

# Photography and Participation

Museum approaches towards  
collecting and educating  
in the digital age

Online Conference  
January 25, 2022

## Program

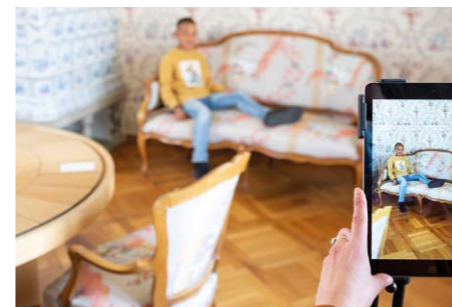
- 09.45 Admission (Zoom)
  - 10.00 – 10.15 Welcome and Introduction
  - 10.15 – 10.25 Speed Dating
  - 10.25 – 10.50 Presentation: Photography connects  
Elze van der Steen, Foam Museum of  
Photography Amsterdam
  - 10.50 – 11.00 Q&A
  - 11.00 – 11.10 Break
  - 11.10 – 11.30 Presentation: From Print to Pixel  
Jovana Hitz & Janis Huber, Foto-  
museum Wintherthur
  - 11.30 – 11.40 Q&A
  - 11.45 – 12.15 Meet-up
  - Lunch**
  - 13.15 – 13.20 Welcome back
  - 13.20 – 13.30 Speed Dating
  - 13.30 – 13.50 Presentation: Shared Mountains  
Barbara Keller, Swiss Alpine Museum,  
Berne
  - 13.50 – 14.00 Q&A
  - 14.00 – 14.10 Break
  - 14.10 – 14.35 Presentation: Co-Collecting Social  
Digital Photography  
Anni Wallenius, Finnish Museum of  
Photography Helsinki
  - 14.35 – 14.45 Q&A
  - 14.50 – 15.20 Meet-up
  - 15.20 – 15.30 Break
  - 15.30 – 15.45 Summary
- Afterwards: online farewell aperitif

## Imprint

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Stadtmuseum Aarau: visitors in action in and outside the museum



## Topic

The Internet, social media, and smartphones have drastically changed the manner in which we deal with photography as well as expanding its spectrum. Consequently, museums have also begun to focus more on everyday photography of the broad population that, today more than ever, creates its own pictorial worlds. Reactions, for instance, involve dialogue-based communication formats allowing young people and adults to serve as informants of photography today. The speakers invited are representatives of museums that do not consider communication and education additional offers but core tasks, thereby exploring the potential of photography to include the population in an exemplary manner.

Participation-oriented access to collecting, which the second part of the conference will be dedicated to, is even less institutionalized. The projects presented here deal with pictures commented on social media platforms, shared via instant messaging, or simply stored on private phones. Museums wishing to preserve this cultural heritage for future generations must address several new content-related, technical and legal-ethical questions. The speakers will share insight into opportunities and challenges of their collaborative collecting projects that could be helpful to other museums to further their own practices.

In addition to the presentations, the conference will create spaces inviting all participants to share their experiences.

## Background information on the organizer

With the building extension and reopening in 2015, the City Museum Aarau also ensured an important repositioning: With participation as a central leitmotiv, the leading media of the 20th century, photography and film, became priority themes of the newly designed museum. Part of this focus is expressed in the cooperation with the state archives of Aargau in Switzerland to convey audiovisual everyday culture. A core component of this cooperation is the collection of approx. seven million analog press photos forming the «Fokus Ringier Bildarchiv».



### Photography connects

## Dialogue, creativity and empowerment: ten years of bringing people together

**Elze van der Steen** Head of Education, Foam Museum of Photography Amsterdam (NL)

With its various programs in and outside of its walls, Photography Museum Foam in Amsterdam aims to be relevant within the developments in photography and in society. Sometimes photography itself is the tool to achieve a larger goal. For example, in community projects that connect different groups or generations within society. Photography can play a key role in stimulating interactions between groups that would otherwise never meet. Elze van der Steen explains in a practical way how, why and with which kinds of partners Foam has developed this approach in recent years. What is the value and what lessons have been learned? And where are the challenges during the pandemic and in the future? The talk provides special insight into the project «Look Twice», an intergenerational education program in which students are introduced to elder care through photography.

**Elze van der Steen** has been serving as the Head of Education at Photography Museum Foam in Amsterdam since January 2019. She graduated from the Maastricht Academy of Dramatic Arts and studied Foundations of Management at Nyenrode Business University. She has worked in several theaters as an educator. From 2008 to 2018 she developed and managed the education department of the International Theater Amsterdam.

### From Print to Pixel

## Dialogues for visual and media literacy

**Jovana Hitz** Art Educator «From Print to Pixel» and **Janis Huber** Project Management «From Print to Pixel» Fotomuseum Winterthur (CH)

Images are an ever-present feature of our lives – on Instagram alone, over a hundred million visual posts are shared every day. But in the process of these networked images being produced, disseminated and viewed, what traces are left behind? How does this influence our perception, values and behaviour? And what effect does it have on our self-image? Fotomuseum Winterthur's (mobile) educational project «From Print to Pixel» discusses such questions and is designed to foster competence in dealing with images and media. In a context framed by digital media and new advances in technology, the project opens the door to current developments in photography. Within the framework of various educational formats, such developments are discussed with young people, adults and experts with regard to their effects on society. The contribution to the conference shares particularly concrete project experiences after go workshops with over 1,500 young people.

**Jovana Hitz** studied Art History (Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade) as well as Visual Communication and Culture (Academy of Art and Design Basel). Her work is dedicated towards researching and disseminating visual pop cultures, digital media and LGBTIQ+ topics. Currently, she is acting as a cultural mediator for the «From Print to Pixel» project, pursuing a creative and inclusive outreach practice.

**Janis Huber** studied Cultural Analysis, Film and Literature (Zurich University). In addition to his current function as the Project Manager of the outreach format «From Print to Pixel» (Fotomuseum Winterthur), he pursues transdisciplinary, collaborative, curatorial and project-based activities in (Media) Art and (Social) Culture, thereby focusing on cinematic and photographic images.



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### Shared Mountains

## How mobile phone photos found their way into the museum

**Barbara Keller** Curator, Swiss Alpine Museum, Berne (CH)

The exhibition «Schöne Berge. Eine Ansichtssache» («Beautiful Mountains. A Point of View») invited visitors to share a picture of their preferred peak, pinnacle or crest. The interactive station in Switzerland's Alpine Museum concluded the thematic exhibition on the beauty of the mountains, showcasing 120 paintings of the mountains from the collection. The result was overwhelming: approx. 16,000 photos built the thematic bridge to the present, exhibiting daring, humorous, kitschy, and personal views of the mountains. The contribution to the conference speaks of the obstacles towards realization, the possibilities for presentation, the potential for communication and the challenges of everyday photography for the collection.

**Barbara Keller** studied Geography and Social Anthropology at the Universities of Berne and Stockholm as well as «Education, Curatorial Studies» at Zurich's University of the Arts. From 2008 to 2011, she learnt the craft of exhibition staging as a research associate at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich. Since 2011, she has been working as an exhibition curator at the Swiss Alpine Museum in Berne, serving as the museum's Deputy Director since 2016.

### Co-Collecting Social Digital Photography

## Work practices for collecting a new kind of vernacular photography in heritage institutions

**Anni Wallenius** Chief Curator Collections, Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki (FIN)

How can museums and archives find sustainable ways to work with photography collections in the age of social media? How should the roles, motivations and methods in documentation practices change to better accommodate the networked, fluid, ephemeral and communicative social digital photograph? These questions were addressed by the Nordic project, «Collecting Social Photo» (CoSoPho, 2017–2021) through eleven case studies, where social media photography was documented and collected in collaboration with the producers of the images. This talk will focus on the practical methods of these case studies and offer insights on how and why museums can and should take up collecting social digital photography.

**Anni Wallenius** has a background in art history and museology. Her interest in photography ranges from photographic art to vernacular photography, old and new. Through the Nordic CoSoPho project Anni has explored the challenges and possibilities social digital photography brings for a national museum of photography and also for other museums and archives.



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