

Bio's and Abstracts

Annebella Pollen

Title and Abstract.

When is a cliché not a cliché? Reconsidering mass-produced sunsets

Of all photographic clichés, none is more prevalent than the sunset. Despite sunsets themselves being unique, natural and frequently spectacular phenomena, *photographs* of sunsets have come to represent the most predictable, culturally devalued and banal of amateur image-making practices. As a means of exploring aesthetic hierarchies, this paper examines ambitious sunsets: those entered into photographic competition and judged in the pages of the aspirational photo press. In these contexts, in order to rehabilitate what is most commonly associated with uneducated aesthetic appreciation and practice, an image of a sunset must distinguish itself if it is to achieve the most nebulous and contested of standards: that of the 'good' photograph.

Annebella Pollen is a lecturer in the History of Art and Design at the University of Brighton with particular research interests in amateur photography, Mass Observation and popular culture. Her writings on these topics have appeared in various journals and edited collections including *Photography and Culture*, *New Formations* and *The Photobook from Talbot to Ruscha and Beyond*, and are forthcoming in *History Workshop Journal*, *History and Memory* and *The Blackwell Companion to Photography*.

Ben Burbridge

Title and Abstract.

I Wanna Be Adored: Exhibitionism in Contemporary Art Photography

This paper examines examples of recent art photography marked by a public display of intimate autobiographical moments, in relation to a wider culture of exhibitionism. Focusing on the work of Nan Goldin, it considers ways in which image practices generated through Web 2.0 potentially threaten the privileged cultural status previously bestowed upon this 'camera as diary' art strain.

Dr. Ben Burbridge is Lecturer in Art History at the University of Sussex, where he teaches the history and theory of photography and post-war American and European Art. His research focuses on relationships between photography's artistic and instrumental applications, and how the medium is implicated in wider social, cultural and political transformations. He is the co-curator of the 2012 Brighton Photo Biennial, *Agents of Change: Photography and the Politics of Space* and *Revelations*: a forthcoming exhibition examining the legacies of early scientific photography, opening at the Science Museum in Spring 2013. Burbridge is co-editor of *Photoworks* magazine and the co-founder of Ph.

Sarah James

Title & Abstract:

Ghosts in the Machine: Cartier-Bresson's Corporate Humanism

This paper will consider Henri Cartier-Bresson's peculiar and much neglected photo-essay and touring photo-exhibition *Man and Machine*, commissioned by IBM in 1967. In it Cartier-Bresson's brand of humanist photojournalism was put to work to sell computers, particularly in the under-developed Third World.

Contextualising *Man and Machine* in relation to decolonisation, neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism, as well as the cultural turn and the New Left, the paper will ask whether we can take Cartier-Bresson's humanism seriously.

Sarah James teaches in the History of Art Department at UCL. Her current research interests include pre and postwar German photo-essays and documentary practices. Her new book *Common Ground: German Photographic Cultures Across the Iron Curtain* will be published by Yale University Press in Spring 2013. Her next book project *Paper Revolutions* will explore the unofficial art world of East Germany. She has published numerous articles (*Grey Room*, *Oxford Art Journal*, *Art History*, *Photographies*), chapters and catalogue essays on photography and contemporary art. She also writes as a critic, contributing regularly to the magazines *Frieze* and *Photoworks*.

Liam Devlin

Title and Abstract:

Occupy the Image: Photography and discursive documents.

The popular protest of the now global Occupy movements, are seeking to recreate open, egalitarian spaces to practice a more accessible democratic debate. Can an assumed equality of intelligence, applied across all the various forms of photography provide a more productive framework to consider how images are used and reused? What is called for is a formulation of a photographic discourse that uses the documentary nature of photographic images: that seeks to set these images up as residue (whether physical or virtual) of the relationships between people. This new discourse frames the photograph as a vehicle for debate, as a discursive document.

Liam Devlin is a writer and visiting lecturer at Goldsmiths University of London and within the University of Wales, Newport. His research explores the use of documentary imagery in relation to art practices that explicitly operate in social and political realms and is interested in how antagonistic socially engaged art practices are a vital force in democratic society. He is currently completing a PhD at the University of Wales Newport, entitled *Creating Kurdistan: The role of photography as discursive documents*. The thesis uses Susan Meiselas' ongoing project on Kurdistan as a case study to frame the discussion between politics, aesthetics and the documentary image.