Bringing down the Archive Fever (Zagreb, 21-22 Oct 21)

Zagreb, Croatia, Oct 21–22, 2021
Deadline: Jun 1, 2021

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Bringing down the Archive Fever – opening and collaborating on photography archives and collections

ORGANIZED BY: Institute of Art History, Zagreb; Magnum Photos Endowment Fund, Paris; Spéos International Photographic Institute, Paris; Deusto University, Bilbao; Office for Photography, Zagreb

Photography archives are more than just collecting, writing about, and curating. Recent discussions over the world confirm that archives are responsible for major changes in many discourses – institutional, educational, historical. They provide necessary impulses for networking and raise awareness about the urgency to protect valuable documentation (even considering those that has not yet been discovered), while encouraging new knowledge through continuous research and interpretation. Archives are inevitable in critical thinking on how the past has impacted our contemporary moment. Photographic archives offer an important cultural testimony and a strategic means to raise awareness on history and reconsider it in the light of civilisational values that have been threatened throughout history. This is especially urgent in case of women photographers, that have been predominantly left out of the collecting discourse.

Numerous archives exist in institutions all over the world; yet, many of them are still lacking attention from researchers and the general public. In addition, many photographers and/or members of their families continue to keep archives in private hands, often without basic knowledge about how to maintain them and open them to the public, or how to connect with institutions, at least partially. Aim of this conference is to explore the ways in which photographs have been archived and collected, as private belonging and/or public ones, to look for new tools and processes that help raise awareness of the role of photography archives, and grow their social relevance. We are also encouraging contributions related to the vast network of knowledge and skills needed in photographic practice, study, circulation and collaboration, while also highlighting social, political, representational discourses of the history of photography and its present, as well as contributions from the point of view of history, critical theory, art history, visual studies, archival studies, anthropology, and other humanistic and social disciplines. We invite researchers, curators, professionals in archives and private owners to overcome invisibility and raise the voice of the margins, creating a trajectory between the underrepresented, migratory, unseen records and the institutions with better, even privileged status.

Speakers are encouraged to address the following and related questions:

Constructing the archive
Can archivists abandon traditional approaches to archival processing in favour of renewed ones that expedite user access to archival collections?
What procedural and technical innovations could be applied to archival processing in order to achieve a more efficient and sustainable management of photographic collection, as well as greater access?
Is photography 'just' an apparatus to construct an imaginary world, and archive a cultural narrative of reality?

How to maintain the 'archive fever'?
Keeping in mind Derrida's words, how to define objectivity, access and power in contemporary archives?
What kind of foreknowledge is needed for a user to know what he/she is looking for and to create new knowledge out if it?
How can archival institutions deepen their relationship with their users, and promote new ways of interacting with potential communities of interest?
What kind of strategies, resources and programmes can help organisations and private individuals holding photographic archives to grow their relevance for the general public?

Privacy vs. public interest
How to find a balance between the private space of archives and public curiosity?
How to create accessible and legible record while keeping someone's right to privacy over content kept in an archive?
How to treat and present additional information, for instance the backside of an image (a kind of a 'time capsule' for that image)?
How important are personal stories to the interpretation of an archive? Should personal accounts continue to excluded from the institutional processing methodologies?
Recognising the meaning of an archival object from interpretation, classification, and set up

'Small' European histories through the photographic archives
The presentations addressing relationships and potential liaisons from the Cold War period and politics of division are also welcomed.
How to promote awareness of shared European history and values through the photographic archives?
Shifts from historical into archival discourse – how to 'add' women into already existing narratives?

Photo archive as an artistic device
Interpretations of the different positions – photographer as an artist and/or archiver
Are archives taking fully advantage of the possibilities contemporary art projects offer for research into their collections?

The conference will take place in Zagreb on October 21 - 22 2021. The conference is a part of the project entitled The Cycle: European Training in Photographic Legacy Management, funded by Creative Europe. The format of the conference (face-to-face, distance, online or mixed) will be deter-

mined in early September 2021, depending on the epidemiological situation.

Please submit your abstract that includes a title for your proposal and has a maximum length of 500 words, as well as your CV (150-word max) no later than June 1, 2021 to Sandra Krizic Roban (skrizic@ipu.hr) via email.
The language of the conference will be English.

Timetable:

Submission Deadline for Abstracts: 1.6. 2021
Response by the Acceptance of Abstracts: 30.6. 2021
Submission of the PP-presentations: 20.10. 2021

Reference:
CFP: Bringing down the Archive Fever (Zagreb, 21-22 Oct 21). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 27, 2021 (accessed Nov 25, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/33710>.