

“Foto-Objekte”: A Book Biography (online, 16 Dec 20)

Zoom, Dec 16, 2020

Costanza Caraffa

“Foto-Objekte”: A Book Biography

Online event via Zoom, Wednesday 16 December 2020, 5:00pm

Open to the public after free registration [here: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0rd-CgqDojG9L20D5Efj4jk7cH8IFsWhPY](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0rd-CgqDojG9L20D5Efj4jk7cH8IFsWhPY)

The collaborative project “Foto-Objekte” (funded by the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung 2015-2018) was dedicated to photographic and archival practices in the academic disciplines of archaeology, ethnology, and art history. After its culmination in the exhibition “Unboxing Photographs: Working in the Photo Archive” (Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 2018), it took two more years to complete its last output, a book now published by Kerber Verlag and designed by Heike Grebin and Andreas Trogisch (Troppo Design). While the project was focused on the biographies and itineraries of photographic objects in scholarly archives, this online event will focus on the biography of the book itself: it is not only a text with images, but rather an autonomous object that acts and interacts in different ecosystems, among them the photo archives and the reference libraries of the four partner institutions: the Photothek of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max Planck Institute, the Kunstbibliothek and the Antikensammlung, both Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, and the Institut für Europäische Ethnologie, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

The primary challenge of the book was to convey on printed paper photographic and archival materiality. The volume reflects the dynamics of the four collections as well as the interactions between the authors, designers, and artists who participated in the project. Research is an open process that does not end with the duration of a given project. Similarly, this book is not a final product, but rather represents a momentary status quo. The production of the book was an integral part of the research process. With its sophisticated design this publication – by definition belonging to the category of multiple originals – replicates the tensions between uniqueness and reproducibility that characterize discussions about photographs and archives.

The online event will explore the scholarly and creative processes and ideas that led to the production of the book and continue to resonate in the authors’ research even beyond the project. This kaleidoscopic presentation will be enriched by two of the artists involved in the project, by the designers of the book as well as by two esteemed discussants.

Programme:

Costanza Caraffa (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut): Introduction

Artists' presentation:

Johannes Braun & Toby Cornish (JUTOJO): "An den Rändern, rau" - From the Video Installation to the Book, or: From Two Screens to Two Double-Page Spreads

Petra Wodtke (Freie Universität Berlin): Networks

Julia Bärnighausen (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): Disruptions

Stefanie Klamm (Universität Erfurt): Transformations

Franka Schneider (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): Co-laboration

Heike Grebin & Andreas Trogisch (Troppo Design): From the Project to the Book, or: The Project is the Book, the Book is the Project

Discussants:

Alexa Färber (Universität Wien, European Ethnology): Studying Photography's Multiple Modes of Existence

Katharina Sykora (Professor emerita, Art History): About the 'Nature' of the Photo/Book

Final roundtable discussion

The event will end at around 6:30pm

Reference:

ANN: "Foto-Objekte": A Book Biography (online, 16 Dec 20). In: ArtHist.net, Dec 8, 2020 (accessed Jul 19, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/24091>>.