



Universität
Basel

Research Project

Validating Visual Heritage: Historical Photographs and the Role of the “Archive” in Cameroon

Project funded by own resources

Project title Validating Visual Heritage: Historical Photographs and the Role of the “Archive” in Cameroon

Principal Investigator(s) Arlt, Veit ; Thomas, Guy ; Schneider, Jürg ;

Project Members Mazuela, Rosario ;

Organisation / Research unit

Departement Geschichte / Geschichte Afrikas (Harries)

Departement Gesellschaftswissenschaften / Afrikastudien (Macamo)

Project Website <https://zasb.unibas.ch/research/research-projects/endangered-archives/>

Project start 01.01.2015

Probable end 31.12.2016

Status Completed

The world we live in has evidently turned iconic and pictorial (a turn heralded most prominently by G. Boehm and W.J.T. Mitchell). In the course of the past decades, scholars, artists and media professionals have increasingly engaged critically with visual sources, in particular photographs, in their work. In a parallel development, and partly related to the latter, the focus on the archive as a bounded and static storage area has been variously challenged, and attention has shifted to perceiving and examining the “archive” as a process and open subject of research per se. Indeed, we can relate the “archive” to identities, mnemonic devices and the occupancy of space, hence the notion of the “living archive”.

The virtual ubiquity of photographic collections and archives goes hand to hand with huge numbers of photographic images which have become publicly accessible. However, because of the abundance of images – the images’ various uses notwithstanding – a broad set of questions as to what we are to make of historical photographs and how we can relate them to the “archive” preoccupies and challenges many users, both academic and non-academic.

On the one hand, the conference will conclude the two-year project “Cameroon Photo Press Archives. Protection, Conservation, Access” which aims at rendering a substantial amount of the archive’s material more easily accessible. It shall engage scholars, media professionals and artists from Cameroon, Africa, and abroad on a platform to discuss practical, methodological and theoretical questions that arise in critically dealing with photographs and their contexts in distinct fields of activity, disciplines and archival settings.

On the other hand, the event will not simply serve to promote the Buea Press Photo Archives in a narrowly conceived manner, but instead attempt to place the project within a broader framework of the “circulation of knowledge” by means of a) accessing varied visual information resources and b) targeting users with a view to validating visual heritage within the wider realm of its place in the “archive”.

Keywords Archives, photographic images, visual heritage, circulation of knowledge

Financed by

Other funds

Follow-up Project of... [1205855 Cameroon Photo Press Archives. Protection, conservation, access](#)

Add publication

Add documents

Specify cooperation partners