

The Holocaust and the (Digital) Photographic Documentation International Workshop for researchers and experts

Dates: Monday 19 september – Wednesday 21 September 2011

Venue: NIOD, Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Herengracht 380, Amsterdam

Call for Papers

The history of the Second World War and the Holocaust has been documented and passed along via (among other means) the use of images, photographs in particular. The human experience of war and genocide in particular has been spread over the globe and transferred across generations by means of the appearance of pictures in mass media or through those kept in private collections. Throughout, historians have been challenged to consider how best to utilize such visual documentation as a historical source.

Increasing mediatisation of images has produced a visual canon of the war, in such a way that historians and their audiences have become familiar with the power of images. Ground-breaking exhibitions - like the German *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht* and, more recently, the new setting of *Topographie des Terrors* in Berlin – have played a role in emphasizing the power of pictures, not as a lever of the imagination alone, but primarily as an instrument of historical analysis. The digital revolution has enabled the development of massive and hitherto unknown reproduction, dissemination, storage, and interpretation techniques regarding photographs. Consequently, the study of images has become solidly embedded in academic research, and funding has become available on a large scale.

At the same time, archives have been working to digitize their image collections and subsequently to offer on-line access to multiple archives via portals. In the Netherlands more than 30 museums and other collecting institutions are cooperating to make photographs, drawings, and posters related to the Second World War and the Holocaust available by means of the Dutch 'Image Bank for the Second World War', which is a syndicated website (www.beeldbankwo2.nl) coordinated by NIOD in Amsterdam. Operational since 2010, the Image Bank is an example of a digitally conserved, accessible collection. This Image Bank contributes to the provision of a learning ground for new programmes with comparative purposes and scopes. Such collections, being conserved, inventorised, and made accessible by modern information technology, are challenging scholars from various disciplines to develop new perspectives and methods for studying the past.

The *European Holocaust Research Infrastructure* (EHRI) intends to organize an international expert meeting in which the place of photography in historical research of the Holocaust will be discussed. The meeting aims to combine the growing academic interest in photography with the increasing digitisation and opening up of photographic archives. **The overall aim is to generate a creative exchange between researchers on the many aspects of the photographic representation of the Holocaust. Archivists of picture collections and e-scientists will be invited to discuss how EHRI can**

fulfil its purpose of creating a European research infrastructure, focussing on the photographic representation of the Holocaust.

The organisers are extending this invitation to scientists as well as archivists of picture collections, and hope to receive proposals which will address crucial questions in two fields:

Photographical Representation of the Holocaust:

- What is the international state-of-the-art in regard to research (from different disciplines) of photographs as a source for Holocaust history? Which topics are promising, which approaches should be explored now? How can we find new and cutting-edge scholarly perspectives to deal with this particular field of research, which requires maximum sensitivity and sophistication?
- How can we identify the present and future users of historical images, and fulfill their needs in the best possible way? What can be considered to be relevant experience and best practices in this field?
- The history of the Second World War and the Holocaust is documented by often very imposing images. These have had a powerful impact on memory cultures at many different levels – national, transnational, and group-specific. How can we develop new perspectives on the social, cultural and psychological impact on the representation of the Second World War and the Holocaust?

Consequences and Challenges of the Digitization of Photographic Collections:

- How shall we envision the role of historical images, photographs in particular, in an up-to-date visualised E-science environment?
- What kind of new research questions can be formulated when using large-scale digitized photo collections?
- How can we address and avoid undesirable situations when photographs are accessed on-line and disseminated to large audiences out of context and/or without proper explanation?
- Which newly-developing techniques in digitizing, inventorizing, and making accessible images are relevant in general, and in particular in the field of Holocaust studies?

With this seminar we hope to initialize further discussion among people dealing professionally and scholarly with Holocaust photography.

EHRI

The expert meeting is being organized within the framework of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI). EHRI is financed by the 7th Framework Programme of the European Commission. The project was launched in November 2010 and is coordinated by NIOD in Amsterdam. It brings together 20 institutions throughout Europe and in Israel, and is dedicated to opening up collections related to Holocaust history within a web-based environment. By bringing together important collections, EHRI aims to improve accessibility and to stimulate historiographical progress in this field, which is of crucial importance to European and World history.

Procedure

Researchers and experts working in the fields described in this call are invited to submit proposals for papers to be discussed at the expert meeting. Please send proposals (400 words) for individual presentations to René Kok. Proposals must include all relevant contact information, a title, and the main questions to be addressed during the presentation. The deadline will be June 1st 2011.

Everyone who has submitted a proposal will be notified about acceptance or refusal by July 1st 2011.

Costs

Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs for the workshop will be reimbursed with a maximum of three nights.

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