

Biennale

The Lives and Loves of Images

29/02–26/04/2020

Kunstverein Ludwigshafen

All Art is Photography

Photography has two relations to art. It can be an art in itself—expressive, subjective, creative, inventive. It can be the mechanical means by which all the other visual arts—from painting and sculpture, to performance—are documented, reproduced and publicized. What we know of art, we often know through photographic images of it. Paintings we have never seen in real life. Sculptures we have never walked around.

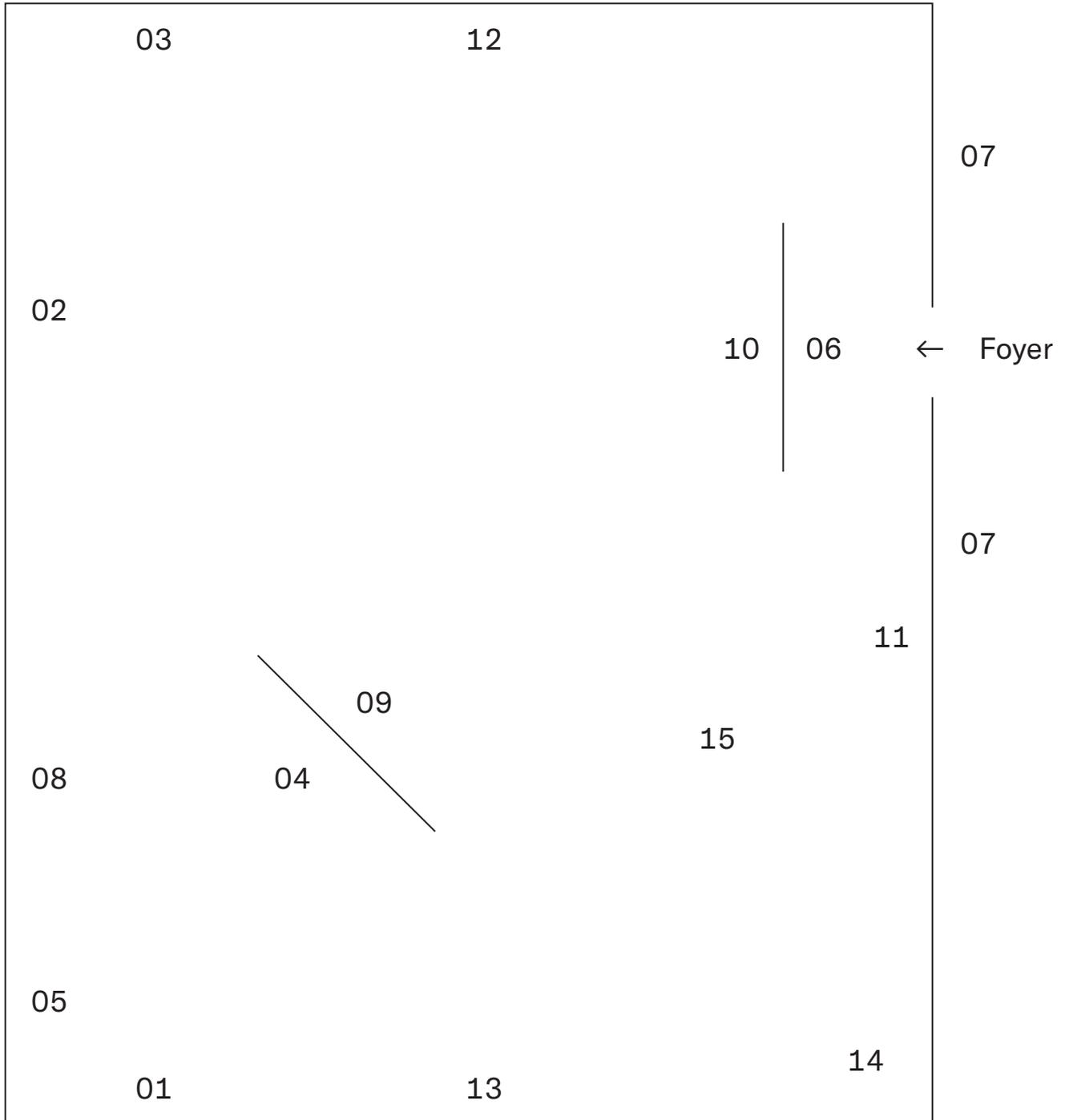
In general, these two roles are kept separate, but photography and photographers are not respectful

of boundaries. What happens when artistic photography takes the other arts as its subject matter? What can a camera do in a painter's studio, in front of a sculpture, or in an art gallery full of people? This is what the exhibition *All Art is Photography* sets out to consider. Some of the photographic artists in this show reflect upon the cultural role of printed art books. Others concern themselves with looking again at physical spaces in which art is made and displayed. Others consider the camera's complicated relation to paintings and sculptures as aesthetic objects.

Curated by David Company

**für aktuelle
Fotografie**

Biennale



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Claudia Angelmaier

01 from the series *Plants and Animals*

Hirschkäfer, 2004

Analogue C-Print, 110 × 144 cm

Blauracke, 2004

Analogue C-Print, 105 × 128 cm

02 from the series *Works on Paper*

Rokeby Venus, 2008

Analogue C-Print, 166 × 220 cm

Kniender Akt, 2008

Analogue C-Print, 110 × 142,6 cm

La Baigneuse Valpinçon, 2008

Analogue C-Print, 193 × 144,5 cm

La Petite Baigneuse, 2008

Analogue C-Print, 56 × 42 cm

03 from the series *This is Photography*

Portrait (Goldin), 2019

Analogue C-Print, 112 × 171,5 cm

Portrait (Man Ray), 2019

Analogue C-Print, 112 × 129 cm

“In the series *Plants and Animals* I arrange different catalogues to a sculptural arrangement of opened, under- and interlaced art historical volumes. In this synopsis of different reproductions of one and the same motif—Albrecht Dürer’s pictured *Blauracke* appears in a variety of colour nuances and sizes—the question of the original arises. The work analytically reflects the relationship between image and reproduction, between the unique and its mass reproduction.

For the series *Works on Paper* a collection of art postcards showing female nudes seen from behind from the starting point. The back of the postcard is staged and illuminated in my photographs in such a way that the image of the front shines through schematically, reduced to a few colour values, laterally reversed. In the process, the female nude is reproduced in the photographic enlargement as a facsimile in its respective original size. In this way, the image of the front merges with the text, logo and barcode on the back of the card, which appear many times larger. The postcard, although undescribed, is transformed in a figurative sense from a collector’s item back to a communication object by revealing the ‘back’ of the images.

This results in an ambiguous interplay of visibility and disappearance, of illusion and pictorial reality; something is shown and at the same time concealed again.

The artistic medium of photography today competes with digital image worlds and their specific forms of presentation and distribution. Against this background, I focus my research in my current series *This is Photography* exemplarily on different pictorial representations of well-known individual works of the history of photography on the Internet. In doing so, my interest goes far beyond the mere depiction of the original works and focuses above all on the context and the medium of their representation.

In *This is Photography* I thus examine the medial ‘transformation’ of the original images in an analogous transformation process, at the end of which there are multi-layered new image levels and image compositions that invite reflection.” – Claudia Angelmaier

Dennis Adams

04 *Malraux’s Shoes*, 2012

Video, 42 min.

Written and performed by Dennis Adams

Directed by Dennis Adams and Paul Colin

In his video *Malraux’s Shoes*, the North American artist Dennis Adams plays André Malraux, the French writer, art theorist and France’s Minister of Culture under President Charles De Gaulle. Adams re-enacts the famous photograph taken by Maurice Jarnoux in 1954, showing Malraux in his study with the plates for his book *The Imaginary Museum of World Sculpture*, laid out on the floor before him. Jarnoux’s original photograph is displayed in the foyer of the Kunstverein.

Adams’s Malraux is a brilliant and lonely megalomaniac who makes astute reflections on the fate of art in the age of mass media, as he switches back and forth between poetic interior monologue and episodes of screaming rage about the larger context of culture and its various personalities.

Tim Davis

05 *Colosseum Pictures*, from the series *The New Antiquity*, 2009

Inkjet-Print, 55 × 70 cm

Since the invention of photography in the 1830s, photographers have been fascinated by the architectural legacies of antiquity. The Victorian cult of ruins takes place during the heyday of industrial revolution. The camera, a technique that emerged from this very revolution, is able to vividly reproduce the cracks, patina and decay of old buildings in detail. It simultaneously emphasises the history of the ruins and modernity of photography itself. As photography became increasingly popular with amateurs and tourists from all walks of life some ruins in Europe were photographed so often that they soon became national symbols. Tim Davis shows this phenomenon in *Colosseum Pictures* using the famous landmark in Rome as an example. But this photograph by Tim Davis is already outdated and well on its way to becoming a relic itself. It is an artefact of a very specific moment in the history of photography. According to the title of the series, *The New Antiquity* shows the moment just before the emergence of smartphone cameras, from which point the cameras shown belong to the past—a new antiquity.

Pablo Genovés

06 *El Museo*, 2011

C-Print, 149 × 184 cm

The dystopian-surreal collage in an impressive format by the Spanish artist Pablo Genovés serves as a prelude in the exhibition hall. Within his virtual world he creates an apocalyptic space of art. What appears to be an art museum with old masters, in which a bomb exploded and intensified by the sepia tone—looks like a historical photograph, turns out to be a photo collage. By combining an opulent, magnificent exhibition space with a pile of rubble, *El Museo* creates a “non-space” in which time seems to stand still. The museum space seems to dissolve and thematises the transience of various parameters such as preciousness, value and elitist art itself—photography is capable of questioning the value of visual art through a pseudo-historical event. The bizarre aesthetics of the work and the simulation of a fictional reality, which, through

The work specifications are listed in reading direction (from left to right).

clever digital post-processing, suggests to the recipient that it could actually have taken place in this way, becomes the actual work of art here. The play with different pictorial worlds, the reproductions of works of art, as well as the documentation of exhibitions is reflected here, as is the manipulative power of photography.

Maurice Jarnoux

- 07 André Malraux at home editing “Le Musée Imaginaire de la Sculpture Mondiale”, 1953
Courtesy Getty Images / Paris Match

In the foyer of the Kunstverein Ludwigshafen the exhibition is introduced with a large picture by the photographer Maurice Jarnoux of André Malraux (1901-1976), one of the most controversial figures in the cultural and political life of the 20th century. He made a name for himself as a bon vivant, adventurer, convicted art thief and writer. Malraux showed great interest in photography and its potential to bring together the art of the world in an illustrated art book or—as he called it—a “musée imaginaire” or “museum without walls”. According to Malraux, the fate of all works of art was to find themselves first in a modern museum and then on a page of a book. In his many books, he described how misleading, manipulative, and authoritarian the “musée imaginaire” is, but held on to the idea that this was inevitable. No matter how insightful Malraux’s explanations may be, from today’s perspective he seems to us colonial and monolithic; as a man who assumed there was only one history of art and he was the one who was able to tell it.

In 1952, the Paris magazine Paris Match published an article with photographs by Maurice Jarnoux showing Malraux laying out the pages of his book *Le musée imaginaire de la sculpture mondiale*, published shortly afterwards. The most famous of the pictures shows Malraux from above, leaning against his double wing, the pages of the book spread out on the floor in front of him as if he were watching over the culture of the world in photographic form.

Both publications can be seen in the showcase of the exhibition (see No. 15).

David Jiménez

- 08 *ROMA Mosaic No 1*, 2019
Installation, multiple pieces, facsimile prints of 20 partially burnt prints in 25 irregular fragments, 185 × 185 cm

David Jiménez’ *ROMA Mosaic No 1* is a compilation of facsimiles of burnt-out photographs. It is a mosaic of fragments, almost like our image of antiquity, composed of works of art on which time has left its mark. It is up to us to create a picture of the past, which itself is always shaped by its own time. Associations with unexplained provinciality through iconoclasms, fires and violence arise.

Steffi Klenz

- 09 *Staffages (Beiwerk)*, 2018
C-Print, 133 × 73,5 cm
Staffages (Beiwerk), 2018
C-Print, 97,2 × 69,5 cm
Staffages (Beiwerk), 2018
C-Print, 70 × 60 cm

Staffages (Beiwerk), 2018
C-Print, 70,3 × 59,2 cm

Staffages means something like “accessories” or “decoration”. In painting, this term refers to figures that are added to a composition for decorative or compositional purposes, comparable to the extras in film.

In 2017 Steffi Klenz visited the collections and buildings of the Tunbridge Wells Museum in Kent, UK. She repositioned various objects from the museum, removed them from their previous context within the collection and photographed them.

Klenz is interested in the idea that the way objects are registered, described, displayed and maintained in a collection gives them equal status. This equal status, and thus our perception of the objects, is reversed through the various ways in which artists or curators present themselves. In her work, the artist plays with the idea of context-dependent value by placing the objects in the collection in a different, radically new situation and thus (can) be perceived in a new way.

The artist also addresses the exhibition of her photographs in the way she presents or installs her works, by also taking up the coloured categorization in the wall design. Klenz became interested in the traditional role of the plinth to isolate the object from its surroundings, transforming the traditional plinth into an abstract sculpture. Flexible modular constructions consisting of stacked and cantilevered geometric forms were made out of scrap and untreated wood reminding us of the Modernist sculptural works by Brancusi and the utopian visions of Constructivist Vladimir Tatlin’s sculptures, El Lissitzky’s posters, Kazimir Malevich ‘Architectons’ and Modernist examples of mass-produced objects such as Wilhelm Wagenfeld Kubus Stacking Storage Containers from 1938 or the Bauhaus Bauspiel Construction Set originally designed at the Bauhaus School in Germany by Alma Siedhoff-Buscher in 1923.

The sculptural plinth not only holds the object but rather allows the objects ‘to do’ and ‘to become’. Here, the plinth is not only an actor but also a mediator rather like the staffage in the paintings of the late 1700s and early 1800s, whose purpose was to mediate between the viewer and the subject of the painting.

Mark Lewis

- 10 *Museum*, 2018
Video, silent, 10:59 min.

The Canadian artist Mark Lewis is best known for his silent movies produced with a single shot. In the film *Museum* there are also no cuts and one encounters a strange undefined space and a feeling of disorientation is created by the pedestal-less large projection.

Museum refers directly to the main gallery of the Museu de Arte de Sao Paulo (MASP), designed by Lina Bo Bardi. The experimental exhibition design from the 1960s does not use walls in the exhibition space. Instead, the paintings hang on and in front of transparent glass panels mounted on concrete pedestals. This creates the impression of works of art floating in space.

Along a pre-programmed route, Mark Lewis had a camera, mounted on a robot, take numerous still images of the exhibition space. With the help of computer software, these images were to be merged to simulate a continuous

camera movement. However, the software produced an incomplete rendering in which large amounts of image data simply remained black while the image decayed elsewhere. The resulting film has the appearance of an imaginary ruin that is barely anchored in the past, present or future, thus inventing its own time.

In this work, Lewis deals with the theme of exhibiting itself. While Lina Bo Bardi's presentation is progressive, the trend in today's exhibition design seems traditional. Even the approach to the innovations of the past is only fragmentary despite the most modern technology—perhaps Lewis' work shows how difficult it is to be ahead of one's time.

Josh Murfitt

11 *A Creative Act*, 2019

3 C-Prints mounted on archival board, 24 × 30 cm
1 C-Print mounted on archival board, 30 × 24 cm

Josh Murfitt's series deals with a central question of art history: the ethical discourse on the provenance of historically relevant artefacts. Specifically, it deals with the controversial repatriation of the fragments of the Parthenon, which were removed and brought to England by Lord Elgin between 1801 and 1812 and have been exhibited in the British Museum ever since. Hartwig Fischer, the director of the British Museum, gave an interview to the Greek newspaper *Ta Nea* in 2019 in which he classified the exhibition of the Parthenon fragments as a self-sufficient, creative process that "offers opportunities to engage with the objects differently and ask different questions because they are placed in a new context". Murfitt's series deals with this theme by combining his own photographs of the exhibition space with postcard views of the Parthenon. Specifically, he inserts the trivial, commercialized photographs of the Parthenon, which have become engraved in the collective cultural memory, into the actual exhibits to address these monumental, historical fragments. "I am interested in the ethical aspects of museum collections. This project is about the staging of the Parthenon sculptures in the British Museum and the political context of their removal from the grounds of the Acropolis in Athens," says Murfitt.

Antonio Pérez Río

12 From the series *Masterpieces*:

Venus de Milo (Unknown), 2016
Inkjet-Print, 45 × 30 cm

The Sleep of Endymion (Anne-Louis Girodet), 2017
Inkjet-Print, 50 × 75 cm

Oath of the Horatii (Jacques-Louis David), 2017
Inkjet-Print, 60 × 90 cm

Portrait of the Artist at his Easel (Rembrandt), 2017
Inkjet-Print, 45 × 30 cm

July 28, 1830. Liberty Leading the People (Eugène Delacroix), 2017
Inkjet-Print, 50 × 75 cm

The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons (Jacques-Louis David), 2017
Inkjet-Print, 60 × 90 cm

Bathsheba at Her Bath (Willem Drost), 2016
Inkjet-Print, 45 × 30 cm

In his series *Masterpieces*, Antonio Pérez Río deals with a phenomenon that is now omnipresent. The simple handling of smartphones tempts people to quickly reach for their mobile phones—not only in everyday life or at famous sights, but also in museums. Due to the frequent duplication and increased sharing in social networks, the popularity of the artwork depicted continues to grow. This creates the paradox that an increasing number of visitors in museums will only search for the most famous works to photograph them and no longer deal with the works themselves. Antonio Pérez Río writes about his series:

"The Louvre Museum fascinates and terrifies me in equal parts. Since 2014, I have spent thirty-seven days inside the museum, with my camera and a notebook, trying to reflect on the real experience of visitors to one of the most visited art spaces in the world. Paintings and sculptures that have survived several centuries face people who visit the museum for once in their lives and refuse to look directly at them. Contemplation has given way to accumulation, an accumulation conducted by means of all sorts of digital devices—veritable cyclopes that pound through the museum hallways stockpiling everything they see in their bottomless memory, generating a new way of staying and being in the world, a transformation of the art experience that points towards a profound modification of human nature. The result of these four years of work and more than 500 kilometres walked in the Louvre galleries is a book entitled *Masterpieces: an essay on the remains of a world devoured by its images.*"

Nick Waplington

13 From the series *The Cave*, 2018–19
26 framed prints, 25,4 × 20,3 cm each

Although the British artist Nick Waplington is best known for his photographs, he produces sketches, drawings and paintings on a large scale. While working on a cycle of abstract paintings in his New York studio, Waplington noticed the sunlight falling through a barred window. As it wandered along the wall the light unfolded an additional painterly quality in his paintings. He used a large-format camera (8 × 10 inches) to photograph the light, as it fell onto his canvases. The result is a cheerful confusion in which it is no longer clear what is painted and what is pure play of light. This is of course how you would *not* document a painting for reproduction purposes.

With his title *The Cave*, Waplington refers to the famous allegory of the cave, Plato's allegory of being and appearance. Prisoners who have spent their whole life in a cave, are held in chains. All they see of the hustle and bustle of the people in front of the cave are shadows cast by the light of a fire on the back wall. To quote Plato: "On the walls of the cave, only the shadows are truth."

By chance, Nick Waplington discovered how the incident light through a window unfolded an additional painterly quality. Here, photography literally shows itself as a drawing of light. The presentation in a transparent glass case in the exhibition lends the photographs an additional sculptural quality.

Ewa Monika Zebrowski

14 From the series *Bassano in Terevina*, 2016:

shroud
urn

remnants
lantern
absence
In the Name of the Father
remembrance
plaster & time
hero
dreams
no guests

11 pigment prints, 60,9 × 50,8 cm each

The renowned artist Cy Twombly drew much of his inspiration from his adopted country, Italy. The Canadian artist Ewa Monika Zebrowski, who lives and works in Montreal, Quebec, and Twombly's son visited Cy Twombly's house north of Rome, where he fed his imagination and his spirit. The clarity and serenity that these rooms exude and the spirit of antiquity enable the viewer to imagine where and how Twombly lived and found inspiration for his exploration of ancient mythology and poetry. Zebrowski's photographs are both a testimony to their time and a work of art in their own right. Photography here serves as an approach to the life of an artist, as a supposed approach to a person, to a work, a personal approach to a studio that looks as if it were not one.

Zebrowski describes it as follows: "Bassano in Teverina is about absence, about loss, and about the ephemeral nature of being."

Showcase

- 15 Maurice Jarnoux, André Malraux at home editing "Le Musée Imaginaire de la Sculpture Mondiale" (1953), Paris Match, June 1954
Private Collection
- André Malraux, Les Voix du Silence, Gallimard, 1953
Private Collection