

Böhm/Kobayashi Publishing Project und Künstlerverein Malkasten (Hg.)
THE ANT!FOTO MANIFESTO
Düsseldorf 2013
S. 2–5

Katja Stuke & Oliver Sieber

***A Manifesto?**
Are you serious?

Yes. Kind of. As serious as we have been when founding the »Böhm/Kobayashi University« by inviting artists to talk about their work, their views and opinions on photography (not to mention including »Credit Points« for the audience); as serious as we have been when organizing »The Böhm Megastore«, a small space with exhibitions, concerts, performances in an empty store; as serious as we have been calling our cooperative exhibition at the »Museum für Photographie« in Braunschweig »Our House« and taking over the museum; as serious as we have been founding the »Böhm/Kobayashi Publishing House«, publishing the »Böhm/Kobayashi encyclo-pedia« and calling an annual photography-exhibition ANT!FOTO (by the way: don't miss there is an »!« instead of an »i«). And, last but not least, as serious as we have been calling our photographic fanzine »Frau Böhm«.

You should be serious about your content but you can have all the freedom regarding the form.

We are serious about photography and the content of our own photographic work. And we are serious about discussing photography. But form should be something every artist should choose as his or her own way of communication – and it need not necessarily be with-out any humour, irony or pleasure.

So this year we decided not only to show another ANT!FOTO-exhibition but also use ANT!FOTO and the magazine to recap photography, to think about a new self-consciousness in photography and a different awareness in or about it – and to invite others whose work we appreciate, whose opinion we are interested in to contribute some statements, slogans, personal texts or academic views.

To come back to the question of a »Manifesto«: after at least 100 estimated manifestos in the last 165 years after Karl Marx's original version you can't believe that you seriously change somebody's mind with a list of demands and theses. I contend that not all of these manifestos have been super serious about their form and expecting people to follow their principles. But all of them originated in a discontent of a situation, an attitude against an routine and have mainly been just for the moment being. And – as a matter of fact – it is a wonderful approach with a lot of (also graphic) options ;-)

Not everybody shares our conclusions – even in this magazine. But even different opinions illustrate in a convincing way, how many topics can be discussed when you discuss photography. When talking about photos you can talk about almost everything: questions regarding society, personal experiences, social phenomena, dreams, facts & fiction, the past and the future (»Das Medium der Fotografie ist berechtigt, Denkanstöße zu geben (photography is entitled to give food for thought)« *F.C. Gundlach, Kunstverein Hamburg 1989).

We understand ANT!FOTO and especially this issue of the magazine as a beginning of a conversation about photography. There are so many different opinions – we collected some here, we don't agree but we appreciate all of them. Thanks to all of you who participated and shared his/her thoughts with us. And if you are not involved so far – feel free to join the conversation on <http://theantifotomanifesto.wordpress.com/> From now on it's not only open for images but for texts, too. Katja Stuke

**Photography
is
exploding
and
splintering
into
fragments
and pieces**

What started out as a single path became many roads became many streets became many freeways became many highways became the superhighway and that superhighway has led us to endless possibilities, unparalleled and relentlessly exponential, the photograph becoming simply the image and the image be-coming the language and the language is now the universal. What began as a device became a hundred devices became a thousand devices became a million machines became a billion machines became a giant machine. What started as the photograph has now emerged as our mirror, our reflection, our image, our projection, our rejection, our detection, our footprint, our dissection. What once was created now is re-created, to be used and then re-used, to be re-seen and re-discovered, to be re-interpreted, re-energized, re-made, re-contextualized and re-vitalized. We are entering the Re-mix Era. And if the clock is our marker then what of time? The past is folding on to the present and the old is becoming again the new and the new is becoming immediately the past, and our thirst for the future and for more images is unquenchable and it's happening every minute, every day, every hour, every second, quicker and quicker on the superhighway. And the superhighway is now what matters but is it driving us or are we driving it? It's too late to matter, jump in and hold on, it's happening, let's go.

Doug Rickard (*1968) is a photographer based in Sacramento. He is founder & publisher of www.americansuburbx.com and with his own work he brings a keen eye to Google street view and creating images that reference documentary photography of the past.

»It's funny that photography and memory are always linked because one is so precise and the other is constanly fuzzy.«

Todd Hido (born 1968, Kent, Ohio) is an American contemporary artist and photographer. Currently based in San Francisco, much of Hido's work involves urban and suburban housing across the U.S., of which the artist produces large, highly detailed and luminous color photographs. (**Wikipedia)

[Abb. Please do not stop taking pictures]

Joachim Schmid (*1955) is a Berlin based artist who has worked with found photography since the early 1980s. He studied Visual Communication at the UAS, Schwäbisch Gmünd and Berlin University of the Arts. He is co-founder of the »ABC-Artists' Book Cooperation« and participated in »Antifoto #1« in 2010.

**»There we are, in
the second decade
of the 21st
Century, having
an internet filled
with photography
at our disposal,
and are we happy?
No, we're not.**

There's too much photography, or there's too little of the proper, correct kind. People don't know the quality of a good print any longer, while at the same time their insistence to work with digital images irritates us. Now we all have to be editors, while previously someone else would do that work for us. In short, it's just all so disappointing that the internet is presenting us with the photography that we have, not the photography we want.

Let's be slightly more precise: The internet presents us with the photography that those people who have access to it and who bother to upload images want us to see. The people who don't have access to the internet are as invisible as ever. The internet thus is not strictly a fair representation of photography (whatever that might really be). But it's closer than anything we've ever had.

So you might be wondering
what all that whining is about.

Also, while there is a lot of photography on the internet, a large part of it is actually invisible because it is inaccessible. A photograph nobody links to is invisible. It cannot be seen. A photograph in someone's private Facebook gallery is invisible, by construction and with determined intent, to all those who are not 'friends' – aka millions of people.

As a library of images, the internet is closer to being a very odd private club that has millions of separate rooms, access to the majority of which is only granted to the select few. And that one shared space, that's like a huge bazaar, where images are thrown around: people act like in scenes from movies where someone throws money out of a window.

Except, of course, there is no money to be made online, especially not with photography (needless to say, that's a different topic). You'd imagine we'd spend our energy trying to fix those kinds of issues, or at least to work on understanding them a bit better. But no, we're complaining how there's too much... Bla bla bla. Photography is dead. Bla bla bla.

As a matter of fact, however, photography is doing just fine online. But we better adjust our attitude. We've started to look a bit silly, what with all the whining and complaining about the very world all of us have so happily created. Jörg Colberg

Jörg M. Colberg is a writer, photographer and educator. His Blog »Conscien-tious« (jmcolberg.com/weblog) is one of the most influential blogs dedicated to contemporary photography. He also publishes in photography and design magazines and photographers' monographs.

»PICS -
OTHERWISE
IT DIDN'T
HAPPEN.«*

*Quote: Someone's mocking post on facebook

Entgrenzung...

Das Feld der fotografischen Möglichkeiten und Ausdrucksformen hat sich mit den Möglichkeiten digitaler Technologien innerhalb von 20 Jahren extrem erweitert.

Produktion und Distribution fotografischer Bilder sind von diesen neuen Möglichkeiten gleichermaßen betroffen. Das Medium Fotografie, dass in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren eben erst als künstlerische Ausdrucksform allgemein anerkannt wurde und damit einer spezifischen kulturellen Versprachlichung offen stand, entzog sich schlagartig mit einer neu entstanden Bandbreite an Erscheinungsformen einem eng geführten akademischen Zugriff.

Während der Welterfolg einer instantan klassisch gewordenen Kunstfotografie, nicht zuletzt deutscher Provenienz, mit ihren großen Formaten, als Komplementär zu den großen Formaten der Kunstmalerei der 1980er Jahre, den Blick auf die Krise der Bildenden Kunst nach dem ökonomischen Crash des Marktes 1990 verstellte, lösten Internet, digitale Bildbearbeitung und Drucktechniken, das eben erst scheinbar konsolidierte Feld des Fotografischen auf. Begleitet von einer neuen Magazin- und Buchkultur sind die Grenzen so verschwommen, die Kontakte und der Austausch so weit über Länder und Kulturen greifend, dass der Kunstdiskurs diese Phänomene einer technischen und kommunikativen Beschleunigung der Bilder kaum erfassen konnte.

Während nach dem Ende des Kunstfotobooms vor 10 Jahren eine Generation junger Künstler, die mit den Mitteln der Fotografie arbeiten, vom Markt und den Institutionen weitgehend allein gelassen wurden, ist damit die fotografische Bildkultur noch nicht am Ende, sondern dehnt sich in andere Regionen weiter aus. Während eine konstitutive Orientierungslosigkeit Teil dieses Prozesses ist, entzieht sich im Bilderrauschen des Internets das fotografische Bild dem Markt und verändert das Verständnis von Autorschaft und Eigentumsrechten. Aus dieser Krise entspringt ein Wert, wo sie die Reduktion des Kunstwerks zur Ware auf dem zeitgenössischen Kunstmarkt konterkariert.

Die Reflektion über die neuen Formen des (fotografischen) Bildes muss außerhalb und mit anderen Strukturen und Protagonisten als im Kunst- und Museumsmarkt erfolgen.

Eine neue Fotobiennale?

Für diese Auseinandersetzung müsste sich ein neues Forum bilden, in dem sich die Vielfalt der Personen und der Materialien widerspiegelt: und warum nicht im Rheinland? und warum nicht in Düsseldorf: eine neue Bilderschau für 2014!

Thomas W. Kuhn (*1969) studied Art History, Media Studies and Modern Japan in Düsseldorf and works now as a writer for magazines and newspapers and lecturer. From 2006 – 2011 he curated several exhibition projects in Düsseldorf under the title »NONcon temporary«. He now lives in Berlin.

»Die Praxis, die noch bis vor ein paar Jahren ganz allgemein als Fotografie bezeichnet werden konnte, entsteht heute ganz überwiegend komplett digital. Es wurde aber kein neuer Begriff dafür gefunden.«

Quote: Adrian Sauer in »Antifoto 2011, Seite 6, Düsseldorf Böhm/Kobayashi 2011«.

PHOTOGRAPHY CHANGES:
HOW WE HAVE SEX
WHAT WE THINK ABOUT OURSELVES
WHERE AND WHAT WE EAT
WHAT WE FEAR
WHO WE ELECT
WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HOW
 THE BRAIN FUNCTIONS
HOW MONEY IS MADE
WHAT BEAUTY IS
WHO WATCHES OVER US
WHO WE FEEL SORRY FOR
WHETHER OR NOT WE GET ON THE PLANE
WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT NEIGHBORS
WHAT PRIVACY MEANS
WHAT POWER LOOKS LIKE
HOW ACTIVISM WORKS
WHAT'S LEFT TO BE EMBARRASSED ABOUT
WHO GETS CHASED
WHAT IS RIDICULED
HOW WE COMMUNICATE
WHAT WE BUY
WHAT TRUTH SEEMS TO BE
WHAT WE CAN CLAIM TO BE IGNORANT OF
 OR INDIFFERENT ABOUT
AND WHAT ART LOOKS LIKE, TOO.

Marvin Heiferman, a curator and writer, has created projects about photography and visual culture for i.a. The MoMA, The ICP, The Whitney Museum, P.S.1 the New Museum or the Smithsonian. As contributing editor to »Art in America«, he has written extensively for museum publications, catalogs, and magazines. His recent book »Photography Changes Everything« was published in 2012.

**I AM
A
DINOSAUR.**

I still value a photograph which I can look at for years and it still excites the eye and, subsequently the mind, as if seeing it for the first time.

Although I may be able to see your ideas at work – if the conduit to your idea, the image, isn't interesting or compelling – I no longer give a fuck about your idea.

Consider embracing the fullest extent of conceptualism and save us the half-assed illustration.

I do not think that involvement with this medium means one has to try to produce something ‚new.‘

A large collection of mediocre photographs drawn together usually does not suddenly make them interesting.

Photography is about a three-way collaboration between a person, the medium and the world. The person is the weak link.

Galleries are stores.

Attention and expectations make producing work more difficult.

There are too many books.

There are not enough books which I feel compelled to pull off the shelf twice.

A photographer should publish their first book in an edition of three copies. Keep one for themselves, give the second to their closest friend, and the third to their mother. If the book needed to be known on a greater scale, you can always do a second print run.

A photographer should publish 5000 copies of their first book and have a large and dedicated Facebook following.

The ego is always at the wheel and we are willing to sacrifice our talents to sooth it.

I want all photographs to be so fascinating that I waste my life, sacrifice my own photography, and neglect my relationships because I need to spend more time with them above anything else.

Have I mentioned that all this is subjective?

Jeffrey Ladd (*1968) is an american photographer, writer, editor and founder of Errata Editions (which had been part of Antifoto #1 in 2010) living in Cologne. He contributes regularly to the TIME Lightbox. In 2013 he will organize the Photo Book Salon in Düsseldorf.

**Photography is
a creative force
and a mutable,
constellated
notion.
It is a prompt for
action, a vehicle
for ideas,
a tool of
communication
as-well-as a
material form.**

I love photography because of this pluralism and the inherent impossibility of fixing it into a conventional hierarchy of cultural value. I feel really lucky that it is this (unruly) discipline of visual culture that has shaped me.

In the mid 2000s, I wrote a book about the confident and vibrant scope of contemporary art photography since 2000. The publisher chose its title – The Photograph as Contemporary Art – and I initially really disliked the intonation of their choice. It suggested that photography was not definitely contemporary art. The ‘as’ in the title seemed subtly non-committal, still a pro-posal for how we might consider photo-graphy as an art form rather than a statement of fact.

But I have come to appreciate the significance of the title’s inference more and more as this century progresses, since the meaning of photography can be proposed as in relation to a whole host of militating factors. Contemporary art will perhaps not be the central pivot in our experiences and assessments of photography in the forth-coming years and more a solid foundation on which new ideas will can stand.

I’m excited about the prospect of photography becoming a more imaginative notion, one that thinkers and makers of all kinds can gravitate towards. Photography’s new innovators will come from many different perspectives to meaningfully and honestly propose where the value of photography in this

fast-evolving ecosystem of image-making can be found.

Charlotte Cotton is a curator and writer. She was i.a. curator of photography at London's Victoria and Albert Museum, head of the Photography Department at the LACMA and wrote various books on photography e.g. »The Photograph as Contemporary Art« (Thames & Hudson) and »Words without Pictures« (Aperture).

»Photographs are largely not about what's in the frame anymore, but what's outside the frame, the space between images...«

Jason Lazarus (*1975) is a Chicago based artist, curator, writer and educator who received his MFA in Photography from Columbia College Chicago in 2003. His work has been exhibited internationally and is in major collections including the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Art Institute of Chicago among others. His series »Nirvana« was part of »Antifoto #1« in 2010.

[beim folgenden Text handelt es sich um eine überarbeitete Version des Originaldokuments]

A Strong Relationship to Photography

I have never met my father and the only photograph I have ever seen of him is of his legs. They are part of a neatly composed scene; my mother, in her late-teens and wearing her Sunday best floral dress, holding a baby (who I believe to be my eldest brother); a picnic rug covered with some bad-looking food and a pushchair in the background. This is all set against a magnificent Scottish countryside backdrop. It is a small black and white image made on thin paper, but the tones are rich and deep. The print is glazed and the shiny surface has cracks spreading like cobwebs across its entirety. The edges are frayed and it has the smell of damp lingering on it. If you turn it to one side you can see the silver of the photographic process on the surface and it flits between positive and negative as it is tilted. The image has slightly browned through age, more in the mid tones than the blacks or the whites. My father's legs are thin in Sta-Press trousers and he is wearing Chelsea boots, which are scuffed and worn at the heels. His legs come into the frame from the left and are cropped mid-thigh. It is an image made in the swinging 60's, but stuck in the stayed social constraints on the 50's – you can feel the repression and yearning for change embedded in it. It is the kind of picture that any family album will hold, really nothing special to look at or valuable to anyone without a personal investment in it.

I do not like the photograph at all, but it holds elements of the great and mysterious potential of

photography within it. Photographs can make you feel like you know something or somebody; they can form a starting point for your imagination to work its magic. From this thin, cracked and smelly piece of paper I feel like I have experienced a person, in this case my father, and this may well be a far more fulfilling experience than meeting him in the flesh. I can genuinely enjoy this as a fiction - it is as compelling and real as any lived experience. It's what photography has always been good at and, though the context of the medium alters continually, this I hope will never change.

Gordon MacDonald is co-Director of GOST Books and was founding Editor of Photoworks magazine and Head of Publications at Photoworks. He is co-founder of the Brighton Photo Fringe and one half of the collaborative partnership MacDonaldStrand with Clare Strand.