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Alena Alexandrova

Kenniskring / Knowledge Network: Alena Alexandrova

Alena Alexandrova is a cultural theorist and an independent curator based in Amsterdam. She teaches theory and does thesis supervision at the Fine Arts and Photography departments, Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam. She holds a PhD from the University of Amsterdam. Currently she is writing a book *Anarchic Infrastructures: Re-Casting the Archive, Displacing Chronologies*. She is the author of *Breaking Resemblance* (Fordham University Press, 2017) and has published internationally in the fields of aesthetics, performance and visual studies, and regularly contributes to art publications and catalogues. She has curated *exhibitions around the conceptual figure of anarchoeology*. Previously she taught at the Master of Fine Arts, Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design, University of Bergen, Norway and the Dutch Art Institute, Arnhem. She was a visiting researcher at the Humanities Center, Johns Hopkins University, Atelier Holsboer, Cité des Arts, Paris, and a guest lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts in Nuremberg.

After Images: Negotiating Public Visibilities

Photography and film are media with a manifold relationship to memory. They are at the heart of the definitions of concepts as document and evidence, regimes of visual attributions of truth, and the ever-growing visual archive of culture. Photography is an artistic medium in its own right with a complex history, but it has always been intimately related to art history as the medium for the reproductions of artworks, and as implicitly shaping the approaches and questions asked by art historians. It is also the medium of documentation of presentation of contemporary artworks and in many cases determines their public visibility. Digital photography redefines the visibility, the materiality and the destiny of photographic images and archives, and triggers constant negotiation of collective experience of images. What we now call archive is an object of continuous fluctuation and redefinition. Images at the present moment are increasingly defined and experienced as liquid, networked and allegedly immaterial. Also, they are public in a specific sense, in the space of the screen where public is not collective and private is almost an obsolete concept.

Alexandrova: “I look at a number of art practises that address the space of the archive as a scene, and give new visibility to archive material. They represent variety of different approaches to animating existing images, with an attention to details that usually remain outside the archive’s infrastructure or taxonomy. I am specifically interested in works, which focus on image collections that are displaced or discarded, but maintain a particular image weight associated with the amnesic aspect of photography. The artists I am discussing create artworks *withand on* the surfaces of existing images and with the media of their original production. Photographic images and film the become *objects*, or a second-level surface characterised by opacity and materiality and contemplate the determination memory processes by media and their material histories. Such artistic approaches don’t fall into the category of archival art in the sense that they don’t attempt to fix the omissions of history. They address the question of the temporal complexity of images related to obsolescence of media, and significantly history as both cumulative and entropic process, and importantly take into account erasures, missing pieces, failures and gaps, in order to contemplate the possible futures of archives.”

This research is related to a publication in development, titled: [*Anarchic Infrastructures: Re-Casting the Archive, Displacing Chronologies*](#). The outcome(s) of Alexandrova’s research will be presented in a book, lecture and symposium.

www.alenaalexandrova.com

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