoods as an Indicator of Modernism in Ibadan, Nigeria

11.20 – 11.40 Duncan Cook (University of West London):

Visualising Urban Histories, Identities and Materialities: The role of Photography, Cartography and the Archive in Knowledge Production about the Contemporary City

11.40 – 12.00 Sara Dominici (University of Westminster):

The Materiality of Camera Technology: 'Cyclo-photographers' and Visual Modernity, 1880s-1890s

12.00 – 12.30 Discussion

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

Panel 6. Historical Materialisation of archives

13.30 – 13.50 Katalin Bognár (Hungarian National Museum):

Message to Mátyás Rákosi. Visual Propaganda in the hands of the "Working People"

13.50 – 14.10 Ramina Abilova (State Museum of Fine Arts of the Republic of Tatarstan):

Dembelsky albums and the material performance of the Soviet Past

14.10 – 14.30 Discussion

14.30 – 15.00 Coffee break

Panel 7. Historical Materialisation of Prints

15.00 – 15.20 Anne Cross (University of Delaware):

'Features of Cruelty Which Could not well be described by the Pen': The Media of Atrocity in Harper's Weekly, c1865

15.20 – 15.40 Silvia Magistrali (University of Warwick):

Re-framing collective imageries. Publishing house archives and the case of Rizzoli Editore

15.40 – 16.00 Jose Luis Neves (Ulster University) – From photobook to photobookwork: the early stages of photographic narrative in book form

16.00 – 16.30 Discussion

16.30 Close of Conference

Reference:

CONF: Material Practices of Visual History (Leicester, 18–19 Jun 18). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 15, 2018

ArtHist.net

(accessed May 7, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/17595>>.