

CO.LAB II_PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE ARCHIVE

“Archives are contradictory in character [...] One is torn between narration and categorisation, between chronology and inventory”

Allan Sekula, Reading an Archive, p.446

“Photography [...] is suspended between both the discourse of science and art, staking its claim to cultural value on both the model of truth upheld by empirical science and the model of pleasure offered by the romantic aesthetics”

Allan Sekula, Reading an Archive, p.446

Module Title	Co.Lab II
Provided by	Art Based Masters, MArch
Level/Stage	Level 7
Module Code	ARC7211
Term	One + Two
Module start dates	15th October 2013
Module end dates	16 th April 2014
Credits	15
Module Leader	Mike Dring
Project Partners	Stuart Whipps. MA Arts Based Masters, School of Art, BCU, Library of Birmingham Photographic Archive
Assessment Date	Formative 11 th December 2013 Summative 16 th April 2014

The relationship between photography and the archive as old as the medium itself. Photographs were adopted by the emerging state apparatus of the late 19th and early 20th century as documents of indexical veracity. These archives had functions as multitudinous as the images themselves and were applied for both mundane clerical purposes, and to reinforce complex ideological positions. With the development of advanced technologies, both analogue and digital, this system of archiving and use has become more nuanced. Artists and photographers have been responding to archives for as long as they have existed, and continue to engage with the aesthetics and politics of this application of the medium.

This year, the Modern Gazetteer will be working across the Schools of Art of Architecture in collaboration with Bournville Village Trust and the photographic collection at the new Library of Birmingham, specifically in response to the archive of Bill Brandt, considered one of the most important British photographers of the 20th century. Through an investigation into the contradictory character of the archive and of photography, you will explore the Trust, the archive and the site, presenting new interpretive work that will inform an installation, publication and events. At key points you will interact with students of the Art Based Masters to develop a dialogue around art and architectural practice with the common ground of the archive.

The outcome is open ended and is your opportunity to develop your creative capacities beyond conventional studio, but should contribute to the dialogue on art and architectural practice and speculate on the key themes for the installation, due to be delivered in March 2014 as part of the Flatpack Film Festival. Your work can either be considered as ‘content’ for the installation or act as a ‘support structure’ for work by others. Whichever direction you choose you should be mindful of the budget of £5000 assigned to the installation and £3000 to the publication elements of the live project.

The project will operate in three distinct but interrelated phases;

- A. October – December 2013: exploration of site, archive and trust with cross-disciplinary dialogue towards production of work for review at end of December.
- B. November 2013 – January 2014: cross-disciplinary collaboration through establishment of installation concept and delivery team as part of CELT funded collaborative project. We will be seeking applications for up to 6 students to join this team.
- C. January – March 2014: delivery of installation and publication including procurement of (building and publication) material, construction, curation of work, marketing and design and editing of publication with mentors.

SUBJECTS, MEDIA AND COST

The Modern Gazetteer is an open-ended exploration. *Subjects* you may wish to consider include;

- Site: philanthropic and religious origins, Bournville as a model for garden villages and cities,
- Industry: from small scale manufacture to global brand
- The contradictory nature of the archive and photography in representing truth and/or myth
- The Bournville Village Trust as a management and landlord organisation, research body, publisher

The *media* of your response should be appropriate to your theme, but may include:

- Still and moving image studies (documentary or artistic)
- Explorations in graphic design and publishing (typeface, typesetting, binding)
- Three-dimensional structure and space (installation)
- Abstract representations

Whatever your choice of subject and media, you should consider it as part of (or indeed as the support structure for) the installation, and as such you should present the outline *cost* for your work since we have a budget of £5000 for the physical installation and circa £3000 for the publication. Think literally and laterally about what would be needed to deliver your work as a finished piece. For example, would you require transport for the object/work, do you need to employ the services of a specialist manufacturer/finisher, does your work need to be framed/mounted, if it is a video work what equipment and environment would be needed to effectively show your work?

TIMETABLE

The following workshops & tutorials will support your development:

- 15.10.13: Visit to Library of Birmingham Archive (17:00, Library of Birmingham)
- 22.10.13: Group tutorial based on initial response to archive/site/etc (10:00 – 12:00, Parkside)
- 29.10.13: Group tutorial exploring findings and outlining content for dialogue following week (10:00 – 12:00, Parkside)
- 5.11.12: Dialogue 1: sharing of findings with Art Based Masters students (17:30 – 19:30, Margaret Street)
- 12.11.13: Group tutorial developing personal response to theme (10:00 – 12:00, Parkside)
- 19.11.13: Group tutorial developing personal response to theme and outlining content for dialogue following week (10:00 – 12:00, Parkside)
- 26.11.13: Dialogue 2: sharing of findings with Art Based Masters students (17:30 – 19:30, Margaret Street)
- 3.12.13: Group tutorial developing personal response to theme and outlining content for review following week (10:00 – 12:00, Parkside)
- 11.12.13: Dialogue 3: Pecha Kucha reviews of work [location likely to be Glenn Howells Architects, 321 Bradford St, Digbeth]

FORMAT AND CONTENT

You will be developing and proposing personal responses to the project, and will also prepare a summary document as described in the overarching brief. Please refer to this for details.