

Locating Photography (Durham, 20-22 Sep 07)

Call for Papers

Locating Photography

Durham Centre for Advanced Photography Studies
University of Durham, UK

20-22 September 2007

Deadline: 30 November 2006

Following the success of its inaugural conference 'Thinking Photography - Again' (July 2005), the Durham Centre for Advanced Photography Studies (www.dur.ac.uk/dcaps) invites proposals for a conference on 'Locating Photography'.

From its inception to the present, photography has been haunted by what Allan

Sekula termed the 'universal language' myth, whereby the photographic image is

deemed to possess broad cross-cultural currency and to be comprehensible within conventions shared by a vast trans-national audience. The reliance of

the world's press on international agencies such as Reuters or Associated Press means that the same photographs of global events appear in newspapers in

London and Washington, Madrid and Mexico City, Paris and Senegal. This process

of centralisation and globalisation has been accelerated by the advent of digital photography and the internet, which now allow photographers to submit

pictures to agencies within minutes of their being taken. Photojournalists now

roam the world, filing images of the events which shape it, images which are

then circulated back around the globe.

At the same time, the history of photography has frequently been understood in

national terms, and scholars continue to situate the work of individual

photographers in the context of specific national cultures. There are by now numerous publications devoted to e.g. 'American/ German/ Soviet Photography', and many of the longest entries in the recently published Oxford Companion to Photography (2005) are those devoted to a series of 'national' photographs: from Australia to the United States, via (among others) Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Switzerland.

'Locating Photography' seeks to investigate the relationship between national paradigms and the apparently universal nature of the medium. What is at stake in insisting on or resisting the national paradigm? Why has it been so persistent, and can it continue to provide an adequate framework for understanding the history of the photographic medium in a global, digital age?

Possible topics include but need not be limited to:

- .Global language versus national histories.
- .Is there such a thing as a 'national tradition' in photography? How can it be theorised?
- .Vernacular photography.
- .The changing role of the photojournalist: national, trans-national, international.
- .Photography and its institutions.
- .Nationalism and internationalism in photographic movements (e.g. the inter-war avantgarde)?
- .Photography and the national imaginary.

Proposals are invited for 30 minute papers related to the conference theme. Please send a 200-300 word abstract and your contact details by November 30, 2006 to photo.group@durham.ac.uk. Notification of acceptance will be sent out in December 2006.

Reference:

CFP: Locating Photography (Durham, 20-22 Sep 07). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 9, 2006 (accessed Mar 22, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/28497>>.