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SINCE 1989

FotoFocus Announces Schedule for AutoUpdate: Photography in the Electronic Age

By Megan McCardwell - September 27, 2019



Symposium Addresses Tech's Impact on Photography and Politics, Featuring Artist Trevor Paglen, MoMA Curator Michelle Kuo, and More

FotoFocus, a Cincinnati-based nonprofit arts organization, has announced the speakers and schedule for the fall symposium, **AutoUpdate: Photography in the Electronic Age.**



Angie Rucker

Private William Anthony Holland

2019

Photography/Mixed Media/Digital Art

The day-long symposium, held at **The Carnegie in Northern Kentucky** on Saturday, October 5, will feature lectures and panel discussions from international artists, curators, journalists, and educators.

Artist Trevor Paglen will be the keynote speaker, addressing the symposium's theme of digital technology's impact on photography and its disruption of art making and news cycles in a media obsessed world. Paglen's experimental work frequently combines photography with other disciplines, like science and engineering, to examine our current reality and imagine alternative futures.

He is joined on the schedule by three other distinguished artists: Nancy Burson, Lynn Hershman Leeson, and Josh Kline.

AutoUpdate: Photography in the Electronic Age is inspired by the prescient 1994 Aperture special edition *Metamorphoses: Photography in the Electronic Age*, which both envisioned fantastical uses and dire consequences of programs like Adobe Photoshop.

AutoUpdate presents a much needed update on how digital technologies have continued to affect our understanding of photography as an artistic medium and in our current age of “post-truth” and artificial intelligence.

The series of lectures and panel discussions invites speakers to review photography’s part in the current global crisis of information exchange; the fate of documentary filmmaking in a “post-truth” age; and offers a historical and philosophical assessment of digital imaging, past and future.



Emily Zeller

Dragonfly, 59.61%

2019

Archival Inkjet Print from Neural Network Manipulated Images

The symposium’s themes will be visualized in the accompanying group exhibition, *AutoUpdate*, held at The Carnegie in Northern Kentucky. The show features artists working at the intersection of tech and photography, each selected from an open call by a jury of regional curators and exhibition directors. *AutoUpdate* will be on view from September 14 – November 16, 2019, with a reception and performance on October 4, 2019.

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

9 am — Breakfast

9:45 am — Opening Remarks

10 am — Panel: *Curators and The Digital Museum*

Co-Moderated by **Carissa Barnard**, FotoFocus Deputy Director of Exhibitions and Programming, Cincinnati, OH, and **Matt Distel**, Exhibitions Director, The Carnegie, Covington, KY.

AutoUpdate Exhibition Jurors: **Alice Gray Stites**, Museum Director and Chief Curator, 21c Museum Hotels, Louisville and Lexington, KY; Cincinnati, OH; Chicago, IL; Bentonville, AR; Des Moines, IA; Durham, NC; Oklahoma City, OK; Kansas City and Saint Louis, MO; and Nashville, TN; **Jo-ey Tang**, Director of Exhibitions, Beeler Gallery, Columbus College of Art & Design, OH; and **Michael Vetter**, Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art, Newfields, Indianapolis, IN

11 am — Conversation: *Digital Evolution/Digital Revolution*

Kevin Moore, FotoFocus Artistic Director, New York, NY, in conversation with **Fred Ritchin**, Dean Emeritus of the International Center of Photography, New York, NY.

Since writing the first article for the "New York Times Magazine" on the possibilities and perils of the coming digital revolution in photography in 1984, and publishing the first book on the subject, "In Our Own Image", in 1990, Fred Ritchin has been involved with both anticipating future developments in digital imaging and finding new and transformative strategies for both visual artists and documentarians in a more expansive sense of photography. This discussion will focus on the challenges posed by digital imaging since the 1980s, and on its unmet potentials yet to be explored.



Valerie Sullivan Fuchs

>electron<electron~photon

2018

Video

Noon — Panel: *Deepfake News*

Moderated by **Dean Kissick**, Writer and New York Editor of *Spike Quarterly*, New York, NY, with panelists: **Elisabeth Bik**, PhD, Microbiome and Science Integrity Consultant, San Francisco, CA; and **Rob Horning**, Editor, New York, NY.

In recent years, photo- and video-editing software has grown ever more advanced and photography has become weaponized. For instance, subtly altered images have been found in science journals for questionable agendas. Building upon the frequently catastrophic effects of fake news, the rise of the “deepfake”—a video or an image that has been seamlessly manipulated using deep learning artificial intelligence—threatens not only to disrupt news cycles, but to critically undermine our understanding of what’s real and not real.

1 pm — Lunch Break

2 pm — Comment by Nancy Burson: *Seeing is Believing*

Nancy Burson, Artist, New York, NY.

From her early invention of facial morphing, Burson’s work explores the boundaries of legibility in photographic imagery and the overwhelming human desire to make sense of what we see.

2:30 pm — Panel: *Artists in the Forest of Signs*

Moderated by **Michelle Kuo**, The Marlene Hess Curator of Painting and Sculpture, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, with panelists: **Josh Kline**, Artist, New York, NY; and **Lynn Hershman Leeson**, Artist and Filmmaker, San Francisco, CA, and New York, NY.

In a world of vastly expanded image technologies, artists face more and more complex choices as they navigate between real and virtual, form and data, signs and codes, human interpretation, and artificial intelligence.



Stefan Petranek Fire Line (Lovelock, NV) 2019 Archival Inkjet Print 24 x 36 inches

3:30 pm — Panel: *Documentary Filmmaking: Observing Outside the Lines*

Moderated by **Toby Lee**, Artist, Anthropologist, and Assistant Professor, Department of Cinema Studies, Tisch School of the Arts, NYU, New York, NY, with panelists: **Jacqueline Goss**, Filmmaker and Professor of Film and Electronic Arts, Bard College, Annandale on Hudson, NY; and **Christopher Harris**, Experimental Filmmaker and Head of Film and Video Production in the Department of Cinematic Arts at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA.

In an era of politically tainted news campaigns, documentary filmmaking is enjoying a resurgence as a form of objectivity, engaging—at times counter-intuitively— innovative techniques for conveying a director's own sense of truth and authenticity.

4:30 pm — Break

5 pm — Artist Keynote with Trevor Paglen

ABOUT FOTOFOCUS

FotoFocus is a Cincinnati-based nonprofit arts organization that champions photography and lens-based art through exhibitions and public programming. Since 2010, the organization has engaged art and educational institutions throughout the region to support and expand the cultural dialogue around the medium that has come to define our time.



With an emphasis on intellectually and academically rigorous programs, the organization provides uniquely enriching access to lens-based art, film, and practices inspired by photography. FotoFocus has collaborated with hundreds of organizations, curators, academics, and artists to present more than **700** exhibitions and programs, having contributed funding for the majority. The organization has brought hundreds of internationally-renowned photographers to the Greater Cincinnati region. Signature programming includes: **FotoFocus Biennial**, which had a record-breaking 207,000 visitors in 2018 and has presented exhibitions of work by both historic and contemporary artists such as **Berenice Abbott, Eugène Atget, Roe Ethridge, Zanele Muholi, Karl Blossfeldt, Francis Bruguière, Thomas Ruff, and Akram Zaatari** in Cincinnati; the **FotoFocus Symposium**, which has contributed significant dialogue and insight to culturally relevant topics including the controversial Mapplethorpe exhibition; and **FotoFocus Lecture and Visiting Artist Series**, which has brought internationally renowned artists like **Zoe Leonard** and **William Wegman** to Cincinnati.

ABOUT THE CARNEGIE

The Carnegie is Northern Kentucky's largest multidisciplinary arts venue providing theatre events, educational programs and art exhibitions to the Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati community. The Carnegie facility is home to The Carnegie Galleries, the Otto M. Budig Theatre, and the Eva G. Farris Education Center. The Carnegie receives ongoing operating support from ArtsWave, Cincinnati International Wine Festival, The Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Kenton County Fiscal Courts, the Kentucky Arts Council and the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile Jr. / US Bank Foundation. More information about The Carnegie is available at www.thecarnegie.com or by calling (859) 491-2030.