

## The Buzzword is 'Archive' for FotoFocus 2018

*Cincinnati's upcoming photography biennial announces its schedule, which features such major names as Miranda July, Marilyn Minter, Berenice Abbott, Gillian Wearing and more*

**STEVEN ROSEN** - MAR 27, 2018 3 PM



**Karl Blossfeldt image from No Two Alike**PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE KARL BLOSSFELDT ARCHIVE/STIFTUNG ANNUND JURGEN WILDE/PINAKOTHEKDER MODERNE, MUNCHEN

"Archive" has become a culturally fashionable term of late, the way "curation" did several years ago. And with good reason — they both speak to our need to save, prioritize and make sense of the vastly growing amounts of available information and visual imagery in our digital age.

Open Archive is the theme for this fall's FotoFocus Biennial of photography and other lens-based art, which will occur at scores of museums and galleries across the Greater Cincinnati area and feature more than 200 artists, curators and educators. The core event, the Biennial Program, occurs Oct. 4-7, but exhibits will be up longer.

"When photography came along, people filed photographs in image libraries and archives and all types of things," says Kevin Moore, the artistic director and curator for FotoFocus. "More recently, we've all gotten Instagram fatigue and all these huge databanks of imagery.

"So the question is not only how we store these things and manage them, but also what does it mean to keep stuff," he continues. "That has something to do with what society values, how we think about history and how we keep memories."

With that in mind, here are some of the bigger shows and events planned for FotoFocus:

- A conversation with the artist, filmmaker and writer Miranda July, guest curated by Mini Microcinema's C. Jacqueline Wood, occurs at the Woodward Theater on Oct. 7. July will talk about her longstanding interest in the Joanie 4 Jackie project, by which she collected, compiled and publicized DIY films sent in from women around the country. It eventually led to a website —[joanie4jackie.com](http://joanie4jackie.com) — and the recent acquisition of July's archives of the films and related material by the Getty Research Institute/Getty Trust.
- During October, Wood will be programming FotoFocus-related films at the Mini, possibly including a retrospective of 16-millimeter movies by the late Cincinnati filmmaker Steve Gebhardt.
- *No Two Alike: Karl Blossfeldt, Francis Bruguière, Thomas Ruff*, at the Contemporary Arts Center Sept. 21-Jan. 13, 2019, places pioneering 1920s-era photo-abstractions by the German Blossfeldt and American-born Bruguière "in dialogue" with

contemporary abstractions by German photographer Ruff. This exhibit is guest curated by Ulrike Meyer Stump.

“They were both making abstractions, but in different ways,” says FotoFocus’ Moore. “Blossfeldt’s photographs were close-ups of plants that were abstract by the way they’re framed. They’re so weird you don’t know what they are. Bruguère was doing paper cutouts and light effects.”

The decision to add Ruff came about because he keeps an archive of historic photographs. “He uses this as source material for his new work,” Moore says.

- Gillian Wearing, a Turner Prize-winning British artist who works with still photography and video, will be the subject of a ticketed exhibition at Cincinnati Art Museum from Oct. 5-Dec. 30. Her lens-based art is greatly varied — still photographs of people holding up signs, a video of police officers posing for her, a Cindy Sherman-esque portrait of herself posing as the American street photographer Weegee. The museum’s photography curator Nathaniel Stein is organizing the show.

- *Wide Angle: Photography Out of Bounds* at the Weston Gallery of Art from Sept. 21-Nov. 11 features 20 artists, including Harry Callahan, Christian Marclay, Marilyn Minter, Laurel Nakadate and John Wesley. FotoFocus deputy director Carissa Barnard is curating.

- At the Taft Museum from Oct. 6-Jan. 20, 2019, there will be a show curated by Moore called *Paris to New York: Berenice Abbott and Eugène Atget*. It concerns the way young American photographer Abbott befriended the elderly Atget in the Paris of the 1920s and was so moved she devoted herself to saving, archiving and promoting his work after his 1927 death, even as she developed her own career. The work on display comes from the Museum of Modern Art and Philadelphia Museum of Art.

“He had created a huge catalog of his work in categories defined by different subjects and different parts of the city,” Moore says. “When he died, she saved all that, brought it back to New York and then started photographing New York in almost exactly the same way.”

**For more information on the FotoFocus Biennial, visit [fotofocusbiennial.org](http://fotofocusbiennial.org)**