

PRESS RELEASE
19th October, 2009



Photo Archives and the Photographic Memory of Art History, Part II

29th–31st October 2009, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut

An International conference on the connection between photography and the history of art in collaboration with the Courtauld Institute of Art, London

While the first part of the conference in London traced the parallel developments of art historical research and documentary photography, the scholars in Florence now shift the focus to the emergence and development phases of individual photographic collections and archives.

The discussion begins by considering the materiality of the photographic document, which, taking into account all the subordinate information and meta-data surrounding it, is analysed from different perspectives: as the reproduction of an object or artwork, but also as an archival document or the object of inquiry itself. In this context the consideration of the archive as a whole is essential, not only as a site for the conservation of knowledge, but also its production.

In the process, particular attention will be devoted to collections of photographic reproductions of art, which developed in direct relationship to art historical research. Different types of photographic archives – private photographic collections, resource collections for museums, photographic archives for the preservation of historical monuments, or those dedicated to university instruction – will be analyzed according to the circumstances of their development and their specific impact. Such collections include that of Richard Hamann, conceived as an “art historical world archive”, the Bildarchiv Photo Marburg, or the collections of major scholars and art historians such as Jacob Burckhardt and Bernard Berenson. By way of example, the conference will pursue the historical formation of the photographic collection of the South Kensington Museum (presently the Victoria & Albert Museum in London), or the private collection of the American photographer, art lover and art historian Clarence Kennedy.

Finally, several lectures will focus on the present and future of photographic archives, whose functions have, to a significant extent, changed through the implementation of new media. Consequently, the debate on analogue and digital photographic archives will be discussed in depth during a concluding round table. The discussion will start with the recognition of the importance of analogue photographic archives as a research environment not only for art history, but also the wider academic field including disciplines such as history, the history of science, the history of photography, anthropology and visual studies.



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Conference room, Via Giuseppe Giusti 38, 50121 Firenze

Organisers: Costanza Caraffa (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – MPI) in collaboration with Patricia Rubin (Institute of Fine Arts, New York)

“Photo Archives and the Photographic Memory of Art History, Part I” was held on 16th/17th June, 2009 at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

For further information:

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