

Fellows



Birgit Mersmann
Stadt Wien/IFK_Fellow

Duration of fellowship
01. October 2017 bis 31. December 2017

Birgit Mersmann

PROJECT TITLE

Translating Migrants: Hetero- and Self-Translation in Social Documentary Photography

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In social documentary photography, the visualization of global migrant and refugee movements reveals processes of cultural, medial, and situational translation. In order to study the visual translation of migration in social documentary photography, four photo projects on contemporary migration in the European, American and global context are analyzed: Ad van Denderen's *Go No Go: The Frontiers of Europe* (2003), Jim Goldberg's *Open See* (2009), Sebastião Salgado's *Migrations: Humanity in Transition* (2000), and *Fotohistorias: Participatory Photography and the Experience of Migration* (2015) by Ricardo Gomez/Sara Vannini. Taking new participatory tendencies in contemporary documentary photography into account, the research centers on the translational differences (including transitions) between self- and hetero-translation in the field of socially engaged documentary photography while critically discussing their potentials and risks.

CV

Birgit Mersmann is associated Research Professor at the NCCR "Iconic Criticism" at the University of Basel, Switzerland. From 2015 to 2017 she was Visiting Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at the University of Cologne, and from 2008 to 2015 Professor of Non-Western and European Art at the international Jacobs University in Bremen. She is the co-founder of the research network "Art Production and Art Theory in the Age of Global Migration", established in 2013. In 2014, she was Visiting Fellow at the Neubauer Collegium of Culture and Society at the University of Chicago, and in 2013 Visiting Fellow at the Humanities Research Centre of the Australian National University (ANU), where she analyzed new urban museumscapes in Asian global cities. Research foci include image and media theory, visual cultures, contemporary Western and East Asian art, global art history, the history of Asian biennials, cultural and visual translation, interrelations between script and image.

Publications

"(An-)Ästhetisierte Authentizität. Migrationsästhetische Übersetzungspraktiken in der dokumentarischen Fotografie von Sebastião Salgado und Jim Goldberg", in: Claudia Benthien und Gabriele Klein (Hg.), *Übersetzen und Rahmen. Praktiken medialer Transformation*, Paderborn 2016, 223–238; *Schriftikonik. Bildphänomene der Schrift in kultur- und medienkomparativer Perspektive*, Eikones Reihe, München 2015; Birgit Mersmann et al. (Hg.), *Kunsttopographien globaler Migration*, (= Themenheft der *kritischen berichte*), Marburg 2015.