



Call for Papers //

Symposium on the occasion of 11. Darmstadt Photography Days

Bizarre Escapes — Humour in Photography

Application deadline: 30 November, 2019

The symposium will be taking place on Saturday, 25 April, 2020

Darmstadt Photography Days was founded in 2004 by photographers and have since 2019 been organized by Kunstforum um TU Darmstadt. By now, the international festival has grown to be one the most important German events for photography. It focuses on relevant topics and facilitates an interdisciplinary discourse within the field of photography.

The next edition of the festival will be held in April 2020. Its time span has been extended to ten days, the successful concept with its focal point on international artists and institutions developed further. The symposium's renowned format is complemented by a Call For Papers and provides, in this way, especially an opportunity for young scientists to present and discuss the results of their research.

Annual topic 2020:

Bizarre Escapes — Humour in Photography

Humour and photography share more common aspects than is superficially apparent. Both of them probe the status quo, exaggerate events and process experiences from a specifically selected viewpoint. With pointed precision, photography employs odd perspectives in order to visualize, in concentrated moments or by means of unconventional staging, the world in which we live. Only through captivated contemplation can we gain new insights. Humour charmingly takes a look at the everyday, sketching its opposite with a slightly displaced gaze, playing with superficial associations – and causing things below the surface to flare up. Humour or satire in the image are able to visualize comical situations, surprising turns and unexpected contradictions.

The distanced or displaced mode of contemplation conveys new perspectives to us – and ideally, societal action can be derived from the unexpected findings. At all events, these findings make the gravity of life more bearable and query our attitudes, values and prejudices. We look for images and series that seriously and/or comically reveal to us new viewpoints and positions.

The annual topic is traditionally also discussed within the scope of a symposium.

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Call For Papers for the symposium

Humorous images have been part of photographic practice from its early beginnings on — animals in human postures, portraits of people making faces, bizarre stagings of well-known people in the artistic form of caricature. With social media and digital technologies of image processing, such kind of images are making inroads more than ever.

A tongue-in-cheek attitude of photographers is often a precondition in order for them to capture the crucial moment. Nevertheless have humorous photographs just rarely been the topic of scientific research until today. A serious examination of humor and irony within images is particularly necessary in times when satire has become a source for dispute.

The symposium circling around the annual topic wants to make an advance of examining the broad field of photographic humour. The organizers of 11. Darmstadt Photography Days would therefore like to invite art historians, scientists focused on the photographic images, sociologists and psychologists as well as everyone else who works within the field of humour research to discuss the functionality of humor within photography.

Interdisciplinary lectures on, among others, the following hypotheses are welcome:

- How does humour function within images: is there a general aesthetic strategy and way of representation?
- Can classical humour-theoretical positions in the field of psychology and philosophy be used in the examination of photographs as well?
- Black humour: are images depicting war, violence and terror allowed to also be humorous?
- Satirical images on the internet: by the use of which means are powerful personalities and rulers depicted satirically on social media? How do their images get manipulated and retouched? And what's the function of memes in this context?
- Bizarre depictions as social criticism: examples from the history of photography and art in consideration of aesthetics and history
- The absurdity of reality: aesthetical mechanisms within the field of documentary photography
- Who laughs about which kind of images: can one identify societal divisions on the basis of reactions to humorous images (e.g. on social media)?

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- Female vs. male humour: is there a genderspecific, aesthetic strategy discernible (e.g. within advertisement)?
- Face recognition: why and how are cameras programmed in order for them to detect laughing people?
- Funny algorithms: how can search engines detect humorous images and what are the underlying algorithms for this ?

Other proposals are welcome.

The Call For Papers is addressed to young scientists (graduates, post-graduates and researchers currently habilitating), to curators, scientists, photographer working within the fields of art and media studies as well as sociology, history, philosophy and other fields of research.

Application deadline: 30 November, 2019

Please submit your written proposal as an abstract (max. 3,000 characters, in German or English) together with a short CV as a Word file to symposium@dtfd.de

The abstract will later on serve as basis for the announcement of the lecture in 11. Darmstadt Photography's programme. The symposium's languages will be German and English. The length of a lecture should not exceed 30 minutes (additionally ca. 15 minutes of discussion following each lecture). The talks will be filmed and made public as part of a publication.

Darmstadt Photography Days will partially cover expenses for travel and accomodation (max. two nights, according to regulations of the federal state of Hessen regarding travel expenses). Expense allowance is intended. A preliminary talk with the speakers is planned.

The symposium will be taking place on the premises of the Technical University Darmstadt on Saturday, 25 April, 2020 from 10 am to 6pm. Following the symposium, there will be a get-together and dinner for all participants.

For further information, please contact Albrecht Haag & Stephanie Stadler at symposium@dtfd.de

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