

Conference cycle

Photography and Archive

Directed by Joan Boadas i Raset

KBr

Fundación **MAPFRE**

Barcelona Photo Center

The continuous act of making photographs is “inevitably” followed by an accumulation of images that almost naturally becomes an archive. In this case we are not talking about the organization of this collection of documents or whether these image documents “unquestionably” acquire the quality of patrimony. We are referring to the fact that *Photography and Archive* have become a symbiotic reality almost since their inception in the late 1830s. However, is this reality stable?

Some figures may anticipate an answer to this question: from 1840 to 1860 a little more 4,000 daguerreotypes were produced daily in the United States. In August 2017 *Business Insider* calculated that still images produced worldwide during that year would reach 1.2 billion, in other words, about 3,287,000 per day.

This conference cycle deals with the changes that have happened in the relationship we formulated above and wishes to look at different aspects and assessments spanning from the birth of the archive to its possible “death”. At the same time the conferences will discuss elements that highlight how the research and creation based on the photographic archive was addressed in the past and how it can be addressed in the future.

We want to gain a deeper understanding of the desire that propels the birth of an archive and ascertain the driving force leading to its creation. Do photographers share the same strategy when they are confronted with this fact? Is this behavior—or the will to transcend from that which is being photographed—present in the pursuit of preserving the work that was produced? Is the value of the cultural patrimony the one that guides the defined strategies, or is it also the value of the images kept, primarily, derived from their economic and commercial exploitation?

How is archival research conducted or how could it be conducted? We will analyze it from two basic concepts: memory and oblivion. What has been the role of the archive in the creation of a particular memory? How does the creation of narratives compromise the preservation or rejection of certain photographs? How much are chance or planning involved in the preservation of memory? And oblivion? What are the photographs that have not existed? And the ones that have disappeared? How has the deliberate destruction of memory been devised?

Dates
**From October to
December 2022**
Tuesdays:
October 11, 18, 25
November 8, 15, 22, 29
December 13

Hour
7:00 pm

*Simultaneous translation
into Spanish will be
available if the conferences
are delivered in another
language.*

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What shared perspectives have existed between the photographic archive and artistic and literary creation? How have literature and art borrowed from photography? What ties have been created between the photographic images and the images constructed in literature and the other arts when used in different contexts and framing new narratives?

Finally, what does the future hold for the photographic archive? Does the enormous production of digital images—unmanageable on a human scale—anticipate its disappearance, at least under the current premises? Does post-photography represent a continuity or a definitive break from the traditional “analog” concepts? Certainly, artificial intelligence will be put at the service to achieve an understanding of this new archive under construction, but what will it be like and what intentions will motivate the information that will ultimately be selected? We are certain that many of these questions—which we can only point out—will have received an answer after listening to the experts who will participate in this conference cycle.

Joan Boadas i Raset

THE BIRTH OF THE ARCHIVE

**11.10
2022** **Anne Cartier-Bresson**
Footprints, Archives, Images.
A Series of Methodological
Approaches to the Conservation
of Photographic Collections...

In-person and online

This presentation will discuss, from the point of view of patrimony conservation, reasons and obstacles encountered by professional photographers in the creation of archives, whether private (associations or foundations) or public (municipal, national, and regional). It will further analyze what must be preserved and for what audience; subsequently it will define the methodological axes for such purposes according to the main objectives of the title holders of the archives' property rights, whatever their nature (physical or virtual images or any documents that may shed some light on them).

(Conference in French with simultaneous translation into Spanish)

Anne Cartier-Bresson (Paris, 1952) is and Honorary General Heritage Curator. She oversees the Photography and Digital images Section of the Conservator's Department of the National Heritage Institute (INP). In 1983 she founded the Atelier de Restauration et de Conservation des Photographies de la Ville de Paris and was its director through 2017. In 1986–87, she was a resident at the French Academy in Rome and in 2015 was awarded the title of Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. A specialist in the history of photographic processes and their conservation, she teaches at different organizations in France and abroad.

**18.10
2022** **Sergi Griño**
The Evolution of the Business
Model for an Image Bank

In-person and online

Image banks of stock images have been and continue to be the documentary source for any editorial or advertising product, and ultimately for anything containing a graphic element. While public archives have been key in the conservation and preservation of our culture's historical legacy, private archives such as ours are focused on the commercialization of images to respond to market demands. This conference will analyze the origins of commercial image banks and their evolution to this day. We will observe how they have adapted to new technologies and how they are able to take advantage of the possibilities they offer, ensuring the ongoing services to the new and changing needs of clients in a globalized market.

Sergi Griño (Barcelona, 1969) holds a degree in economics from the Universitat de Barcelona and an MBA from the University of Chicago. In 1993 he founded the Album photo agency. Since then he has run the business and oversees its financial management, international expansion, and technological development. Album is currently represented worldwide by 48 agents and offers a technological platform for agencies in 8 countries. He has been the head of two projects at the Catalonia Supercomputing Center (CESCA) and has participated in projects such as RDI/LCC and ARDITO, which were funded in part by the EU.

RESEARCH: ARCHIVE AND MEMORY

**25.10
2022** **Miriam Díez Bosch**
The Whimsical Loop of Memory

In-person and online

There is an ailment called "mal de archivo" [archive sickness], an obsession tied to the desire to arrange and create from parcels of memory. The archive stands as the antidote to oblivion: a place in which the truth emerges respecting the right of what has not been told. Archiving is not laying out innards to the light of day, because an existence cannot always be contained. Archiving is condensing memory and allowing for gaps and lies. These institutions appeal to memory to construct collective narratives, fleeing from a possible *matrixization* of their essence. The need to know who we are—or who the others have been—pushes us toward the occasionally violent and forceful passion of listing and registering. The experiments on Instagram where the instant is canceled and posts are substituted for images that do not leave a trace are not whimsical games flirting with innovation, but a giant provocation against the very concept of memory.

Dra. Miriam Díez Bosch (Girona, 1973) holds a degree in Ecclesiastical Studies from the Facultat de Teologia de Catalunya; she holds a bachelor's degree in Information Sciences from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; she is professor and vice-dean of Research, Postgraduate Studies and International Relations at the Facultat de Comunicació i Relacions Internacionals at Blanquerna, of the Universitat Ramon Llull in Barcelona; she is director of Global Engagement for Aleteia.org; director of the Observatori Blanquerna de Comunicació, Religió i Cultura; vice president of Fundació Catalunya Religió, and vice president of the International Society for Media Religion and Culture. She also directs the Chair of Religious Freedom and Conscience at the Universitat Ramon Llull and holds a doctorate in Social Sciences from the Pontifical Gregorian University.

**08.11
2022** **Lluís Muntada Vendrell**
Before Oblivion

In-person and online

Let us imagine an Absolute archive that stores all sorts of documents that capture every instant of every single human life from different angles. We would have undoubtedly achieved a very complete archive of reality. However, we would surely drown in an ocean of overinformation due to this same contingent of hyper empiric memory. Archival practice must re-signify the present. Thus, it knows firsthand that memory does not exist as collection and paralysis of a series of mythologically pure facts. On the contrary, it understands that memory is created and reconstructed. It is precisely at this point of realism when the awareness of oblivion builds a preemptive memory of oblivion. This stands both as principle and as epistemological criterion. We try to identify induced oblivion, oblivion as a mechanism of the waste of insubstantiality, the worlds that disappear before our eyes. We walk barefoot on the shiny and sharpened edge of this razor blade that is Before Oblivion.

Lluís Muntada Vendrell (Riudellots de la Selva, 1964), is a writer and an educator. He has published the fiction books entitled *Espirals* [*Spirals*] (Just Manuel Casero award, 1989), *Canvi d'agulles* [Tracks Switch] (Mercè Rodoreda award, 2002), and *L'elegància del número zero* [The Elegance of Number Zero] (Setè Cel award, 2010). He holds a doctorate in Philosophy and Arts. He has been a literary critic for the newspaper *El País* and for the magazine *L'Avenç* and contributes articles for different media. He was director of the "Josep Pla" literature collection of the Diputació de Girona. He has been a consultant for the Department of Culture of the Generalitat de Catalunya and professor of the Cultural Communication degree at the Universitat de Girona.

**PERSPECTIVES ON THE ARCHIVE:
ARCHIVE AND CREATION**

**15.11
2022** **Josep Maria Fonalleras**
***The Use of the Archive
in Literary Creation***

In-person and online

One of the recurring clichés in classical rhetoric formulated by Horace—*Ut pictura poesis*—poses an intimate relationship between painting and poetry that would last through the centuries and flows in both directions. Painting emits signals that poetry receives and modifies by means of another language, while literature constructs images that can be translated in the world of pictorial recreation. When referring to paintings or images, one undoubtedly refers to photography as well. The proposition involves formulating the links established by contemporary literature (in cases such as those of Sebald, Handke, and Rulfo) with supporting graphic materials that occasionally act like a spring within the text's inner workings or become a useful and necessary addition to understand it and further comprehend its meaning.

Josep Maria Fonalleras (Girona, 1959) is a writer. Since 1985 he has published novels, story books, articles, and journalistic chronicles, literary criticism, children's books, translations, cookbooks, and poetry. His latest publications include the novel *Climent* (Critics Serra d'Or award for novels), the portraits in *La sala d'estar és un camp de futbol* [The Living Room is a Soccer Field], the book of poems *L'estiuejant* [The Vacationer], the essay *Tot el que hi veig* [All That I See], and the memoir *Un cafè a Roma* [A Café in Rome]. Currently he is a columnist for the newspaper *El Periódico* and collaborates with *El Punt-Avui* and RAC1.

**22.11
2022** **María Luisa Bellido Gant**
***Photographic Archive and Artistic
Creation: Fragments for an Itinerary***

In-person and online

This conference offers an evaluation of the presence and use of photography in the fine arts through a series of specific cases. Photography was not used exclusively as an auxiliary instrument to enable a deeper understanding of an artwork. It also fostered what has been coined as the *photographic gaze*. Creators such as Edgar Degas, Paul Gauguin, Alfons Mucha, Medardo Rosso and Constantin Brancusi, among others, became photographers. Likewise, photography was a key technique in the crystallization process of great mural compositions, as in the case of David Alfaro Siqueiros or Josep Maria Sert. With the avant-garde photography achieved greater consideration as its own genre within the artistic landscape. Therefore, we would like to address several examples showing how the artists' personal photographic archives—whether acquired or self-generated—have served and continue to be useful in the conceptualization and materialization of their works.

María Luisa Bellido Gant (Córdoba, 1967) is a professor of Art History at the Universidad de Granada. Her lines of research focuses on the relationships between museums, contemporary art, and digital culture. She has been a guest professor at several national and international universities in Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, Mexico, and the United States and is the author of numerous books on museology, patrimony, and contemporary art. She is the head of the Patrimony Department at La Madraza Center for Contemporary Culture (Universidad de Granada).

THE DEATH OF THE ARCHIVE

**29.11
2022** **Joan Fontcuberta**
***From the Analogical Arcadia
to the Digital Bazaar***

In-person and online

Making the archive speak. Squeezing out its juice. Exploring its specters. Occupying it. The archive appears as a recurring place for artistic creation applied to the hacking of history and the establishment of new dialogues with reality. When the archive is not obstructed by fear or prejudice, but instead opens to liberty and creative intelligence, it is like a visit to an inspirational cave of Ali Baba. It is within this scenario that the post-memory, the appropriationism, the recovery of noise, distancing, and other archival methodologies for narratives—both in the realm of photography and in the visual arts as well as in literature—become more fertile. Stemming from the so-called “Artists Meet Archive” program developed in Cologne and other similar initiatives, this discussion suggests a critical immersion into both analog and digital archives.

For more than four decades **Joan Fontcuberta** (Barcelona, 1955) has made artistic work using photography, while also developing multiple activities as an educator, an essayist, and an exhibition curator. His work is part of the collections at MoMA in New York, The Art Institute of Chicago, IVAM in Valencia, MACBA in Barcelona, and Centre Pompidou in Paris. In 2013 he received the Hasselblad Foundation International Award. In 2021 he was awarded an honorary doctorate at Sorbonne University Paris VIII.

**13.12
2022** **Bernardo Riego Amézaga**
***Beyond Algorithms: A Humanist
Vision of Artificial Intelligence facing
Access to Archives***

In-person and online

Nowadays, considering a migration to digital photography that is irreversible and a photochemical legacy comprising millions of photographic images preserved in the archives, while living alongside an omnipresent internet and one of its more dubious variants, the *IoT*—*internet of things*—, the immediate and immersive experiences of the metaverse, concerns raised by so-called surveillance capitalism, and the fear that exists relative to the dominance of algorithms, it is evident that humans have already lost control over their access to information. At present, only artificial intelligence machines can aid us in this task, indexing archived information in different ways and displaying it for humans in an unprecedented manner. This conference will present a humanist and positive vision of what artificial intelligence can be and what we can achieve with it if we contemplate information technologies from a transversal and historicist perspective. Considering this evidence, when fearfully facing the future of information technologies, it may still be possible to make them more human and place them at our service.

Bernardo Riego Amézaga (Santander, 1955) is a historian of images and their technologies in contemporary society, particularly in the field of photography. Since 2015 he has been teaching the course *The Information Society, A Historical Perspective* at the Universidad de Cantabria, that focuses on digital culture and its cultural precursors with the goal of representing reality not only with words, but also with numbers, much like computer science. Among his latest research, he has published works analyzing, among other issues, the social practices of the new digital spectators who no longer follow the cultural guidelines created during modernity.

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