Survey Photography & Cultural Heritage (Warsaw, 14–15 Apr 15)

Warsaw, Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, Apr 14–15, 2015
Deadline: Oct 15, 2014

Ewa Manikowska

Survey Photography and Cultural Heritage in Europe (1851-1945): Expanding the Field

A workshop organized by Prof. Elizabeth Edwards and Dr. Ewa Manikowska
Warsaw, Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences

The large-scale application of photography to the recording and preservation of cultural heritage is a transnational movement that appeared at a very particular cultural moment. This workshop focuses on the phenomenon of survey photography in the same historical period, from Britain in the age of High Empire across Europe to the multi-ethnic territories of the western borderlands of the former Russian Empire. While there are striking links between the survey images produced in such distinct cultural and political contexts, there are also similarities and differences in the patterns underlying their production, use, dissemination, impact and the networks of survey actors. This workshop emerges from the conviction of a need to establish a new research agenda at the intersection of the cultural history, history of photography, and the concept of national heritage. Thus, the core aims of the workshop are to explore the practices and politics of photographic survey and to indicate and delineate the topics, chronology and methodology of survey photography seen as a European phenomenon (both in its transnational and local aspects) closely linked to the Western concepts of culture, identity and memory.
Photography's affinities with the idea of record and survey date from the medium's very beginnings. Indeed, the first state-funded, institutional photographic project – the 1851 Mission Héliographique in France – had already linked photography with travel, the emerging concepts of cultural patrimony and its preservation. In the next decades the use of photography to explore and record cultural landscapes, historic buildings, and folklore became a central and widespread application across Europe. It was both a tool of a scientific and popular discovery. It was used extensively, on the one hand, in the practice of the emerging disciplines dealing with various aspects of cultural heritage and national origin, such as archaeology and anthropology, On the other hand, it was applied by amateurs for whom travel, the surrounding cultural landscape and photography itself, formed both a leisure practice and a means of self-definition.
This 'recording impulse' was also a collective effort, institutionalised both in official and state-founded institutions (museums, universities, preservation offices) and in voluntary associations (photo-clubs, local societies of various kind), defined geographically (restricted to visualise a local / state / imperial / transnational territory) and culturally (aimed at defining a given ethnic or national culture). Its output was organized across Europe in a large number of survey archives, which followed similar recording and archiving patterns. These sprung from expansive notions of cultural

patrimony, the picturing conventions of which were established across the continent through scientific journals and amateur photography periodicals, and were popularised widely through the mean of newspaper illustrations, postcards or photographic exhibitions. Conversely, photographic surveys were undertaken in often radically different political and cultural contexts in the dramatic period which culminated successively in the outbreak of the First and Second World Wars and to the establishment of a new political order in Europe. Survey photography – in the hands of different actors – played an essential role in these processes as a tool of a visualised politics of land, of cultural heritage and of identity and as a function of historical imagination.
We invite papers both general and based on specific case-studies from the period between 1851 and 1945, which consider survey and record photography in its wider European context and which contribute to an understanding of its wider definition, analysis and understanding.

The workshop will discuss survey photography:

- as a response to specific historical moments;
- as a local and transnational phenomenon;
- as a codification of national heritages;
- as a scientific and an amateur practice;
- as a geographical practice;
- as a response to imperial expansion/consolidation;
- as definition of group identities through the visualisation of cultural heritage;
- through its institutions and actors;
- through its specific photographic practices;
- through the photographic survey Archive

The workshop will take the form of pre-circulated papers (all papers to be submitted by the end of February 2015). Participants will be asked to use their papers as the basis of a 20 or 30 minute presentation (depending on final schedule) addressing the issues of the workshop.
The number of speakers is limited to 20. Applicants will be notified of the chosen proposals by 30 November 2014. The workshop will take place on 14–15 April 2015 in the Insitute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. Acoomodation costs can be covered when necessary.

Abstract of no more than 300 words should be sent by 15 October 2014 to:
Dr Manikowska: emanikowska@hotmail.com
Professor Edwards: eedwards@dmu.ac.uk

Reference:

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