

Conference Cycle

Photography Speaks of Revolutions

Directed by Laura Terré



Barcelona Photo Center

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“Photography Speaks of Revolutions” is a cycle of lectures and round-table discussions that seeks to analyze the relationship between photography and the revolutionary phenomenon. During the cycle, photographers who have lived such experiences, as well as experts who have deeply researched these images, will dissect the aesthetics and history of eleven revolutions: from the Paris Commune at the end of the 19th century to the most recent revolutions which we have followed through social media and traditional news outlets. The objective is to shed light on the role of photography as a means of representation, agitation, propaganda and information throughout the skewed history of revolutions.

During the lectures and round-tables we will see that in each one of these revolutions photography played a pivotal role, achieved a specific purpose. In some cases photography was used as testimony; in others, as a method for social analysis. These same images could serve later on as a denouncement for counter-revolutionary purges. Some images also served as a tool for agitation and propaganda, stylized to reflect the aesthetics of new revolutionary powers. On other occasions, they became the battlefield where the struggle of revolutionary photographers unfolded, or an extension of the revolutionary experience suffered by the people. Therefore, aesthetic traits will differ in each case. Similarly, photography has adapted to new imaging and communications technologies. It has been the medium and the tool used to amplify and shape the communications agendas of those wielding it. Each case serves as an example of specific aesthetic, technical and ideological conditions as well as photography’s diverse uses: from the edited postcards of the Paris Commune to daily broadsheets designed by Spanish anarchists; from the newspapers used to disseminate photographs of the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia to the books narrating obscured revolutionary stories in China; and finally, the internet: the contemporary medium that informed us about rise of the Arab Spring. Dissemination has molded the image into its own shape and content. Its ultimate goal is found in the passionate gaze of those who have been involved with the cause; or, on the contrary, the horrified perspective of those who fear the end of their stability. Even the clandestine photographs that have been hidden for so many years end up surfacing, granting us the answers to our questions.

The objective of these lectures is to confront once again the role that photography plays in explaining the world.

Laura Terré

Dates
**Following Tuesdays
between October and
January:**
October 5th, 19th, 26th;
November 9th, 16th, 23rd,
30th; December 2nd
(Thursday), 14th, 21st;
January 11th

Time
7:00 pm
(except 10.05 and 10.19)

*Simultaneous
translation into Spanish
will be available when
conferences are held
in another language.*

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10.05 Mathilde Larrère
2021 Communard Photos,
Versailles Photos:
the Battle of Images

8:00 pm, online

The first French historical event to be abundantly photographed, and also the first revolution, the Paris Commune was an occasion for a real battle of images, redoubling the conflict between (schematically) the Communards and the Versailles. The two camps were able to seize on the photographic medium, then still very young, to put it to the service of their respective political strategies, working of course within the technical constraints of the time. This lecture will analyze the production of these photographs, their dissemination, and their reception as well as how they were instrumentalized in 1871 and beyond. (Conference conducted in French with simultaneous translation into Spanish)

Mathilde Larrère (Paris, 1970) is a research professor at Gustave Eiffel University, specializing in 19th-century French revolutionary movements as well as contemporary social upheavals.

10.19 Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov
2021 Photography and Factography
in the USSR of the Inter-War Period

8:00 pm, online

Giving a new form to Futurism since the 1910s, the Left Front of the Arts (LEF) was established in 1922 around the central figure of Vladimir Mayakovsky. A driving force behind leftist art, the group remained active until 1928. Its journals LEF (1923–1925) and Novy LEF (1927–1928) became platforms for theoretical innovation and advanced practice, promoting “factography” in particular. Under the leadership of Alexander Rodchenko photography became one of the group's main interests.

(Conference conducted in French with simultaneous translation into Spanish)

Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov is curator at the Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, where he directs The Kandinsky Library. He has a PhD in philosophy of art and has coordinated several research exhibitions such as *Politiques de l'art* (2016), *L'œil écoute* (2017), and *Histoire(s) d'une collection* (2018). Among the exhibitions he has curated are *Hægue Yang. Lingering Nous* (2016), *KOLLEKTSIA! Art contemporain en URSS et en Russie 1950-2000* (2016), *Daniel Buren. Projections/Retrojections. Travaux in situ* (2017), *Jean-Jacques Lebel. L'Outrepasseur* (2018), *Isidore Isou* (2019), *Rouge. Art et utopie au pays des Soviets* (2019) and *James Coleman* (2021). He is responsible for the research program «20th-century Russia».

10.26 Andrés Antebi
2021 A Brief Radiance.
Images from the Social Revolution
in Barcelona, 1936-1937

7:00 pm, in person and online

During the first months of the Spanish Civil War in Barcelona the photographs, photomontages and publications put into circulation by the anarchist movement amid the revolutionary processes it led constituted a solid counterpoint to the stigmatizing image of the working-class movement the bourgeoisie had constructed during the late 19th century. For this purpose, the Oficina de Información y Propaganda [Office of Information and Propaganda] of the CNT-FAI, located at the overrun head office of Foment de Treball [Office of Employment Promotion] on the Vía Laietana, created a “graphic barricade” summoning cameramen and women of all sorts: from militant enthusiasts arriving from other European nations, such as Kati Horna, or Margaret Michaelis, to renowned local photojournalists – paradoxically, very far from the libertarian ideal – such as Antoni Campañà or Carlos Pérez de Rozas Masdeu.

Andrés Antebi (Buenos Aires, 1971) is an anthropologist, researcher and documentalist specialized in people's demands for their rights to the city. Since 1999, he has co-directed the Observatori de la Vida Quotidiana (OVQ). He has promoted numerous exhibitions and publications centered on the exploration of the link between photography, memory and the city, such as: *Cops de Gent. Crònica gràfica de les mobilitzacions ciutadanes a Barcelona, 1890-2003* (2005); *Tràgica, roja i gloriosa. Una setmana de 1909* (2010); *Ifni, la mili africana dels catalans* (2019). Antebi also coordinates the research project entitled “Gràfica obrera y anarquista (1870-1939)”.

**11.09 2021 Robert Pledge
China 1966-1976: The Revolution
within the Revolution
Photographed by Li Zhensheng**

7:00 pm, in person and online

During the Cultural Revolution, China became a theater in which the audience took part, from the poorest peasant attending a “struggle session” to the “class enemy” forced to bow at the waist in humiliation; from the rebels to the counterrevolutionaries; from the Red Guards to the old guard. With armbands, flags, banners, big-character posters and Little Red Books turned into props, the stage was dominated by the presence of an invisible diva, surrounded by millions of extras, some shouting, some silenced. Many would die.

Through Li Zhensheng's lens, people and occurrences, shot on black-and-white film with 6x6 and 35mm cameras, are made personal and universal. Born in Liaoning province in 1940, Li first studied cinematography before working as a photographer for 19 years at the northeastern *Heilongjiang Daily*.

Robert Pledge presents the work and legacy of the photographer who died in 2020, and explains how he was all at once a spectator, actor, rebel, and victim, but also a propaganda tool as well as the independent eyes that witnessed events that would change China forever.

(Conference conducted in English with simultaneous translation into Spanish)

Robert Pledge (London, 1942) found his way into journalism and photography as a specialist of African affairs. In 1976 he co-founded Contact Press Images, a picture agency dedicated to long-term projects of international resonance. As a curator he has produced major photographic exhibitions across the world. He has also edited acclaimed books including: *Red-Color News Soldier* with Chinese Cultural Revolution photographer Li Zhensheng (2003) and *44 Days: Iran and the Remaking of the World* with American photographer David Burnett (2009). Pledge is currently developing *9/11 or the Death of a Revolution: Chile 1973*.

**11.16 2021 Leigh Raiford
Being Seen to Be Free:
Photography and Black Power**

7:00 pm, online

Since its inception in the United States in 1839, photography has been both a cultural site of subjugation and a technology for liberation. Black Americans keenly understood the medium's pitfalls and possibilities and have long embraced photography to represent themselves as they choose while also challenging anti-black visual logics. From portraiture to photographs of state violence, from documentation of protest to snapshots of joy, photography has offered African Americans an opportunity to reclaim, repair, remake and re-imagine Black life in national and international consciousness. This presentation will examine the special role photography played in the Black Power revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, focusing on the Black Panther Party's deft visual practices, and situating that movement in the longer history of photography as a means of expressing Black freedom dreams, from Abolition to Black Lives Matter.

(Conference conducted in English with simultaneous translation into Spanish)

Leigh Raiford (New Haven, Connecticut, 1972) is an associate professor of African American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, where she teaches, researches, curates and writes about race, gender, justice and visuality. She is the author of *Imprisoned in a Luminous Glare: Photography and the African American Freedom Struggle*; co-editor with Heike Raphael-Hernandez of *Migrating the Black Body: Visual Culture and the African Diaspora*; and co-editor with Renee Romano of *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory*.

**11.23 2021 Paul F. Goldsmith
The Enduring Influence of
the Prague Spring and the Soviet
Invasion. A look at a photographer's
personal connection to history
and the resonance of the
photographic imagery before,
during and after the August
1968 Invasion**

7:00 pm, online

In this presentation Paul Goldsmith will describe his experiences as a 19-year-old American photographer in Prague in August 1968 on the day of the Soviet Invasion as well as the historic context of the events leading up to the same. Goldsmith will analyze how imagery from multiple sources impacted the development of the Prague Spring, a movement meant to liberalize Czechoslovakia's centralized government. He will also discuss the inevitable conflict with the Soviet Union and its determination to maintain control over the Eastern Bloc. Finally, he will address the continuing impact of Joseph Koudelka's Prague 1968 photographs.

(Conference conducted in English with simultaneous translation into Spanish)

Paul Goldsmith (San Francisco, 1949) is a lawyer and photographer. His Prague 1968 photographs have been widely collected and displayed. The Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Czech National Museum have their permanent collections. Goldsmith has published *Prague 1968* and his works have been featured in prominent photography journals, as well as in celebrated Czech Journalist Josef Pazderka's book on the invasion. Goldsmith divides his time between law, non-profit board work, and photography.

11.30 **Pepe Baeza**
2021 **Photography during the**
Portuguese Revolution of 1974

7:00 pm, in person and online

Starting with a brief introduction to the historical context, antecedents and revolutionary events that occurred on April 25th 1974 in Portugal, the discussion will address several ways in which said events were photographically represented on that historic day and the days that followed. This analysis will be established from the specificity of the original – or adapted – rhetoric of photographer's access to the events and the objectives pursued by local and foreign graphic reporters, and the mediums they worked for, in the selection and distribution of the graphic materials they produced. The images taken during those days will also be analyzed in relation to other photojournalistic discourses arising from similar crisis situations.

The vision of Catalan photographer Paco Elvira will be discussed in great detail as Elvira was one of the first Spanish reporters to be a special correspondent in areas struck by conflict.

Pepe Baeza (Valencia, 1955) is a photographer and photo editor. He works as a journalist and has a PhD in Information Science from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). For over twenty-five years he has been a professor at the School of Communication Sciences at UAB, at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra and at several other higher education institutions dedicated to the image; he has also been editor in chief of photography and photo editor for *La Vanguardia* (1990-2015) and photographer and photo editor at *El Periódico de Catalunya* (1984-1990). In 2006 he co-directed the EDFOTO postgraduate course at the UAB and is the author of the book *Por una función crítica de la fotografía de prensa* (2001, 2003). Currently he coordinates the "Image" section of *Le Monde Diplomatique* in Spanish.

12.02 **Cristina Vives**
2021 **Culture and Counterculture**
in the Photography of the
Cuban Revolution. In Search
of the Revolutionary Subject

7:00 pm, in person and online

"The young bring with them almost nothing but healthy instincts. The project of building a sophisticated framework of thought atop those instincts is rather like trying to graft an oak tree upon a wild flower. How to sustain the oak tree? More importantly, how to avoid crushing the wildflower?"
Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture* (1968)

The drama of experiencing a revolution can only be accurately recounted by its protagonists; in these cases there are no possible substitutes. And, in order to recount the event with a certain degree of objectivity, they must distance themselves from the facts, adding a dose of subjectivity. This is how stories are built: between the fact and its deferred version. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 has forced all those involved to live such a drama until today. Every personal history is unique, for its range and effects vary according to one's generation, socio-economic background, cultural and aspirational circumstances, or simply their role in such a macro-history. However, if there is one common lesson that revolutions teach us, it is that one is either part of them or is irremissibly excluded. Documentary photography in Cuba represents such a history; one plagued by constructions and omissions.

This lecture will aim to track down the photographed Cuban subject from the decade of 1960, where he was seen, and where he was concealed. These are the missing pieces of this unfinished puzzle.

Cristina Vives (Havana, 1955) is a curator and art critic active in Havana, where she lives and works. Degree in Art History from Universidad de La Habana. Fellow at the J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles in 1994 and 1995. She is the co-author of *Memoria: Artes Visuales Cubanas del Siglo XX* (CIAF, Los Angeles, 2002) and author of critical texts, and 5 monographs such as *Korda Conocido Desconocido* (2009); *I insulted Flavio Garciandía in Havana* (2009); *José A. Figueroa. Un autorretrato cubano* (2010); *Nkame Belkis Ayón* (2010); *El espacio inevitable. Alexandre Arrechea* (2014). She has won the Premio Nacional de Curaduría 5 times between 1989 and 2010. Her most recent curatorship is *Belkis Ayón. Colografías* for the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid (2021-2022).

**12.14
2021** **Pilar Aymerich, Judith Prat
and Isabel Segura Soriano**
Feminist Vindication, 1976

7:00 pm, in person and online

In the spring of 1976 the feminist movement was born and expanded by means of the “*Jornades catalanes de la dona*” and the magazine entitled *Vindicación feminista* (1976-1979). Like any revolution, the feminist movement was tied to a sense of celebration. As a participant, photographer Pilar Aymerich gives her account of the new festive subjects and the debates they generate. Debates and actions that have continued through time and have been retaken and reformulated through the work of Judith Prat with the objective of creating new representations, new worldviews.

Pilar Aymerich (Barcelona, 1943) studied theatrical direction and interpretation at the Escuela de Arte Dramático Adrià Gual (EADAG) and photography at Estudios Raphael (France) and in London. In 1968, she returned to Barcelona and specialized in portraiture, social reporting and theater. In 2005, she received the Creu de Sant Jordi prize from the Generalitat de Catalunya.

Judith Prat (Altorricón, Huesca, 1973) is a documentary photographer interested in subjects relating to human rights. Her work has been published in influential media outlets, such as The New York Times, and her photographs have been exhibited at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid; at Palau Robert in Barcelona; at PhotoEspaña, and in several venues internationally.

Isabel Segura Soriano (Barcelona, 1954) is a historian, researcher and exhibition curator. She has published several books including *Cuines de Barcelona, El laboratory domestic de la ciutat moderna, 1859-1976* (2018) and *Barcelona feminista, 1975-1988* (2019), and is the editor of *Barcelona. Fotògrafes/fotógrafas* (2020).

**12.21
2021** **Susan Meiselas**
***Nicaragua: Reflecting
Back and Forward***

7:00 pm, in person and online

Susan Meiselas will share a visual narrative tracing the production and circulation of her images from Nicaragua following the popular insurrection in June 1978, and the movement that overthrew Somoza in July 1979. The presentation will cover several projects wherein Meiselas has revisited these photographs, including two films that gathered Nicaraguan testimonies on the 10th and 25th anniversaries of the events: *Pictures from a Revolution* (1991) and *Reframing History* (2004). Her latest re-visitation was created in response to the student resistance movement after the events of April 2018. Meiselas' documentation will focus on multiple platforms – including international media, exhibitions and free exchange on the internet – all drawing on her seminal 1981 book *Nicaragua*, which continues to spark dialogue as well as the photographer's own reflections.

(Conference conducted in English with simultaneous translation into Spanish)

Susan Meiselas (Baltimore, US, 1948) is a documentary photographer and member of Magnum Photos based in New York. She is the author of *Carnival Strippers* (1976), *Nicaragua* (1981), *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* (1997), and *Encounters with the Dani* (2003), among other publications. Meiselas is well known for her documentation of human rights issues in Latin America. She is the President of the Magnum Foundation.

**01.11
2022** **Samuel Aranda y Anna Surinyach**
***La Primavera Árabe
(2010-2012)***

7:00 pm, in person and online

In 2012, Samuel Aranda won the World Press Photo prize with an image taken in 2011 during the revolts in Yemen. In the photograph, Fátima is depicted embracing her wounded son Said in a mosque that had been turned into a field hospital. According to the World Press Photo jury, the image “summarizes what occurred during the Arab Spring, not only in Yemen, but also in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Syria”. “Can an image summarize what has happened during a series of revolts that have not been deemed over, even today?” How were the most widely covered protests ever photographed? What was the real influence of social media in this revolution known as “Revolution 2.0”?

Anna Surinyach and Samuel Aranda will engage in a conversation in order to analyze and try to answer these questions.

Samuel Aranda (Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Barcelona, 1979) documents conflicts, migrations and social issues. He frequently works for The New York Times in the Middle East, Europe and Africa. He has also covered Pakistan, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen, Colombia, China and Transnistria for National Geographic, Stern, Le Monde and El País Semanal, among others. He was awarded the World Press Photo prize in the category “Photo of the Year” (2012) for an image taken for The New York Times during the uprisings in Yemen.

Anna Surinyach (Barcelona, 1985) is a journalist and documentary photographer. Her work, published in national and international media, has been centered on documenting the movement of populations and on subjects related to human rights. She is the co-founder and photo editor of the magazine *5W* and has taught at several universities. In 2020, she co-directed *#boza* and *Misbah*, two documentary shorts. That same year, she was awarded the Desalambre prize, which she had already received in 2019 for *Tierra sin ellas. La lucha de las mujeres por la tierra en América Latina* (2018), a multi-media special she participated in.

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