Backdrop

membrana/5/18

Hidden mother. Studio photograph from the middle of 19th century. Tintype. USA. Author unknown. Private collection.

Backdrops

Conversation with Chris Pinney

Paolo S. H. Favéro

"Studios seem to be transformative places where people could act out new forms of identity in advance of society."

The conversation between the two researches revolves around the central question of backdrop, its meaning, position inside the studio practices. It delves into the performative aspect of backdrop photography putting it in proximity with theatre and cinema, question its nature as a prop in the process of staging an image. The question seem to be how can photography as a general practice can be understood and its theoretical notions enriched through research into rich backdrop practices (in case of Pinney and Fevero mostly in India and surrounding region) and how can we explain those practice via the established theoretical cannons. The conversation negotiates through main notions of authors such as Michael Fried, John Tagg, illuminates on usually neglected nuances of Barthes *Camera Lucida* to finally elaborate the profilmic nature of backdrop photography and its representative role of the society in which it functions. What kind of politics of space does it represent; is it transformative or representative? What is the meaning of the notion of the prophetic nature of photography?

Christopher Pinney, Chakra Studio, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2018.

Shall we start with defining what a backdrop is? And more specifically, is a backdrop a matter of representation?

Well, in a very simple sense backdrops (as part of the apparatus of studio practice) often demarcate space for representation: they set a kind of target for the subjects of the camera and for the camera itself. I have always liked early images in which the subjects were out of alignment with the backdrop – they are sometimes too tall or standing asymmetrically, so that the backdrop appears as a kind of faulty double frame within the image … in those cases the backdrop contributes to the inevitable contingency (in Walter Benjamin's sense) of the image but mostly the backdrop is conscripted as part of attempts to control and minimize contingency. Its function is to overwrite everything that might otherwise unfold unpredictably behind the subject and, of course, it also imposes its own slice from a usually very restricted repertoire of possibilities. I just bought some new (hand-painted) backdrops from a photo supplier in Old Delhi. They were painted about ten years ago and have a small photographic reference image sealed inside their plastic wrappings and they are all different yet very similar, showing luxurious villas with well-ordered gardens in lush natural settings. I could not buy backdrops only of mountains, or the sea, or of high-rise cities – only ones that conjured this in-between space of a sort of peasant dream of success (the villas actually look like couple of the houses built by the richest villagers in that part of Madhya Pradesh I often visit). It

Christopher Pinney, Barisal, Bangladesh, 2018.

Christopher Pinney, Dwarika Studio, Nepal, 2018.

reminds me of Pierre Bourdieu's observation about the disjuncture between all the infinite variety of things that could theoretically be photographed and the astonishingly narrow range of things and idioms that do actually get photographed. Studio backdrops are part of that technology of exclusion.

Would you agree that backdrops in a way transgress the boundary between photography and theatre? In other words, we could say that they highlight the performative meaning of being photographed. I have experienced that intensely in my work on long exposure self-portraiture that I started up in the aftermath of my father's death. Positioning myself in the photographs, with timer and long exposure, helped me to open up time, I transformed the act of being portrayed in an act of becoming, becoming a new person in a new life. My father's actual house was there in the background, functioning as a backdrop, demarcating a kind of stage encouraging me to enact that transformation. What do you think?

Well yes, I think you are pointing to two features that exist in a kind of tension: the inter-medial or mixed-media nature of photographic practice and also (conversely) its medium specificity. The backdrops that get used in photo studios in South Asia are intimately connected to backdrops used in various local theatrical traditions from Parsi Theatre to religious folk theatre, and there are also of course lots of strong connections with cinema. The Old Delhi retailer who sold me those studio backdrops said (unprompted), that the only people still buying these backdrops (though there are very few who are), were small town and village studios, and also *Ramleela troupes*, by which he meant touring theatrical groups that stage village performances of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. So, there is a fascinating ongoing entanglement between these subaltern performative practices. One could say something similar about cinema: the backdrop painters also produced film banners, and the poses of clients in small town studios demonstrate the central role that Bollywood plays in their imaginations.

In this sense, the backdrop should be classed together with other kinds of props that you used to find in small town studios – telephones, radios, guitars, guns, motorbikes even, and the more restricted items that you can still find, such as jackets and ties and different kinds of hats. They all assist the staging of the performance that the sitter offers up to the camera with the assistance of the studio owner as a sort of theatrical impresario. In the last year, I have been working in Nepal and Bangladesh studios, and ties and jackets are still *de rigeur* as props, and also the so-called Dhaka *topis* in Nepal. Older citizenship photographs in Nepal required males to wear a Nepali style hat and you still see these hanging up on pegs in studios for customers who still want them. In Bangladesh, the jacket and tie were essential for some visa photographs and although these are now usually Photoshopped in, many studios still keep a selection of clothes.

Of course, in the John Tagg/Foucault version, ID photography would be seen as coercive "instrumental realism," the subordination to the "carceral network" and so on, but it makes much more sense to me to see them as part of the performative spectrum that photography invites. You act out the role of a visa applicant. But then one would also want to make a different sort of argument that stresses photography as enmeshed in mixed-media practices (theatre etc.) and say that the performativity that unfolds in front of backdrops in photo studios is precipitated by something that is medium-specific to photography, which encourages what Karen Strassler calls the "as if" nature of photography, or what I would extend into the domain of the subjunctive or proleptic.

Kandinsky said that art does not only "echo" but also functions as "prophecy," anticipating the future. Can backdrops have this function too?

Well, I think that is very perceptive. Photography has, or can have, this function. I once wrote a book called *Coming of Photography in India* which tried to apply issues current in the "history of the book" to photography, and the final chapter in that work was titled "Photography as Prophecy." It is very striking how commentators such as Bourdieu (in his very significant study of 1960s French popular photography) present photography as a monument to everything that is past. In that book Bourdieu says several times that family photography serves as a "gravestone" by which I think he means a kind of empty monument to everything that has gone before. By contrast, when I was studying nineteenth-century Indian studio imagery I was struck by the mismatch between the social groupings that appeared in photographs and the social groupings that cultural history and anthropology would lead one to expect; in photos you predominantly found individuals and conjugal couples, whereas outside the studio the organizing units were collectivities such as castes (*jatis*), "brotherhoods" (*biradaris*) etc. So, it did not make sense to conclude that society was organised in a particular way and this was then reflected in what the studio produced. Studios seemed to be transformative places where people could act out new forms of identity *in advance* of society. This helped me make sense of Barthes' wry observation in *Camera Lucida* that it was "odd" that no-one seems to have noticed the "disturbance" that photography causes in society or to have really grasped the extent of its "madness." I was also encouraged by Jacques Attali's argument (in a book called *Noise*) that music exists in "advance" of society, having a "quicker code." Both these ideas suddenly seemed to illuminate photography.

What is there to learn about photographic theory by studying backdrops?

Well, I think two things. I would say that their performative invitation directs our attention to the mise-en-scène and the profilmic. And there is also the question of whether the backdrop
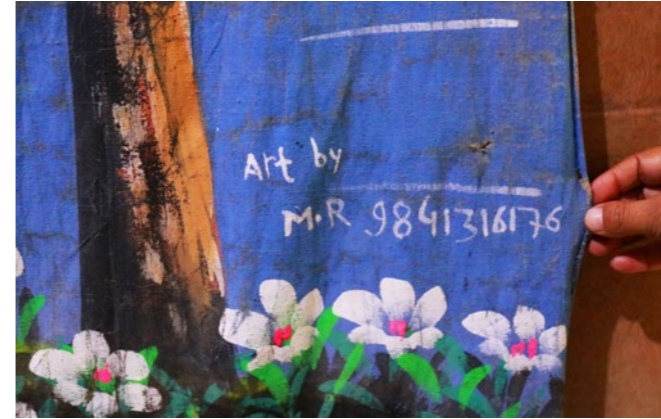
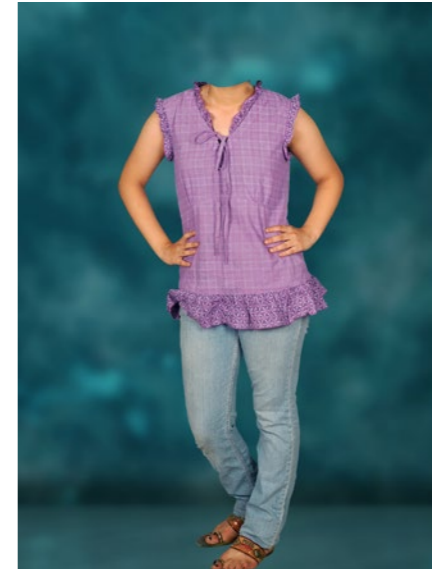Christopher Pinney, Dwarika Studio, Panauti, Nepal, 2018.

Christopher Pinney, Panauti Studio, Nepal, 2018.

Christopher Pinney, Venus Studio, Nagda, India, 1991.

Naresh Bhatia, digital backdrop template, Krish Digital, 2018. Courtesy of Christopher Pinney.

Naresh Bhatia, digital backdrop template, Krish Digital, 2018. Courtesy of Christopher Pinney.

can be deployed in a different politics of space. I think the first question leads us to what I think is the major theoretical achievement of *Camera Lucida* and which seems to have been totally overlooked. This revolves around the distinction Barthes makes between *corps* and *corpus*. His argument is that we want (or as he says "need") photography to generate a corpus, but it cannot. Because it is tied to the singular contingency of an event it can only produce a "body." Photographs can only ever be traces of singular acts or performances (as Barthes says "only some bodies") *and yet* we want them to signify something more, something general or generalizable. Barthes blinding insight (which my former SOAS colleague Kit Davis helped me grasp) is that this is an impossible demand: you simply cannot transcend or escape from the singularity of each image.

For me this really illuminated, in a very major way, a phrase I had heard many times in my work with central Indian studios. Studio owners would often say that their clients wanted "to come out better" and they explained the (perhaps surprising) survival of photo studios in an age of digital phone photography because the studio, with its lights, backdrops, props and skilled technicians, was able to offer the best outcome. But "coming out better" also points to the autonomy of the photographic performance. I never had the sense that anyone in central India thought, or said, "but you are not really like that" (not as glamorous, not as beautiful etc.) because they recognized intuitively that that was an aspect of what Barthes would call the "corpus" which properly speaking cannot be a question for photography since photographs can only ever be documents of the profilmic. The corpus, he says, can only be established by "classification and verification" i.e. through an extended and different kind of knowledge than a trace of a photographic event can possibly provide.

This connects to the second aspect of the question because the backdrop also serves to exclude a larger continuum and depth of the real in which we might be tempted to find ways of establishing the "corpus" (remember that, although Barthes says this is an impossible quest, we nevertheless "need" it, we are endlessly searching after it). This observation could perhaps also be linked to an argument I made in a piece called "Notes from The Surface of the Image" that contrasted two kinds of spatial practice within photography. The first one is something a bit like Heidegger's "World as Picture," or what Martin Jay termed "Cartesian perspectivalism" in which objects are modeled three-dimensionally in space. There is what we might think of as a "depth effect" that presents the world as what Heidegger called a "standing reserve" – graspable and available for exploitation. To me this is a good way of summing up what is often meant by "colonial." The other politics of space deploys backdrops to shunt everything forward into the space of the beholder. Often (the Malian studio photographer Seydou Keita is perhaps exemplary) patterns on the subjects' cloths fuse in the shallow space in front of the backdrop to present a flattened space deprived of depth cues. One effect of this is to foreclose the world as "standing reserve" and

to enhance the embodied presence of the beholder. If the viewer in the "colonial" images is invited to be effectively invisible and incorporeal, the viewer of "surfacist" images has to confront their own physical proximity to the image.

This was the duality I first started to think about a long time ago in the context of popular religious chromolithography in India, with the help of Michael Fried's distinction between "absorptive" and "'theatrical" beholders. It seemed to me that early (colonially inculcated) perspectival representations hoped for a secularizing effect. The Indian "theatrical" rejection of this introjected the beholder into a space of mutual presence with the depicted deities. But I think there is a similar polarity in photography's different politics of space, in which backdrops often play a central role.

And how does digital practice change this?

Well, there is a lot that remains the same. Unless your brains are hardwired to a computer, human perception remains analogue. In that sense, it does not make any difference whether you are looking at a paper image printed from a negative, or an image on an electronic screen. But when the backdrop arrives, courtesy of Photoshop, the photographic event becomes something very different: an endless series of permeable events. There is a very interesting supplier near CST railway station in Mumbai called Krish Digital. It is run by Naresh Bhatia, who creates massive TIF file backdrops for sale to Mofussil studios. He photographs his wife, son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren, locates them in utopian bourgeois settings and then deletes their faces. Small town studios buy these files on sets of DVDs and then insert their client's faces into the ready-made space. This is massively colonizing in a new kind of way: it disseminates a metropolitan aesthetic and radically de-skills the local photo studio. We could think of it as a kind of McBackdrop. It is in the context of these kind of developments that it was so encouraging to find a Delhi supplier still finding customers for his stock of hand painted cloth backdrops.

Backdrop

Created 17.10.2013. Junior Megapix Studio, photographer Kakooza Joseph, Mutanda Rd., Kisoro, Uganda. Courtesy of Kakooza Joseph.

THROUGHOUT its relatively short cultural history, photographer's studio backdrop has, alongside different props, served as a creative and imaginary place of wish fulfilment, aspirations or nostalgic longing. It has created and followed pictorial conventions, and at the same time broken with them. Lastly, in the digital age it has evolved into the ever and instantly changing backscreen in which the frivolous creativity seems to be unleashed in its fullness. Regardless of its form – either as a part of a fancy 19th century attic studio, characterless shopping mall cubicle, a makeshift setup in student admission office or as the portable backdrop of a street peddler portraitist – photographer's backdrop is first and foremost a place of exchange of mastery of technique, desires, conventions and money. Guided by the wish it is a reproduction of prevailing social norms and conventions, or a temporary shelter from them. Even today there seems to be a certain charm in the sociability and ritualistic nature of old photographer's studio backdrop practices. Not only that – backdrop always served as a background, a frame, an ideological grid – artistic and scientific – on which the object of interest, desire or investigation itself was superimposed, thus delineating, exposing, accentuating its features.

More Than a Portrait:
Framing the Photograph as Sculpture and
Video Animation
Karin Becker and Geska Helena Brečević

This essay traces the resurrection of the *fotoescultura,* a three-dimensional photographic portrait popular in rural Mexico in the early 20th century, as interpreted in recent works by Performing Pictures, a contemporary Swedish artist duo. The early *fotoesculturas* were an augmented form of portraiture, commissioned by family members who supplied photographs that artisans in Mexico City converted into framed sculptural portraits for display on family altars. We compare these »traditional« photographic objects with "new" digital forms of video animation on screen and in the public space that characterize Performing Pictures work, and explore how the *fotoescultura* inspired new incarnations of their series *Men that Fall.* At the intersection between the material aspects of a "traditional" vernacular art form and "new" media art, we identify a photographic aesthetic that shifts from seeing and perceiving to physical engagement, and discuss how the frame and its *parergon* augment the photographic gaze. The essay is accompanied by photos and video stills from Performing Pictures' film poem *Dreaming the Memories of Now* (2018), depicting their work with the *fotoesculturas.*

Keywords: fotoescultura, parergon, frame, vernacular photography, video art.

Keeping a Story Alive:
Interview with Lukas Birk
Iza Pevec

The work of an Austrian artist Lukas Birk can be connected to some dilemmas of documentary photography. If the critique of the classical documentary photography stresses the responsibility towards the photographed subject and the problem of the exoticization for the western view, Birk's work is often developed, displayed and distributed in the place where his projects are created. Therefore, the first audience of his projects are locals and are, in that way, maybe more closely connected to the project itself. He co-founded the *Austro Sino Arts Program* in China and founded a residency program *SewonArtSpace* in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The project *Afghan Box Camera*, which he developed with the ethnographer Sean Folley, focuses on the photographic praxis in Afghanistan, mainly on the type of a simple instant camera, which was traditionally used there but its use is now in decline. They investigated the origins, techniques and the many personal stories of the photographers using or having used this type of camera and also made instructional videos on how to build or use one. Attention to the overlooked photographic practices, history and contexts marks also his current project *The Myanmar Photo Archive*, a growing collection of Myanmar photographs that were created during and after the colonial period – the work of local photographers from that period has namely remained unknown until today.

Keywords: Myanmar photography, photographic backdrop, western view, local history

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Backdrops:
Conversation with Chris Pinney
Paolo S. H. Favéro

The conversation between the two researches revolves around the central question of backdrop, its meaning, position inside the studio practices. It delves into the performative aspect of backdrop photography putting it in proximity with theatre and cinema, question its nature as a prop in the process of staging an image. The question seem to be how can photography as a general practice can be understood and its theoretical notions enriched through research into rich backdrop practices (in case of Pinney and Fevero mostly in India and surrounding region) and how can we explain those practice via the established theoretical canons. The conversation negotiates main notions of authors such as Michael Fried, John Tagg and Martin Jay, illuminates on usually neglected nuances of Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida* to finally elaborate the profilmic nature of backdrop photography and its representative role of the society in which it functions. What kind of politics of space does it represent; is it transformative or representative? What is the meaning of the notion of the prophetic nature of photography?

Keywords: backdrop photography, profilmic, prophetic nature of photography, politics of space, photographic event

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Photography Is the Only Art Form That We All Do:
Interview with Martin Parr
Jasna Jernejšek

Martin Parr (1952), who is considered to be one of the most iconic and influential photographers of his generation, managed to make his breakthrough to the global photography scene (and market) in 80s. At that time, impressed by American colour photography, he took on photographing on colour film himself. He made *The Last Resort* (1983–1985), a series of British working class while spending holidays in a coastal resort in New Brighton, which remains one of his most recognizable work to this day. After its first presentation in the Serpentine Gallery in London in 1986, the project triggered turbulence and division of opinions of both professionals and general public. Polarization of opinions became a constant in Parr's photography career. His proponents view Parr as a chronicler of our age, an insightful observer and commentator of modern society, as a satirist with a dry sense of humour, that scrutinizes the eccentricity of everyday life. Focusing on the absurdity of everyday life and on details which loquaciously testify about status and taste, strong, saturated colours and photographing with macro lenses and built-in flash became his *modus operandi.* In this manner, he created series, such as *The Cost of Living* (1987–1989), *Small World* (1987–1994), *Common Sense* (1995–1999), *Autoportrait* (1995–2000 / 1995–2015), *Life's A Beach* (2013) and *Real Food* (2016).

Keywords: photography backdrop, Martin Parr, photobook, photo-studios, portrait

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The Studio Photograph as a Conceptual Framework
Caroline Molloy

In her essay, Caroline's draws from her PhD thesis that looks the visual habitus of transcultural photography. She concentrates her writing on the genre of studio photography, specifically early English studio photography and argues that the conceptual framework established in early photographic studio practices still has its legacy in contemporary digital photographic studio practices. To illustrate this argument, she draws from a contemporary case-study in her local, digital photographic studio in North London and discusses a selection of photographs in relation to early photographic studio practices. She suggests that rather than a radical break caused by digital technologies, digital photography has opened up imaginative ways in which to make studio portraits that blur boundaries between the real and symbolic.

Keywords: studio photography, digital photography, photography and anthropology

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Studio Portraiture as a Construct:
Interview with Ana Peraica
Emina Djukić

Dr. Ana Peraica was born into a family of photographers. Her grandfather, as well as her father after him, run a family photo studio Atelier Perajica on the main square of Diocletian's palace in Split, Croatia. The studio went into Ana's hands, and she still works there herself today. Besides running the business, her main focus is photographic theory, more precise the field of contemporary arts, visual culture studies and media theory. It is very thought-provoking to see how her background and studio practice influenced her research and vice versa. In her writings she focuses on networked society, strategies of anonymity and pseudonymity, parallel hyper-narratives etc. She currently works on her new book *Postdigital Arcadia* in which she focuses on changes in the post digital photography (eg. aerial images and 360 images), and reflects upon the changes brought about by new visual language on our perception of reality. We spoke also about her last published book *The Culture of the Selfie*, an important survey on this particular contemporary phenomenon.

Keywords: selfie, photography, background, backdrop, studio photography

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Travel Images, Capitalism and the Ideology of Enjoyment
Janaki Somaiya

A commonly held assumption about social media is that because users create their own content such as images, videos and so on, and thereby their own representations, social media are largely free from any ideological dispositions imposed from above. Creating images is a discursive practice, mediated by a myriad of social and cultural influences that we encounter in our everyday lives. Like in any other form of communication, certain image sharing practices become more dominant, where they intersect with a range of connotative meanings and their ideological dimensions. Within our current conjuncture of global consumerist capitalism, the dominant cultural order is that of maximizing enjoyment through consumption. This essay puts forth a semiotic reading of a cross-section of travel images shared by users on Instagram to explicate the relationship between travel photography, enjoyment as an ideology and capitalism. It is argued that to travel is not just an activity but it is a commodity that is consumed by us and sold to us by the tourism industry. Contradictions of life under global capitalism remain, with growing inequalities, precarious working conditions, casual job contracts and meagre pays. Material enjoyment remains illusory for many, while the ideological inducements to enjoy finds its outlet in the images we share. When shared on social media for the gaze and 'likes' of the viewers, our travel images are not just memoirs of a journey undertaken but also an affirmation of our enjoyment. For the viewers of these images, the enjoyment of others pertaining to consumption is to be envied or held up to an ideal against which the viewers may imagine their own enjoyment. Capitalism demands enjoyment in the form of consumption, and those who cannot enjoy, are 'free' to fantasize about such enjoyment in the future. While 'free' is the buzzword under neoliberal global capitalism, enjoyment is that kernel that underpins and sustains its ideology.

Keywords: social media, travel, enjoyment, ideology, capitalism

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[abstracts]

A Nostalgic Longing for the 20th Century:
Past and Present Backdrops and Scenes in
the Skylight Studio of Josip Pelikan
Helena Vogelsang (professional caretaker of
Pelikan's collection)

Taking a visual stroll down the backdrops
and sceneries of the master photographer
Josip Pelikan is accompanied by commentary
supplied by the Celje Museum of Recent
History's senior educator and carer of
Pelikan's collection, Helena Vogelsang.
Painted backgrounds with various motifs
used by Pelikan in both portraying and in his
everyday work in the studio represent a key
part of the photographer's heritage and are
part of a permanent exhibition in a skylight
studio. It is the only preserved example of
a skylight photo studio from the end of the
19th century in Slovenia. Various backdrops
enabled the portrayed person to be presented
in a way that suited him or her best; e.g.
raising their social status, being placed in
a specific environment or in a different
position than the person occupied in real
life. This surely influenced the popularity
of portraits made in the wet collodion
technique by contemporary photographer
Borut Peterlin. In this way, the photographer
revitalised the importance of Pelikan's
backgrounds and renewed the interest in old
analogue photography techniques as well as
a comprehensive studio portrait experience,
which today no longer holds a prominent
place among photographic practices.

Keywords: 20th century studio photography,
skylight studio, backdrop photography, portraiture,
Slovenian photography

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global media events and art installations
as mediated through the public space.
Visual ethnography has been central to her
methodological approach. Since 2008, her
research has included an ongoing study of
Performing Pictures' work in Sweden and
southern Mexico. Becker is currently engaged
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Geska Helena Brečević is an artist and
independent researcher working mainly in
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art). Together they make film and video
installations that blur the lines between still
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50 group shows as well as commissions for
several permanent public art installations.
Her artistic research has been carried out
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Geska is currently the artistic director of
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Lukas Birk is an artist, a storyteller and a
conservator. His multi-disciplinary projects
have been turned into films, chronicles and
books. A large part of Lukas' work deals with
archival material he collects while traveling
or while delving into his own background.
His research of consists of careful
investigations and explorations of imagery,
very often in areas that have been affected by
conflict and have not yet had the chance to
present existing material in an artistic form.
His narratives tackle recorded history by
creating alternate storylines and fictional
elements, alongside commonly accepted
facts. His created "archival artworks" have
little to do with institutional processes but
rather revolve around personal stories, the
desire to preserve their place in history, and
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Iza Pevec (1987) finished the studies of art
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time, she was writing for Radio Student and
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Christopher Pinney is Professor of
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historical archaeology of particular media
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Other recent work includes *Photography and
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of the world but also more broadly on the
meaning of images in human life across space
and time. Paolo is the author of *The Present
Image: Visible Stories in a Digital Habitat*
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Jasna Jernejšek (1982) is an independent
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communications which she interdisciplinarily interconnects with social sciences. She graduated in Cultural Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana in 2007, where she also completed her Master of Science degree in Communication in 2013. In addition to managing the institute Sector for Connecting, Researching and Promotion of Media Art, she also collaborates with various exhibition centres and non-governmental cultural organizations, such as SCCA-Ljubljana, Membrane Institute, Fokus Institute, and others.

Martin Parr (1952) is a British documentary photographer, photojournalist and photobook collector. Since 1994, he has been a member of Magnum Photos. He is considered a chronicler of our age, known for his photographic projects such as *The Cost of Living* (1987–1989), *Small World* (1987–1994), *Common Sense* (1995–1999), *Autoportrait* (1995–2000 / 1995–2015), *Life's A Beach* (2013) and *Real Food* (2016) that take an intimate, satirical and anthropological look at aspects of modern life, leisure, consumption and wealth of the Western world. He has had around 100 photobooks published, and has featured in numerus exhibitions worldwide. The Martin Parr Foundation, founded in 2014, opened premises in his hometown of Bristol in 2017. It houses his own work and archive, a collection of other British and Irish photographers, and a gallery.

Caroline Molloy is a PhD art and humanities student at Birkbeck, Centre of Photographic History and Theory at the University of London, alongside of which she a Senior Lecturer in Photography at Coventry University. She has an MA from the Royal College of Art in photography, an MA in visual anthropology from Goldsmiths, and has been trained in oral histories by the British Library. She regularly writes about photography for *Photomonitor*, and New West-Midland Arts. She has delivered a number of national and international conference papers around her research, including in Nicosia, Cyprus and Lisbon, Portugal. Her work was exhibited in the

Family of No-Man, Arles Photography Festival (2018), JAIPUR photo (2017), and Doh Mix Me Up (2014), as part of Leverhulme Arts event with Oxford University. Further infor can be found on www.carolinemolloy.media.

Ana Peraica is the author of *Fotografija kao Dokaz* (Multimedijalni institut, Zagreb, 2018), *Culture of the Selfie* (Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, 2017) and *Sub/versions* (Revolver, Berlin, 2009). She is also the editor of *Smuggling Anthologies* (MMSU, Rijeka, 2015), *Victims Symptom* (Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, 2009), and Žena na raskrižju ideologija (HULU, Split, 2007). Her chapters are on anthologies published by Afterall/MIT Press, Loecker Verlaag, Samarah Institute of Cultural Studies and others. She is the author of entries in encyclopaedia editions published by Sage. Her articles were published by scholarly journals like Leonardo, Afterimage, as well as magazines such as Springerin, Flash Art, Fotografija and many others. She is currently working on the book *Postdigital Arcadia* and coedits *Intelligent Agent Reader* with Patrick Lichty. She teaches at MA Media Art Histories program at the University of Danube in Krems, as well as at the MA Media Art Cultures (ERASMUS MUNDUS) program at the University of Danube, Aalborg, Poznan and Singapore. Peraica lives and works in Diocletian's palace, in Split (Croatia), where she runs a family photo shop Atelier Perajica and actively engages in the preservation of life inside this inhabited Roman monument on the WH list.

Emina Djukić (1982) is a visual artist and pedagogue. She completed her master's degree in photography at the VŠVU in Bratislava, and currently she is a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, photography department. From 2005 to 2010 she collaborated with the Medvode Youth Cultural Center, where she was also a program director for some time. For several years as a mentor she participated in the Celje Fokus summer workshop and was her artistic director in 2013. Since 2015 she

has been a member of the editorial board of *Fotografija* magazine. She is researching the media of photography for a long time; Currently she is mainly concerned with the narrative possibilities of photography and its relation to the past.

Janaki Somaiya is writing her Ph.D. thesis in Sociology at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her research focuses on an analysis of images shared by users on social media utilizing a psychoanalytic-semiotic method. It intends to situate the phenomenon of social media within an account of late capitalism and its ideological delineations. Her previous research was centred on *Decolonizing Sociology and Sociological Practices in India Using a Foucauldian Theoretical Lens*. She is also an activist and has been involved in building a growing extra-parliamentary Left movement in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Her praxis often extends to the classroom where she teaches Sociology to undergraduate students at the University of Auckland. Her research interests include Critical Pedagogy, Marxist Critical theory, Lacanian psychoanalysis, Althusser and ideology critique, semiotics, visual culture analysis and Social media studies.

Helena Vogelsang Novak (1962) graduated from the Faculty of Education at the University of Maribor, Department of History in 1984. Following her studies, she gained pedagogical experience by working with different target groups for several years. Since 1998, she has been employed at the Celje Museum of Recent History, where she works as senior museum educator. In 1999, she passed a professional examination for a museum worker at the Ministry of Culture (Directorate for Cultural Heritage). For many years now, she has been dedicated to reviving the only glass photo studio in Slovenia, which is a valuable example of our cultural heritage and the rich photographic legacy of the master photographer Josip Pelikan.

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