International seminar Photography ? Museum Narratives



On 14-15 October 2013 the National Museum in Warsaw hosted the international seminar **Photography ? Museum Narratives**. The seminar was organized by the Archaeology of Photography Foundation, in collaboration with the National Museum in Warsaw and National Institute of Museology and Collections Protection.

The aim of the conference was **to investigate the position of photography within contemporary museum institutions and to determine the function and premises of photography museums.** This event bring forth an opportunity to become acquainted with histories of photographic collections and acquiring strategies of institutions such as: Museum of Modern Art (NYC), Getty Museum (LA), Art Institute of Chicago, Musée Nicéphore Niépce (Chalon-sur-Saône) , Musée de l'Élysée (Lausanne), and Rosphoto (St. Petersburg).

Below, a list of topics addressed:

Museum of Photography and its History ? different models of developing photography museums.

Museum of Photography Today ? does the museum of photography today have its *raison d'être* if so, what should be its shape, and if not, what consequences does this fact have for existing collections.

Photography on Permanent Display ? past and current ways of constructing the narratives of permanent exhibitions of photography, as well as the ways in which photography is included in the permanent displays.

Historical Narratives of Temporary Exhibitions ? analysis of select landmark exhibitions and their impact on the history of photography and acquisition strategies, such as *The Family of Man*.

Photography in the Collection of a Museum of Art ? historical and contemporary perspectives on and strategies of collecting photography.

Photography as the Object of a Legal Transaction ? copyrights, making the collections available to the public, official records, digitization, etc.; including photographing in museums: the rights of the visitors in the face of the duty to protect the heritage.

Photography has been present in museums ever since its invention, however, the ways it was collected and its status within the museum collections changed drastically over the course of the last 170 years. **The museum institutions and curators played an important role in shaping the history of photography** and are responsible for the fact that it is still very often seen from the perspective of the medium. Nonetheless, both collecting ? that is acquisition strategies ? and making available to the public ? that is temporary and permanent displays ? have defined photography as either closer to a technique, art, or to a document. These different

statuses are still at play, though various museums adopt diverse methods of dealing with such pluralism. In some cases, photographs from all departments ? library, iconography, art, and prints ? are to be found in a single department of photography, which is responsible for the strategy of acquisitions and all photography-related projects. Another model involves keeping the photographs in their original locations in the collection; yet another focuses on challenging the media-based division and including the photographs in the general collection.

Participating speakers:

- Jaroslav And?l (artistic director at the DOX Centre for Contemporary Art, Prague)
- Quentin Bajac (chief curator of Photography Department, Museum of Modern Art, NY)
- Tamara Berghmans (curator and researcher at FotoMuseum Antwerp)
- Martijn van den Broek (head of the Collections Department at the Netherlands FotoMuseum in Rotterdam)
- François Cheval (curator-at-large at Musée Nicéphore Niépce, Chalon-sur-Saône)

Antonella Fresa (technical coordinator at Europeana Photography]); download the presentation in PDF (1,35 Mb)

- Virginia Heckert (curator of Photography Department at the Getty Museum, LA)
- Danuta Jackiewicz (curator of the Collection of Iconography and Photography at the NationalMuseum in Warsaw)
- Adam Mazur (independent curator and researcher; paper on the photo collections at Muzeum Sztuki in ?ód? and National Museum in Breslau)
- Wojciech Nowicki (freelance photographer, curator, and journalist; paper on Photography Museum in Cracow)
- Ulrich Pohlmann (head of the Photography Department at the Stadtmuseum, Munich)
- Mark Robbins (executive director at the International Center of Photography, New York)
- Viktoria Tolpegina (international project manager, RosPhoto, Sankt Petersburg)
- Matthew Witkovsky (head of the Department of Photography at the Art Institute of Chicago)

Executive Organizer: Archaeology of Photography Foundation, Warsaw

Concept: Karolina Zi?bi?ska-Lewandowska

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More information about the proceedings of the meeting here.

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