

Oikography: Homemaking through Photography

Leiden University

Deadline: Apr 30, 2023

Ali Shobeiri

[Extended abstract deadline: 30th April, 2023]

Call for Book Chapter

Oikography: Homemaking through Photography

Can photography become a means of homemaking? If so, how does this representational medium deal with home as something that is not necessarily limited to the photographic frame. While for the photographer home is the space at which the camera aims, for the photographed subject it may be an ineffable and inexplicable feeling of being in space. Ubiquitous as it is, the concept of home evades simple definitions (Blunt & Dowling 2006). While it can denote ontological security, it can also host traumatic entrapments. Not always limited to a fixed locale, home signifies one's relationship to oneself, as one tries to feel rooted in a transient world. While it can be seen as a material structure, a refuge from the outside world, a place to own (Despers 1991), it can also be perceived as a "socio-spatial" system (Saunders and Williams 1988), a "psycho-spatial" feature (Giuliani 1991), or a "warehouse of emotions" (Gurney 2000). Whereas home can be a means of sustaining one's identity (Porteous 1976), it can also become a site of domestic violence (Freeman 1979; Meth 2003). For some, home is merely a "domestic dwelling" in which people live (Atkinson & Jacobs 2016), for others, it is a place of "alienation" (Bartram 2016), porosity (Baxter and Brickell 2014), or a failed promise of protection (Dowling 2006). Home can be seen as an ongoing "performance of home" (Richardson 2019), or simply as a "feeling" internalized within us (Ravetz & Turkington 2011). By pivoting around the concept of home and via the medium of photography, our book inquires: how can photography represent the lived, perceived, and conceived experiences of homemaking? In other words, our book wants to explore the different ways through which the medium of photography defines the term *oikos*.

For the Ancient Greeks, society was divided into the spheres of *oikos* and *polis* and governed by *oikonomia* (the art of the household) and *politikê technê* (the art of politics). Broadly speaking, the term *oikos* was equivalent to "house" and "household", deemed as familial, agricultural, or artisanal units of production (Giannouri 2014). *Oikos*, however, was not only the materialized and perceptible home, but also the immaterialized and imperceptible relations among human bodies and other nonhuman elements. It was a built shelter, an assemblage of emotions, moralities, and affects, as well as a meeting point within neighbourhoods and communities (Biehl & Neiburg 2021). In other words, *oikos* was home seen as a merging nexus between private and public life, family and politics, individuals and the state, thus binding the macrocosm of the universe to the microcosm of human beings. Consequently, *oikos* is not only a materialized domiciliary but also a

space: of intimacy (Bachelard 1964), domesticity (Tuan 1974 & 1977), affect (Ingold 2011), nostalgia (Casey 1998), and self-identity (Heidegger 1971). Oikos is a spatial idea, whether such a space is externalized as a dwelling or internalized as a feeling.

Such an understanding of home, as a space that shapes the core of our existence, has already been put into practice and critically reflected on by several contemporary photographers. For example, Jacob Burge's photo series *Inside* presents home as an imaginative space through photocollages in which people can 'hide' themselves in private interiors, thus questioning the supposed comfort associated with inhabitation and domiciliation (<https://jacobburgephotography.com/inside>). Marie Tamanova's photobook *It Was Once My Universe* frames homecoming as returning to a place one no longer belongs, thereby presenting vagabondage and nomadism as alternatives to localized homemaking. (<https://marietomanova.com/It-Was-Once-My-Universe>). By focusing on displacement and dislocation in refugee camps, Angelos Tzortzinis has shown how daily chores become means of human and social adaptability in times of crisis (<https://www.angelos-tzortzinis.com/#/project/13/Adaptability>). By photographing the objects owned by several homeless people around California, Huang Qingjun's photo series *Homeless People's Family Stuff* shows how one's possessions can become one's home in the absence of a household (<http://huangqingjun.com/cg/homeless-peoples-family-stuff/>). Such examples show that, on the one hand, photographic representations can dwell on the materialized home captured within the frame; and on the other, they can reflect on the ongoing process of inhabitation, which is not necessarily confinable to the representational space of the photograph.

Echoing the word "photography," a compound of "phōtós" (light) and "graphé" (writing/drawing), our proposed book defines oikography as the process of homemaking via the medium of photography. Therefore, by centring the concept of home at its methodological and theoretical kernel, *Oikography: Homemaking through Photography* aspires to examine how photography envisages, embodies, and in turn apperceives home as a space of domiciliation, displacement, vagabondage, or homelessness. To this end, we welcome disciplinary and interdisciplinary abstracts that reflect on the concept of home through contemporary photographic practices and discourses. The proposed topics may include, but are not limited to the followings:

- Photography &
- Homemaking
- Placemaking
- Being at home
- Material & Immaterial Home
- Poetics of home
- Politics of home
- Gendered home
- Spectre of home
- Domiciliation
- Inhabitation
- Private & Collective Home
- Entrapment
- Vagabondage

- Nomadism
- Temporary & Permanent Home
- Itinerant & Transient Home
- Displacement & Dislocation
- Exile & Abandonment
- Longing & Nostalgia
- Un-homing
- Homelessness
- Lived/Conceived/Perceived Home
- Body as Home

Abstracts:

We welcome English abstracts of approximately 250 words that engage with and reflect on the theme of oikography through contemporary photographic practices and discourses. Please send your abstract & a short biography to the following Email addresses no later than April 30th, 2023.

s.a.shobeiri@hum.leidenuniv.nl

h.f.westgeest@hum.leidenuniv.nl

A selected number of abstracts will be invited to submit a full chapter of 5,000 to 6,000 words in August 2023.

Oikography will be published at a prestigious academic publisher in 2024.

Schedules & Deadlines:

Submitting abstract: April 15th, 2023 [Extended abstract deadline: 30th April, 2023]

Communication of acceptance/rejection: April 30th, 2023

Submitting the full chapters: October 30th, 2023

Provisional date for publishing the book: Second half of 2024

Co-editors:

--Dr. Ali Shobeiri, Assistant Professor of Photography and Visual Culture, Leiden University

--Dr. Helen Westgeest, Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History and Theories of Photography, Leiden University

Bibliography

Atkinson, R and K. Jakobs (2016). *House, Home and Society*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bachelard, Gaston (1964). *The Poetics of Spaces*. New York: Penguin Books.

Bartram R. (2016). Housing and Social and Material Vulnerabilities, *Housing, Theory and Society* 33: 469-483.

Baxter R. and K. Brickell (2014). For Home Unmaking. *Home Cultures* 11: 133-144.

Biehl, João and Federico Neiburg. (2021). Oikography: Ethnographies of House-ing in Critical Times. *Cultural Anthropology* 36 (4): 539-547.

Blunt A. and R.M. Dowling (2006). *Home*. New York: Routledge.

Casey, E.S. (1998). *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. London: University of California Press.

Despers, C. (1991). The Meaning of Home: Literature Review and Directions for Future Research and Theoretical Development. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 8 (2): 96-114.

- Freeman, M.D. (1979). *Violence in the Home*. Westmead: Saxon House.
- Giannouri, Evgenia (2014). Matchbox, Knifer and the 'Oikographic' Hypothesis. *Journal of Greek Film Studies* 2: 156-175.
- Giuliani, N. (1991). Towards an Analysis of Mental Representations of Attachment to the Home. *The Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 8 (2): 133-146.
- Gurney, C. (2000). I love Home: Towards a More Affective Understanding of Home. In *Proceedings of Culture and Space in Built Environments: Critical Directions/New Paradigms*: 33-39.
- Heidegger, Martin (1971). *Building Dwelling Thinking*. In *Poetry, language, thought*, ed. Martin Heidegger, 145–161. New York: Harper & Row.
- Ingold, Tim (2011). *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Meth, P. (2003). Rethinking the "Demos" in Domestic Violence: Homelessness, Space and Domestic Violence in South Africa. *Geoforum* 34 (3): 317-327.
- Porteous, D.J. (1976). Home: The Territorial Core. *Geographical Review* 66 (4): 383-390.
- Ravetz, A. and R. Turkington (2011). *The Place of Home: English Domestic Environments, 1914-2000*. Abington: Taylor & Francis Ltd.
- Richardson, Joanna (2019). *Place and Identity: The Performance of Home*. London: Routledge.
- Saunders P. and P. Williams (1998). The Constitution of the Home: Towards a Research Agenda. *Housing Studies* 3 (2): 81-93.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu (1974). *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu (1977). *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. London: University of Minnesota Press.

Reference:

CFP: Oikography: Homemaking through Photography. In: ArtHist.net, Jan 24, 2023 (accessed Mar 10, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/38412>>.