Backdrop
4 Keeping a Story Alive • Interview with Lukas Birk • Lenart J. Kučič
14 Studio Portraiture as a Construct • Interview with Ana Peraica • Emina Djukić
18 Noémie Goudal
20 Daesung Lee • Urška Savič
22 Olja Triška Stefanovič
24 Photography Is the Only Art Form That We All Do • Interview with Martin Parr • Jasna Jernejšek
30 Backdrops • Conversation with Chris Pinney • Paolo S. H. Favéro

Backdrop
38 The Studio Photograph as a Conceptual Framework • Caroline Molloy
48 More Than a Portrait • Framing the Photograph as Sculpture and Video Animation • Karin Becker and Geska Helena Brečević
56 A Nostalgic Longing for the 20th Century • Past and Present Backdrops and Scenes in the Skylight Studio of Josip Pelikan • Helena Vogelsang
62 Travel Images, Capitalism and the Ideology of Enjoyment • Janaki Somaiya

67 Background • Hrair Sarkissian
72 Photo Studio • Ketaki Sheth
78 New Conversations around Old Photographs • BIND
84 Love Studio • Samsul Alam Helal

abstracts
contributors
Shall we start with defining what a backdrop is? And more specifically, is a backdrop a matter of representation?

Well, in a very simple sense backdrops (as part of the apparatus of studio practice) often demarcate space for representation: they set a kind of target for the subjects of the camera and for the camera itself. I have always liked early images in which the subjects were out of alignment with the backdrop – they are sometimes too tall or standing asymmetrically, so that the backdrop appears as a kind of faulty double frame within the image … in those cases the backdrop contributes to the inevitable contingency (in Walter Benjamin’s sense) of the image but mostly the backdrop is conscripted as part of attempts to control and minimize contingency. Its function is to overwrite everything that might otherwise unfold unpredictably behind the subject and, of course, it also imposes its own slice from a usually very restricted repertoire of possibilities. I just bought some new (hand-painted) backdrops from a photo supplier in Old Delhi. They were painted about ten years ago and have a small photographic reference image sealed inside their plastic wrappings and they are all different yet very similar, showing luxurious villas with well-ordered gardens in lush natural settings. I could not buy backdrops only of mountains, or the sea, or of high-rise cities – only ones that conjured this in-between space of a sort of peasant dream of success (the villas actually look like couple of the houses built by the richest villagers in that part of Madhya Pradesh I often visit).
reminds me of Pierre Bourdieu’s observation about the disjuncture between all the infinite variety of things that could theoretically be photographed and the astonishingly narrow range of things and idioms that do actually get photographed. Studio backdrops are part of that technology of exclusion.

Would you agree that backdrops in a way transgress the boundary between photography and theatre? In other words, we could say that they highlight the performative meaning of being photographed. I have experienced that intensely in my work on long exposure self-portraiture that I started up in the aftermath of my father’s death. Positioning myself in the photographs, with timer and long exposure, helped me to open up time, I transformed the act of being portrayed in an act of becoming, becoming a new person in a new life. My father’s actual house was there in the background, functioning as a backdrop, demarcating a kind of stage encouraging me to enact that transformation. What do you think?

Well yes, I think you are pointing to two features that exist in a kind of tension: the inter-medial or mixed-media nature of photographic practice and also (conversely) its medium specificity. The backdrops that get used in photo studios in South Asia are intimately connected to backdrops used in various local theatrical traditions from Parsi Theatre to religious folk theatre, and there are also of course lots of strong connections with cinema. The Old Delhi retailer who sold me those studio backdrops said (unprompted), that the only people still buying these backdrops (though there are very few who are), were small town and village studios, and also Ramleela troops, by which he meant touring theatrical groups that stage village performances of the Ramayana and Mahabharata. So, there is a fascinating ongoing entanglement between these subaltern performative practices. One could say something similar about cinema: the backdrop painters also produced film banners, and the performance that the sitter offers up to the camera with the ties and different kinds of hats. They all assist the staging of those idioms that do actually get photographed. Studio backdrops are part of that medium-specific to photography, which encourages what Karen Strassler calls the “as if” nature of photography, or what I would extend into the domain of the subjunctive or proleptic.

Kandinsky said that art does not only “echo” but also functions as “prophecy,” anticipating the future. Can backdrops have this function too?

Well, I think that is very perceptive. Photography has, or can have, this function. I once wrote a book called Coming of Photography in India which tried to apply issues current in the “history of the book” to photography, and the final chapter in that work was titled “Photography as Prophecy.” It is very striking how commentators such as Bourdieu (in his very significant study of 1960s French popular photography) present photography as a monument to everything that is past. In that book Bourdieu says several times that family photography serves as a “gravestone” by which I think he means a kind of empty monument to everything that has gone before. By contrast, when I was studying nineteenth-century Indian studio imagery I was struck by the mismatch between the social groupings that appeared in photographs and the social groupings that cultural history and anthropology would lead one to expect, in photos you predominantly found individuals and conjugal couples, whereas outside the studio the organizing units were collectivities such as castes (jatis), “brotherhoods” (bhiradars) etc. So, it did not make sense to conclude that society was organised in a particular way and this was then reflected in what the studio produced. Studios seemed to be transformative places where people could act out new forms of identity in advance of society. This helped me make sense of Barthes’ very observation in Camera Lucida that it was “odd” that no-one seems to have noticed the “disturbance” that photography causes in society or to have really grasped the extent of its “madness.” I was also encouraged by Jacques Attali’s argument (in a book called Noise) that music exists in “advance” of society, having a “quicker code.” Both these ideas suddenly seemed to illuminate photography.

What is there to learn about photographic theory by studying backdrops?

Well, I think two things. I would say that their performative invitation directs our attention to the mise-en-scène and the profilmic. And there is also the question of whether the backdrop
can be deployed in a different politics of space. I think the
first question leads us to what I think is the major theoretical
achievement ofCamera Lucida and which seems to have been
totally overlooked. This revolves around the distinction Barthes
makes between corpo and corpus. His argument is that we want (or
as he says “need”) photography to generate a corpus, but it cannot.
Because it is tied to the singular contingency of an event it can only
produce a “body”. Photographs can only ever be traces of singular
acts or performances (as Barthes says “only some bodies”) and yet
we want them to signify something more, something general or
generalizable. Barthes blinding insight (which my former SOAS
colleague Kit Davis helped me grasp) is that this is an impossible
demand: you simply cannot transcend or escape from the
singularity of each image.

For me this really illuminated, in a very major way, a phrase I had
heard many times in my work with central Indian studios. Studio
owners would often say that their clients wanted “to come out
better” and they explained the (perhaps surprising) survival of
photo studios in an age of digital phone photography because the
studio, with its lights, backdrops, props and skilled technicians,
was able to offer the best outcome. But “coming out better” also
points to the autonomy of the photographic performance. I never
had the sense that anyone in central India thought, or said, “but
you are not really like that” (not as glamorous, not as beautiful
e.tc.) because they recognized intuitively that that was an aspect
of what Barthes would call the “corpus” which properly speaking
cannot be a question for photography since photographs can
only ever be documents of the profilic. The corpus, he says, can
only be established by “classification and verification” i.e. through
an extended and different kind of knowledge than a trace of a
photographic event can possibly provide.

This connects to the second aspect of the question because the
backdrop also serves to exclude a larger continuum and depth of
the real in which we might be tempted to find ways of establishing
the “corpus” (remember that, although Barthes says this is an impossible
quest, we nevertheless “need” it, we are endlessly searching after
it). This observation could perhaps also be linked to an argument
I made in a piece called “Notes From The Surface of The Image”
that contrasted two kinds of spatial practice within photography.
The first one is something a bit like Heidegger’s “World as Picture,”
or what Martin Jay termed “Cartesian perspectivalism” in which
objects are modeled three-dimensionally in space. There is what we
might think of as a “depth effect” that presents the world as what
Heidegger called a “standing reserve” – graspable and available for
exploitation. To me this is a good way of summing up what is often
meant by “colonial.” The other politics of space deploys backdrops to
shunt everything forward into the space of the beholder. Often (the
Malian studio photographer Seydou Keita is perhaps exemplary)
pattems on the subjects’ cloths fuse in the shallow space in front of
the backdrop to present a flattened space deprived of depth cues.

This was the duality I first started to think about a long time ago
in the context of popular religious chromolithography in India,
with the help of Michael Fried’s distinction between “absorptive”
and “theatrical” beholders. It seemed to me that early (colonially
inculcated) perspectival representations hoped for a secularizing
effect. The Indian “theatrical” rejection of this introjected the
beholder into a space of mutual presence with the depicted deities.
But I think there is a similar polarity in photography’s different
politics of space, in which backdrops often play a central role.

And how does digital practice change this?

Well, there is a lot that remains the same. Unless your brains are
hardwired to a computer, human perception remains analogue.
In that sense, it does not make any difference whether you are
looking at a paper image printed from a negative, or an image
on an electronic screen. But when the backdrop arrives, courtesy
of Photoshop, the photographic event becomes something very
different: an endless series of permeable events. There is a very
interesting supplier near CST railway station in Mumbai called
Krish Digital. It is run by Naresh Bhatia, who creates massive TIF
files backdrops for sale to Mofussil studios. He photographs his
son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren, locates them in utopian
bourgeois settings and then deletes their faces. Small town studios
buy these files on sets of DVDs and then insert their client’s faces
into the ready-made space. This is massively colonizing in a new
different kind of way: it disseminates a metropolitan aesthetic and radically
de-skills the local photo studio. We could think of it as a kind of
McBackdrop. It is in the context of these kind of developments that
it was so encouraging to find a Delhi supplier still finding customers
for his stock of hand painted cloth backdrops.

This connects to the second aspect of the question because the
backdrop also serves to exclude a larger continuum and depth of
the real in which we might be tempted to find ways of establishing
the “corpus” (remember that, although Barthes says this is an impossible
quest, we nevertheless “need” it, we are endlessly searching after
it). This observation could perhaps also be linked to an argument
I made in a piece called “Notes From The Surface of The Image”
that contrasted two kinds of spatial practice within photography.
The first one is something a bit like Heidegger’s “World as Picture,”
or what Martin Jay termed “Cartesian perspectivalism” in which
objects are modeled three-dimensionally in space. There is what we
might think of as a “depth effect” that presents the world as what
Heidegger called a “standing reserve” – graspable and available for
exploitation. To me this is a good way of summing up what is often
meant by “colonial.” The other politics of space deploys backdrops to
shunt everything forward into the space of the beholder. Often (the
Malian studio photographer Seydou Keita is perhaps exemplary)
pattems on the subjects’ cloths fuse in the shallow space in front of
the backdrop to present a flattened space deprived of depth cues.
One effect of this is to foreclose the world as “standing reserve” and
to enhance the embodied presence of the beholder. If the viewer
in the “colonial” images is invited to be effectively invisible and
incorporeal, the viewer of “surfacing” images has to confront their
own physical proximity to the image.

This was the duality I first started to think about a long time ago
in the context of popular religious chromolithography in India,
with the help of Michael Fried’s distinction between “absorptive”
and “theatrical” beholders. It seemed to me that early (colonially
inculcated) perspectival representations hoped for a secularizing
effect. The Indian “theatrical” rejection of this introjected the
beholder into a space of mutual presence with the depicted deities.
But I think there is a similar polarity in photography’s different
politics of space, in which backdrops often play a central role.

And how does digital practice change this?

Well, there is a lot that remains the same. Unless your brains are
hardwired to a computer, human perception remains analogue.
In that sense, it does not make any difference whether you are
looking at a paper image printed from a negative, or an image
on an electronic screen. But when the backdrop arrives, courtesy
of Photoshop, the photographic event becomes something very
different: an endless series of permeable events. There is a very
interesting supplier near CST railway station in Mumbai called
Krish Digital. It is run by Naresh Bhatia, who creates massive TIF
files backdrops for sale to Mofussil studios. He photographs his
son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren, locates them in utopian
bourgeois settings and then deletes their faces. Small town studios
buy these files on sets of DVDs and then insert their client’s faces
into the ready-made space. This is massively colonizing in a new
different kind of way: it disseminates a metropolitan aesthetic and radically
de-skills the local photo studio. We could think of it as a kind of
McBackdrop. It is in the context of these kind of developments that
it was so encouraging to find a Delhi supplier still finding customers
for his stock of hand painted cloth backdrops.
More Than a Portrait: Framing the Photograph as Sculpture and Video Animation

Ziška Šcorda

This essay traces the resurrection of the fotocultura, a three-dimensional photographic portrait popular in rural Mexico from the early 20th century, as interpreted in recent works by Performing Pictures, a contemporary Swedish artist duo. The early fotoculturas were an augmented form of portraiture, commissioned by family members who supplied photographs that artisans in Mexico City converted into framed sculptural portraits for display on family altars. We compare these traditional photographic objects with “new” digital forms of video animation on screen and in the public space that characterize Performing Pictures work, and explores how the fotoculturas inspired new incarnations of their series Men that Fall. At the intersection between the material aspects of a “traditional” vernacular art form and “new” media art, we identify a photographic aesthetic that shifts from seeing and perceiving to physical engagement, and discuss how the frame and its parergon augment the photographic gaze. The essay is accompanied by photos and videos stills from Performing Pictures’ film poem Dreaming the Memories of Now (2018), depicting their project with the fotoculturas.

Keywords: fotocultura, parergon, frame, vernacular photography, video art.

Keeping a Story Alive: Interview with Lukas Birk

Iza Pevce

The work of an Austrian artist Lukas Birk can be connected to the phenomena of documentary photography. If the critique of the classical documentary photography stresses the responsibility towards the photographed subject and the problem of the exteriorization for the western viewer, Birk’s work is often developed, displayed and distributed in the place where his projects are created. Therefore, the first audience of his projects are locals and are, in that way, maybe more closely connected to the project itself. He co-founded the Atrium Foto Artis program in China and founded a residency program SewonSpace in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The project Afghan Box Camera, which he developed with the ethnographer Sean Folley, focuses on the photographic praxis in Afghanistan, mainly on the type of a simple instant camera, which was traditionally used there but its use is now in decline. They investigated the origin, techniques and the many personal stories of the photographers using or having used this type of camera and also made instructional videos on how to build or use one. Attention to the overlooked photographic practices, history and contexts marks also his current project The Myanmar Photo Archive, a growing collection of Myanmar photographs that were created during and after the colonial period – the work of local photographers from that period has namely remained unknown until today.

Keywords: Myanmar photography, photographic backdrop, western aura, local history.

Backdrops: Conversation with Chris Pinney

Paolo S. H. Faverio

The conversation between the two researchers revolves around the central question of backdrop, its meaning, position inside the studio practices. It delves into the performative aspect of backdrop photography putting it in proximity with theatre and cinema, question its nature as a prop in the process of staging an image. The question seems to be how can photography as a general practice can be understood and its theoretical notions enriched through research into rich backdrop practices (in case of Pinney and Fevero mostly in India and surrounding region) and how can we explain those practices via the established theoretical canons. The conversation negotiates main notions of authors such as Michael Fried, John Tagg and Martin Jay, illuminates on usually neglected nuances of Roland Barthes Camera Lucida to finally elaborate the profilmic nature of backdrop photography and its representative role of the society in which it functions. What kind of politics of space does it represent, is it transformative or representative? What is the meaning of the notion of the profilmic nature of photography?

Keywords: backdrop photography, profilmic, profilmic nature of photography, politics of space, photographic event.

Photography is the Only Art Form That We All Do: Interview with Martin Parr

Jasna Jernejšek

Martin Parr (1952), who is considered to be one of the most iconic and influential photographers of his generation, managed to make his breakthrough to the global photography scene (and market) in 80s. At that time, impressed by American colour photography, he took on photographing on colour film himself. He made The Last Resort (1985–1983), series of photojournalistic articles while spending holidays in a coastal resort in New Brighton, which remains one of his most recognizable work to this day. After its first presentation in the Serpentine Gallery in London in 1986, the project triggered turbulence and division of opinions of both professionals and general public. Polarization of opinions became a constant in Parr’s photography career. His proponents view Parr as a chronicler of our age, an insightful observer and commentator of modern society, a satirist with a dry sense of humor, that scrutinizes the eccentricity of everyday life. Focusing on the absurdity of everyday life and on details which laughingly testify about status and taste, strong, saturated colours and photographing with macro lenses and built-in flash became his modus operandi. In this manner, he created series, such as The Cost of Living (1987–1989), Small World (1987–1994), Common Sense (1995–1999), Autoportrait (1995–2000 / 1995–2015), Life’s A Beach (2013) and Real Food (2016).

Keywords: photography, backdrop, Martin Parr, photobook, photo-studios, portrait.

The Studio Photograph as a Conceptual Framework

Caroline Molloy

In her essay, Caroline’s draws from her PhD thesis that looks the visual habits of transcultural photography. She concentrates her writing on the genre of studio photography, specifically early English studio photography and argues that the conceptual framework established in early photographic studio practices still has its legacy in contemporary digital photographic studio practices. To illustrate this argument, she draws from a contemporary case-study in her local, digital photographic studio in North London and discusses a selection of photographs in relation to early photographic studio practices. She suggests that rather than a radical break caused by digital technologies, digital photography has opened up imaginative ways in which to make studio portraits that blur boundaries between the real and symbolic.

Keywords: studio photography, profilmic, photographic backdrop, studio photography.

Travel Images, Capitalism and the Ideology of Enjoyment

Jamil Somaiya

A commonly held assumption about social media is that because users create their own content such as images, videos and so on, and thereby their own representations, social media are largely free from any ideological dispositions imposed from above. Creating images is a discursive practice, mediated by a myriad of social and cultural influences that we encounter in our everyday lives. Like in any other form of communication, certain image sharing practices become more dominant, where they intersect with a range of connotative meanings and their ideological dimensions. Within our current confluence of global consumerist capitalism, the dominant cultural order is that of maximizing enjoyment through consumption. This essay puts forth a semiotic reading of a cross-section of travel images shared by users on Instagram to explicate the relationship between travel photography, enjoyment as an ideology and capitalism. It is argued that to travel is not just an activity but it is a commodity that is consumed by us and sold to us by the tourism industry. Contradictions of life under global capitalism remain, with growing inequalities, precarious working conditions, casual job contracts and meagre pays. Material enjoyment remains illusory for many, while the ideological inducements to enjoy finds its outlet in the images we share. When shared on social media for the gaze and ‘likes’ of the viewers, our travel images are not just memoirs of a journey undertaken but also an affirmation of our enjoyment. For the viewers of these images, the enjoyment of others pertaining to consumption is to be envied or held up to an ideal against which the viewers may imagine their own enjoyment. Capitalism demands enjoyment in the form of consumption, and those who cannot enjoy, are ‘free’ to fantasize about such enjoyment in the future. While ‘free’ is the buzzword under neoliberal global capitalism, enjoyment is that kernel that underpins and sustains its ideology.

Keywords: social media, travel, enjoyment, ideology, capitalism.
A Nostalgic Longing for the 20th Century: Past and Present Backdrops and Scenes in the Skylight Studio of Josip Pelikan

Helena Vogelsang (professional caretaker of Pelikan’s collection)

Taking a visual stroll down the backdrops and scenes of the master photographer Josip Pelikan is accompanied by commentary supplied by the Celje Museum of Recent History’s senior educator and caretaker of Pelikan’s collection, Helena Vogelsang. Painted backgrounds with various motifs used by Pelikan in both portraying and in his everyday work in the studio represent a key part of the photographer’s heritage and are part of a permanent exhibition in a skylight studio. It is the only preserved example of a skylight photo studio from the end of the 19th century in Slovenia. Various backdrops enabled the portrayed person to be presented in a way that suited him or her best, e.g. raising their social status, being placed in a specific environment or in a different position than the person occupied in real life. This surely influenced the popularity of portraits made in the wet collodion technique by contemporary photographer of portraits made in the wet collodion technique. This surely influenced the popularity of portraits made in the wet collodion technique by contemporary photographer of portraits made in the wet collodion technique.

Keywords: 20th century studio photography, skylight studio, backdrop photography, portraiture, Slovenian photography.

Geska Helena Brečević is an artist and independent researcher working mainly in Sweden, Mexico and Croatia. In 2004, she and Robert Brečević formed Performing Pictures (www.performingpictures.org). Together they make film and video installations that blur the lines between still and motion media. Their work, supported by numerous national and international grants, has resulted in more than 20 solo and 50 group shows as well as commissions for several permanent public art installations. Her artistic research has been carried out with the support of The National Arts Grants Committee, the Royal Institute of Arts and the National Swedish Research Committee. Geska is currently the artistic director of the Film Capital Stockholm’s project Smart Kreativ stad (www.smartkreativstad.com) investigating new perspectives on moving images in the public space.

Lukas Birk is an artist, a storyteller and a conservator. His multi-disciplinary projects have been turned into films, chronicles and books. A large part of Lukas’ work deals with archival material he collects while traveling or while digging into his own background. His research of consists of careful investigations and explorations of imagery very often in areas that have been affected by conflict and have not yet had the chance to present existing material in an artistic form. His narratives tackle recorded history by creating alternate storylines and fictional elements, alongside commonly accepted facts. His created “archival artworks” have little to do with institutional processes but rather revolve around personal stories, the desire to preserve their history in place, and Lukas’ own emotional attachment to them.

Iza Pecov (1987) finished the studies of art history and comparative literature. She has been writing about art and culture for some time, she was writing for Radio Student and since 2014 she is also working for Radio Slovenia – programme Ars. As a young curator she was part of the project Zagon Gallery Skuc and in programme of the Centre and Gallery P74 Incubator for young curators. Since 2013 she is also writing for the Fotografska and Membrana magazines.

Christopher Pinney is Professor of Anthropology and Visual Culture at University College London. His chief interests are in commercial print culture and photography in South Asia and popular Hinduism in central India. He is presently working on a new book entitled Image-Making-India (Bloomsbury). His publications combine contemporary ethnography with the historical archaeology of particular media (see e.g. Camera India and Photos of the Gods). The Coming of Photography in India, based on the Panuizi Lectures was published by the British Library in October 2008. Other recent work includes Photography and Anthropology (Reaktion, 2011) and (together with Suresh Pumpr) Artisan Camere: Studio Photography from Central India (Tar, 2013).

Paolo Silvio Harald Favéro is a visual anthropologist presently Associate Professor in Film Studies and Visual Culture at the Department of Communication Studies, University of Antwerp. A member of at the Visual and Digital Cultures Research Center (VIDi) he is also the Chair of the MA in Film Studies and Visual Culture. Paolo has devoted the core of his recent career to the study of visual culture in India (and partly also Italy). Ethnographically involved today in research on emerging image-making practices and politics in contemporary India, he was recently awarded funding by the Flemish government for a project on the introduction of digital technologies in Cuba. He has a number of publications on the meaning of images in contemporary digitized habitats of the world but also more broadly on the meaning of images in human life across space and time. Paolo is the author of The Present Image: Visible Stories in a Digital Habitat (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) and of Dentro ed Oltre ’l’immagine: saggi su cultura politica e visive nell’Italia contemporanea (Mellini, 2017). He is presently working on a new book entitled Image-Making:India (Bloomu).

Jacna Jermančič (1982) is an independent curator, project manager, writer and reviewer in the field of contemporary visual arts. She focuses in particularly on the field of contemporary copyright practices, the theory and history of photography, and visual art.

Karin Becker is professor emerita of media studies at Stockholm University. Originally based in the US, her early research focused on documentary photography and photojournalism in the US and its European influences. She has investigated a broad range of visual media forms and practices, and has led major research projects on global media events and art installations as mediated through the public space. Visual ethnography has been central to her methodological approach. Since 2008, her research has included an ongoing study of Performing Pictures’ work in Sweden and southern Mexico. Becker is currently engaged in the research project Screening Protest (www.screeningprotest.com), where she is analysing the visual coverage of protests as mediated in transnational television news broadcasts.

Lukas Birk
karin.becker@httu.se
Department of Media Studies, Stockholm University
Sweden
communications which she interdisciplinarily interconnects with social sciences. She graduated in Cultural Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana in 2007, where she also completed her Master of Science degree in Communication in 2013. In addition to managing the institute Sector for Connecting, Researching and Promotion of Media Art, she also collaborates with various exhibition centres and non-governmental cultural organizations, such as SCCA-Ljubljana, Membrane Institute, Fokus Institute, and others.

Martin Parr (1952) is a British documentary photographer, photojournalist and photobook collector. Since 1994, he has been a member of Magnum Photos. He is considered a chronicler of our age, known for his photographic projects such as The Cost of Living (1987–1989), Small World (1987–1994), Common Sense (1995–1999), Portadown (1995–2000), Life’s A Beach (2000–2006) and Red Food (2010) that take an intimate, satirical and anthropological look at aspects of modern life, leisure, consumption and social life of the Western world. He has had around 100 photobooks published, and has featured in numerous exhibitions worldwide. The Martin Parr Foundation, founded in 2014, opened premises in his hometown of Bristol in 2017. It houses his own work and archive, a collection of other British and Irish photographers, and a gallery.

Caroline Molloy is a PhD arts and humanities student at Birkbeck, Centre of Photographic History and Theory at the University of London, alongside of which she is a Senior Lecturer in Photography at Coventry University. She has an MA from the Royal College of Art in photography, an MA in History and Theory at the University of London, alongside of which she a Senior Lecturer in Photography at Coventry University. She has an MA from the Royal College of Art in photography, an MA in History and Theory at the University of London, alongside of which she is a Senior Lecturer in Photography at Coventry University. She has an MA from the Royal College of Art in photography, an MA in History and Theory at the University of London, alongside of which she is a Senior Lecturer in Photography at Coventry University.

Emina Đukić (1982) is a visual artist and pedagogue. She completed her master’s degree in photography at the VSU in Bratislava, and currently she is a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, photography department. From 2005 to 2010 she collaborated with the Medemblik Youth Cultural Center, where she was also a program director for some time. For several years as a mentor she participated in the Cefle Focus summer workshop and was her artistic director in 2013. Since 2015 she has been a member of the editorial board of Fotografija magazine. She is researching the media of photography for a long time; Currently she is mainly concerned with the narrative possibilities of photography and its relation to the past.

Jenaki Somaiya is writing her Ph.D. thesis in Sociology at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her research focuses on an analysis of images shared by users on social media utilizing a psychosanalytic-semiotic method. B intends to study the phenomenon of social media within an account of late capitalism and its ideological delineations. Her previous research was centred on Decolonizing Sociology and Sociological Practices in India Using a Foucauldian Theoretical Lens. She is also an activist and has been involved in building a growing extra-parliamentary Left movement in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Her praxis often extends to the classroom where she teaches Sociology to undergraduate students at the University of Auckland. Her research interests include Critical Pedagogy, Marxist Critical Theory, Lacanian psychoanalysis, Althusser and ideology critique, semiotics, visual culture analysis and Social media studies.

Helena Vogelsang Norak (1962) graduated from the Faculty of Education at the University of Maribor, Department of History in 1984. Following her studies, she gained pedagogical experience by working with different target groups for several years. Since 1998, she has been employed at the Celje Museum of Recent History, where she works as senior museum educator. In 1999, she passed a professional examination for a museum worker at the Ministry of Culture (Directorate for Cultural Heritage). For many years now, she has been dedicated to reviving the only glass photo studio in Slovenia, which is a valuable example of our cultural heritage. For many years now, she has been dedicated to reviving the only glass photo studio in Slovenia, which is a valuable example of our cultural heritage.

Membrane 9 / 2018 • ISSN 2463-8501 • publisher: Membrana, Mauersova 8, 1000 Ljubljana • tel.: +386 (0) 31 777 959 • email: info@membrana.org • editors: Jan Batelli (editor-in-chief), Ilja T. Tomanić • editorial board: Mark Curran (Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland; Freie Universität Berlin, Germany), Ana Peraica (Independent researcher, educator, Croatia), Milada Karváková (UAP Purzyc, Poland), Mha Cohier (International Centre for Graphic Arts, AEC, Ljubljana, Slovenia), Lenart Kukič (Independent journalist, Prof Drž, Slovenia), Emira Djukić (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia), Jazna Jermanišek (Independent researcher, curator, Slovenia), Aško Lehmskuld (University of Tampere, Finland), Deron Schiller (independent researcher, USA), Robert Harniman (Northwestern University, USA) • advisory board: Alžbeta Ščit, Andrea Álvarez de Oteíva, Isra Pevc, Matej Sitar • article contributors: Karis Becker, Goska Hlević Bledvodić, Jazna Jermanišek, Martin Parr, Ana Peraica, Emira Djukić, Christopher Pinney, Paul H. S. Davies, Lukas Bli, Isra Pevc, Caroline Molloy, Jenani Somaiya, Helena Vogelsang, Ulrika Savić • translations: Tom Smith • proofreading: Tom Smith, Anja Kus • image & projects contributors: BND Collective, Hrastarstvar, Martin Parr, Lukas Bli, Christopher Pinney, Navesh Bhatia, Ketaki Sheth, Caroline Molloy, Samuel Alam Helal, Jenani Somaiya, Daseung Lee, Noleen Goswad, Oja Triška Stefanovitz, Borut Peterlin, Dragan Angiler, Josip Poljanac • design: Primož Polak • printing: Cicero • printrun: 400 • all images and texts © Membrana, except when noted otherwise • editorial photograph: Samuel Alam, from the series Love.Love, 2010-2015 • last page photo from part of a backdrop, Icon Studies, Namavsegno Market II, Bukusa Parish, Kampala, Uganda (photographers Tim Prince in Edify Turmiiel), 2014. Photograph by: Jan Batelli.