Photographic Resilience and Sociopolitical Change (online, 5-7 Nov 26)

Online, Nov 5–07, 2026

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Vision and Veiling: Photographic Resilience and Sociopolitical Change

Photography Network's Annual Symposium, November 5-7, 2026 (online)

Registration is now open!
https://www.photographynetwork.net/symposium

Photography practitioners, historians, and curators respond in a multitude of ways to political and cultural contexts that challenge their work. Moreover, in response to efforts to remove, omit, occlude, obscure, or manipulate, photographs often persist, transform, and recirculate, reformulating visual worlds. Photographs bear a complex relationship to political and social power; authorities might manipulate or remove photographs to further their goals, but forms of covering up, self-censorship, or self-fashioning might also function in the name of individual privacy, safety, or resistance. Furthermore, as the material capabilities and limitations of photography shift, new questions continually emerge about the role of photographic removal and photographic resilience in constricting cultural climates.

This symposium offers a platform for scholarship that investigates the adaptability of photography and photo history in the face of constraints, be they cultural, governmental, institutional, editorial, individual, or otherwise. What do historians, curators, and photographers do when limitations are placed on their work, and what do the limitations themselves reveal about photography? Relatedly, when is restriction, refusal, or withdrawal protective, strategic, or empowering? Finally, what, if anything, has changed about how the medium navigates social or cultural boundaries—what can we learn from how practitioners have done this in the past that might shed light on present-day questions?

Please join us for sessions spread across three days that will approach this topic from a variety of perspectives—we will discuss artistic strategies, exhibitions, archival work, commercial studios, political propaganda, and more.

Symposium registration is $15, and you must be a PN member in order to attend. Free memberships and symposium registration are available to those in need. Please email photographynetworksymposium@gmail.com for further information.

See the full program and register here:
https://www.photographynetwork.net/symposium

Thursday, November 5

Symposium Introduction (12:00 pm EST)
Welcome Remarks
Announcement of Book Awards and Project Grants
Meet and Greet (12:30 pm EST)

Keynote: Gil Pasternak (1:00 pm EST)
The Unsettled Photo Archive: Censorship, Decolonial Praxis, and the Limits of Visual Sovereignty

Friday, November 6

Panel 1: Artistic practices of strategic veiling and unveiling
10:00-11:30 am EST
Moderated by Natalie Zelt
Nam Huh, The Algorithmic Veil: Archival Refusal and ESEA Diasporic Memory in Nhu Xuan Hua's Tropism
Myles Little, Alvin Baltrop's Waterfront Opacities
Samuel Allen, From Covert Sense to Incipient Utterance: Edmund Teske's Queer Photographic Abstractions

Panel 2: Repressive governments and photographic persistence
12:00-1:45 pm EST
Moderated by Sarah Miller
Ozan Yavuz, From Censorship to Containment: Photography Exhibitions and Strategies of Resilience in Turkey, 2000–2023
Jesse Dritz, "Paper Monuments": Cityscape Magazine and the Remapping of Washington, D.C.
João Ferreira, An image and its many publics: political restagings of Vladimir Herzog's Staged Suicide Photograph under the Brazilian Civil-Military Dictatorship and Beyond
Evan Hume, Clandestine Camera: Deep Politics and Photographic Intelligence

Artist dialogue
2:00-3:00 pm EST
Zora Murff and Jabari Zuberi, Martyrdom and the Museum
Moderated by Mtume Gant

Saturday, November 7

Panel 3: Commercial subversion
10:00-11:30 am EST
Moderated by Gia Del Pino
Louis Kaplan, A Photographic Amusement Can Mean Serious Business: On Lotte Jacobi's Subterfuges in Response to the Aryanization of German Photography (1933-1935)
Caitlin Ryan, "For the Price of a Bullet": Photography and the Politics of Peace in 1930s France
Valentine Nyamndon, When the Backdrop Speaks Without the Painter: Signature Erasure and Visual Rhetoric in Cameroonian Studio Photography

Panel 4: Archives and the impact of seeing

11:45-1:30 pm EST
Moderated by Zulay Chang
Caroline Riley, Beyond Viewing: Concentration Camps and the Ethics of Interpretation in Thérèse Bonney’s Photography
Giuseppe Chiavaroli, Veiled Looks: Clandestine Photography and the Resilience of Working-Class Vision in Reggio Emilia, Late 1950s–Early 1970s
Mehrdad Mirzaie, After the Massacre: Photography, Blackout, and Collective Memory
Ioanna Sakellaraki, Ruins, Capital, Bodies: Afterlives of Cancelled Negatives in the Smithsonian’s Underwood & Underwood Glass Stereograph Collection

Reference:
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