

Document – Time – Memory: in art, film and photography

Tate Liverpool

Friday 17th March 2006

10:30am – 5:00pm

This one day conference considers ways in which documentary material has been used in art, photography and film. Documentary, as well as art practices, can often become involved in the construction of one set of images, which can be at the expense or the erasure of another set of competing representations. The tensions over questions of authenticity, truth, and history all come into play as material is turned into art work. Papers will explore the influences and creative potential of documentary, as well as assessing the tensions, controversies and complications involved in dealing with the shifting boundaries between fact and fiction.

This event complements the Tate Liverpool exhibition ***Making History: Art and Documentary in Britain from 1929 to Now***, which runs 3 February – 23 April.

The conference is a collaboration between Tate Liverpool and the *Location, Memory and the Visual Research Group*, MIRIAD, Manchester Metropolitan University

Chair: Steven Gartside, MIRIAD, Manchester Metropolitan University

10.30 – 11.00 Registration

11.00 – 12.30 **Nigel Warburton – What is Documentary Photography?**
David Company – The Art of the Document

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 15.00 **Ben Highmore - Walls Without Museums: Anonymous History
Collective Authorship, and the Document in Twentieth Century
British Art**
William Raban - Film documents of London's East End 1978-2002

15.00 – 15.30 Coffee Break

15.30 – 17.00 **Margaret Harrison – Context, Content and Form**
Camilla Brown -

Speakers:

Nigel Warburton, Open University What is Documentary Photography?

Nigel Warburton will examine the question 'What is documentary photography?' with particular emphasis on the pictorialist tendencies in Bill Brandt's photography. Many of Brandt's most familiar documents turn out to be staged or manipulated. What are the implications for this in relation to his photographic art? Here the comparisons between Henry Moore's drawings and Brandt's photographs of tube shelterers in the Blitz provide an interesting contrast.

Nigel Warburton is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the Open University. He has written widely on the philosophy of photography, edited a book about Bill Brandt and written a biography of the architect Ernö Goldfinger. His other books include *The Art Question*, and *Philosophy: The Basics* (4th edition). He recently presented a Radio 4 Archive Hour programme on the editor of *Picture Post*, Stefan Lorant.

David Campany, University of Westminster The Art of the Document

Nearly all the shades of debate about photography in art have hinged on the medium's double status as artwork and document. The schism was there in Pictorialist photography, so-called straight modernist photography, the New Vision, Surrealism, art-photojournalism, Pop, Conceptualism, Postmodernism and it is here still. Campany's talk traces in interplay between the art of the document and the document within art.

David Campany is a writer, artist and Reader in Photography at the University of Westminster. He has written several essays for Tate shows including 'Cruel and Tender: the real in the twentieth century photograph'. He is the author of 'Art and Photography' (Phaidon Press 2003) and is currently working on a book about dialogues between photography and cinema.

Ben Highmore, UWE Bristol Walls Without Museums: Anonymous History, Collective Authorship, and the Document in Twentieth Century British Art

Starting off by looking at the exhibition *Parallel of Life and Art* (Nigel Henderson, Eduardo Paolozzi, Alison and Peter Smithson, 1953) this talk argues that 'documenting' (rather than 'documentary') practices provide a route through British art in the twentieth century. Such a practice relates back not just to the documenting practices of Mass-Observation in the 1930s, but also to the work of cultural analyst and architectural historian Siegfried Giedion working with ideas of 'anonymous history'. For Giedion the cultural unconscious of an epoch is to be found in its 'disdained everyday fields' - in the architecture of shops, factories, sheds; the very environment that gets ignored by traditional architectural historians (Giedion is writing in the 1920s). This tradition of anonymous history and collective authorship (or rather authorship by the collective) continues into the present.

Ben Highmore is Reader in Cultural Studies at the University of the West of England, Bristol. He is the author of *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory* (Routledge, 2002) and *Cityscapes: Cultural Readings in the Material and Symbolic City* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). He is the editor of *The Everyday Life Reader* (Routledge, 2002) and his book on Michel de Certeau, *Michel de Certeau: Analysing Culture*, will appear in May 2006 with Continuum.

William Raban, artist filmmaker

Film documents of London's East End 1978-2002

William Raban will show clips from the following east London films to clarify the development of his ideas, principles and working methods:

AUTUMN SCENES (1978)

THAMES FILM (1986)

SUNDIAL (1992)

A13 (1994)

ISLAND RACE (1996)

He will explore the idea of the film document and show how these works are linked by a shared reflexive approach to the film medium.

William Raban is an artist filmmaker and Reader in Film at London College of Communications at the University of the Arts London. He has been making films since 1970 that have been shown on television, at international film festivals including specialist documentary festivals such as Marseille and Leipzig. Recent retrospective programmes include Rotterdam International Film Festival (2001) Multi Media Centre, Zagreb (2002) Zimbabwe Film Festival (2003) Museum of Contemporary Art, Strasbourg, 2005. Other recent group exhibitions include: LIVE IN YOUR HEAD, Whitechapel Art Gallery 2000, SHOOT SHOOT SHOOT, opened at Tate Modern 2001 then touring internationally, A CENTURY OF ARTIST'S FILM IN BRITAIN, Tate Britain, 2003-4, X-SCREEN at the Museum of Modern Art, Vienna, 2004. The DVD British Artists' Films: William Raban was released by the British Film Institute, October 2004.

Margaret Harrison, artist, Manchester Metropolitan University

Context, Content, and Form

Walter Benjamin in his essay 'The Storyteller', lamented the fall in value of experience, attributing it to dependence on information as communication. Information he says, "doesn't survive the moment in which it was new." As an artist producing art work which deals with issues, Harrison will address strategies of production in relation to particular moments in time; she will focus on her own production and that of artists she worked alongside, looking at the context and moment out of which the work emerged. Through this personal history she will discuss the form that the work took and how it was influenced by the contexts of the moment both politically and against the debates of the time amongst artists, theorists and the grassroots politics of the time. She will take a look at the 70's (when *Women and Work* was produced) and recent projects in California.

Margaret Harrison is Senior Research Professor at Manchester Metropolitan University and Director of the Research Centre SEA (Social and Environmental Art). She is an artist with an international profile, her work on *Rape* (in the collection of the Arts Council of England) has since its first controversial showing at the Hayward Gallery in 1979, entered Art History and is now seen as a feminist classic. She lectures and shows her work internationally, most recently at *Intersection for the Arts*, San Francisco (*Beautiful Ugly Violence*) and *Taxis Palais*, Innsbruck (*Homeworkers*), Austria. Her work is in several important public collections including the Tate Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Kunsthaus Zurich, the Arts Council of England and the University of California.

Camilla Brown, Photographers' Gallery

The paper will begin by considering notions such as the social responsibility of the artist to their subject through the work of Nan Goldin; Corinne Day; Boris Mikhailov and Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin. The paper will then shift to questions of fiction and reality and the relationship between documentary photography and film in some recent contemporary practice seen in artists work like Nikki S Lee and Trish Morrissey. The paper will end with a discussion around context and the importance of that to reading a work, it will focus on Johan Grimonprez's seminal work D-I-A-L H-I-S-T-O-R-Y (currently on show at Tate Liverpool), produced before 9/11, but which was to take on new significance and meaning after that event.

Camilla Brown is Senior Curator at The Photographers' Gallery where she has worked for the past six years, before which she was Exhibitions Curator at Tate Liverpool. She writes regularly for specialist magazines on contemporary photography and on artists work. Most recently she contributed an essay to the recent IRIS publication *Stilled - Contemporary Still Life Photography by Women 2006*.