

Conference Cycle

Photography and Exhibition

Interwoven Knowledge

Directed by Marta Dahó

KBr

Fundación **MAPFRE**

Barcelona Photo Center

Since its invention, photography has gone hand in hand with the possibility of being exhibited and displayed as an autonomous object with artistic value. In parallel, it has performed an equally important function as a significant expository device through the reproduction of works and archives, as well as through its scenographic applications. The essentially transversal condition of photography and the malleability that allows it to adapt to different uses and functions within the context of an exhibition have had an unavoidable impact on debates regarding the inscription of photography within the museum, and have also marked its long process of institutionalization as an artistic practice; a process that cannot be understood as separate from the history of its exhibitions.

The history of the photographic medium has been written within a dynamic relationship of mutual conditioning and interwoven knowledge that is generated between the exhibition and photography, and, though not always unequivocally, in close collusion with museum institutions. Exhibitions have contributed toward legitimizing certain practices in detriment to others and have also been fundamental in the critical review of the mediums' historiography. Undoubtedly, the exhibition has been a key platform in the dissemination of photographic practices. Similarly, the photographic medium has contributed to the potential complexities of exhibition discourse.

Nevertheless, one might consider how an entity as ephemeral as the exhibition has been able to so radically mold the concept of photography; to what point have exhibitions represented the staging of a particular history of the discipline that must be reinterpreted continually? Likewise, if photographic resources, in their most heterogeneous displays, have altered works and archives transforming the spaces of experience and comprehension that make up exhibitions, then what sensibilities transmitted by contemporary artists might contribute toward approaching curatorial work from new perspectives?

The link between photography and exhibition has been the object of growing interest in the last four decades. This conference cycle, articulated through a crossed focus between historiography, theory and curatorial knowledge aims to delve into the complex interweaving created between photography, its history and theories, and exhibition; as well as the uncertainties arising in the near future relative to its reconfiguration as an essential space for collective meeting.

Marta Dahó

Dates

**Every tuesday
in March and April
March 2nd, 9th, 16th
and 23rd; April 6th,
13th, 20th and 27th**

Time

7:00 pm

*Conferences will take place
in the language specified
in each title. Simultaneous
translation into Spanish
will be available when
conferences are held
in another language.*

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02.03 **Olivier Lugon** *L'exposition transformée par la photographie*

Although photography has been profoundly transformed through its contact with exhibition, which has granted it access to art museums and cultural recognition; the opposite is equally true. Photography has exceedingly contributed to redefine exhibition beyond art museums and "photography exhibitions" in the strictest of senses. Photography has taken part in a wide range of manifestations throughout the 20th century, generating new forms of spatial relationships relative to images. Photography, with its ability to interweave the power of the exhibition as a public event (an actual meeting of people within a defined space and time) and the logic of reproducibility and dissemination inherent to mass media, has reconfigured the ways in which to visually address the audience, as well as the experience (both individual and collective) of the visit.

(Conference conducted in French with simultaneous translation into Spanish)

Olivier Lugon (Sion, Switzerland, 1962) is a historian and Professor of Photography History at the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) he is a specialist in 20th century photography and in history of exhibition design and projection.

09.03 **Anne Wilkes Tucker** **Nathan Lyons:** *It's all very interesting*

Nathan Lyons had a tremendous impact on the history and practice of photography as an innovative curator, photographer, teacher, publisher, collector, administrator and founder of non-profit institutions. Having photographed since high school, he officially entered the fledgling photographic field in 1957 working at the George Eastman House Museum in Rochester, New York, eventually rising to Associate Director. Using that platform, he published influential books and curated exhibitions that traveled internationally. Many of his initiatives became established practices. In 1969 he established the Visual Studies Workshop that educated soon to-be major photographers, curators and historians.

(Conference conducted in English with simultaneous translation into Spanish)

Anne Wilkes Tucker (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, United States, 1945) is the curator emerita of the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston (MFAH) where she had been Curator of Photography for thirty nine years, until 2015. She has published numerous works including *The Woman's Eye* (1973) and has received several international acknowledgments during her career.

16.03 **Jordana Mendelson** *De la página a la pared: espacios expositivos para la fotografía en España en los años treinta del siglo XX*

This conference will trace the relationship between photography in print and exhibited photography throughout the decade of nineteen thirty focusing on the relationship between print culture (books, magazines and posters) and the exhibition spaces devoted to photography at the time (industrial fairs, social clubs, art galleries and public spaces, such as squares and streets). In doing this analysis, one encounters that the aforementioned exhibition spaces, as well as the audiences, were heterogeneous. In order to understand the ways in which photography was exhibited one must focus on these "photographic exhibitions" found in the press of the time. The exhibition circuit for photography started, ended and was mediated entirely through the printed page.

Jordana Mendelson (New York, United States, 1970) is a Professor at NYU. Author and Editor of numerous books and exhibition catalogs on photography, including: *Documentar España: Los artistas, la cultura expositiva y la nación moderna, 1929-1939* (2005), *Revistas y Guerra, 1936-1939* (cat. 2007) and *Postcards: Ephemeral Histories of Modernity* (2010).

23.03 **Jorge Ribalta** *La fotografía como objeto expositivo. Algunos interrogantes sobre la práctica curatorial*

In his conference, Jorge Ribalta will address historiographic and curatorial methods through various exhibitions he has curated. The photographs that appear in them are understood as historical objects. In the words of American Photographer Allan Sekula, exhibitions must portray the images' visibility and the way they circulate "the traffic in photographs". The curatorial method poses questions on the mutable and unattainable condition of the photographic "original", as well as the multiplicity of forms that one same negative may adopt.

Jorge Ribalta (Barcelona, Spain, 1963) is an artist, researcher, editor and independent curator, he was also Head of Public Programs at MACBA between 1999 and 2009. Author of several books of reference on Photography, recently he has published *El espacio público de la fotografía. Ensayos y entrevistas* (2018).

06.04 Florian Ebner
«Entre tables et tableaux»
Sur la rhétorique des tirages et leurs
formats ou ce que la représentation
de l'histoire de la photo peut
apprendre des contemporains
(et vice versa)

An apparently simple question is put forth in this talk: What does it mean to exhibit a photograph on a wall, on a table or inside a showcase? Are we not responsible for what we display in a frame and hung on a wall? How can we develop significant ways of presenting photographs? Borrowing a phrase from French historian Georges Didi-Huberman, this conference reflects on the original functions of photographic copies and their value within exhibitions. Contemporary art – for example the work of conceptual artist and photographer Wolfgang Tillmans – can also inspire us when presenting the history of photography in another way.

(Conference conducted in French with simultaneous translation into Spanish)

Florian Ebner (Regensburg, Germany, 1970) since July 2017 he is Chief Conservator of Photography at Centre Pompidou (Paris). From 2009 to 2012 he was Director of the Museum für Photographie Braunschweig (Lower Saxony) and from late 2012 to 2017 he was head of the photography collection at the Museum Folkwang in Essen.

13.04 Laura González Flores
Arte, historia, política.
Relatos mexicanos en las
exposiciones de fotografía

“Art” and “nation” are two concepts that were associated to each other in several ways during the development of photography exhibitions throughout the twentieth century. From the first shows dedicated to the medium driven by Mexican photographer and filmmaker Manuel Álvarez Bravo, to the incredible feat in the name of postmodern photography carried out by the Centro de la Imagen de Ciudad de México between 1994 and 2018, the history of photography exhibitions is parallel to the unstable though vigorous link between art and historical and political Mexican narratives.

Laura González-Flores (Mexico City, Mexico, 1962) is a researcher at the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Curator of the *Manuel Álvarez Bravo* exhibition (Jeu de Paume and Fundación MAPFRE, 2012-2013), among others, she is also the author of numerous books on photography.

20.04 Nicoletta Leonardi.
“Work of Art or Behavior?”
Photography, Conceptualism
and Material Culture at
the 1972 Venice Biennale

At the 1972 Venice Biennale, the Italian Pavilion's exhibition *Work of Art or Behavior?* traced a direct lineage from informale to arte povera, conceptualism and performance. Among the artists invited to this seminal show was Franco Vaccari, who placed a photo-booth in his allocated space and invited visitors to take their pictures and leave them on the walls. This talk will focus on Vaccari's emphasis on photography as a material object and a social agent in relation to the other works in the exhibition, as well as to the political and cultural climate in Italy in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

(Conference conducted in English with simultaneous translation into Spanish)

Nicoletta Leonardi (Catania, Italy, 1968) is professor of Photographic History at Brera Academy of Fine Arts, Milan. Her work has been published extensively in monographs, exhibition catalogues, peer reviewed journals, and edited volumes. She is the co-editor of *Photography and Other Media in the Nineteenth Century* (Penn State UP 2019).

27.04 Elvira Dyangani Ose
Eventos de lo social.
La fotografía, su exposición
y la construcción de
un imaginario colectivo

The narrative of the complex Black African imaginary – plural, transnational and transgenerational – had in photography and in photography exhibition an exceptional platform for the reappropriation of its subjectivity and a gaze whose recovery, as a generating force, would transform into an element of critical analysis and empowerment of the individual and of black communities. This conference analyzes how photography exhibitions of African photographers and their diaspora in the last thirty years has served as a vessel for the reconfiguration of cultural identity through which black subjects would become narrators and protagonists of their own story.

Elvira Dyangani Ose (Córdoba, Spain, 1974) is Director of The Showroom (London). Professor at the Department of Visual Culture at Goldsmiths, University of London, and member of the Thought Council of Fondazione Prada in Milán.

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