

VASA 2024-2025 E-CATALOG



VASA EXHIBITION
JOURNAL on IMAGES and CULTURE
VIDEO / FILM SERIES
This Catalog is linked to the VASA website

VASA : center for media studies

ABOUT VASA



This publication, provided free to an international audience, was made possible by VASA staff and supporters.

The e-catalog is designed as an interactive internet based publication. **The content of this publication is linked to the exhibitions, essays, interviews, and video/film series on the VASA site** (<http://vasa-project.com>). All images and texts are under © of the author / artist / VASA.

Users need to be connected to the Internet for interaction with the on-line programs on VASA.

Users may freely move between this publication and VASA website.

This publication may be used as a stand-alone digital publication.

VASA is an online center for media studies. The VASA mission is to provide an internet platform for disseminating the work of theorist and image makers on a global scale. The VASA community shares an interest in media studies, photography, film/video and sound.

To meet its mission, VASA supports online curated exhibitions; film/video screenings; the Journal on Images and Culture (VJIC); On Photography conversations and other programs.

VASA was founded in July of 2009 and is directed by its founder Roberto Muffoletto.

VASA curators, editors, design and production team and contributors are all volunteers. VASA hosts no ads, is not supported by grants or sells anything.

VASA is a non-profit making organization. VASA membership is free.

Visit VASA: <http://vasa-project.com>
 Contact: vasa@vasa-project.com
 Director:
 Roberto Muffoletto (roberto@vasa-project.com)

International Curatorial Team (Past and Current Curators)

Photography

Lead Curators

Roberto Muffoletto (Italy/USA)
 Rui Goncalves Cepeda
 (Portugal/UK)
 Igor Manko (Ukraine/Germany)
 Sandeep Biswas (India)
 Stefanie Zorzi (Italy/Austria)
 Małgorzata Wakuluk (Poland)

Invited Curators

Lara Ciarabellini (Italy/Brazil)
 Andrea Motta (Greece)
 Sinyagur (Ukraine)
 Paula Scamparini (Brazil)
 Larry Chatman (USA)
 Kyunghee Lee (South Korea)
 Ximena Echague (Belgium)
 Michaela Bosakova (Slovakia)
 Judith Rodriguez (Argentina)
 Sabine Kutt (USA)

Video/Film Series (invited)

Miha Colner (Slovenia)
 Carla Della Beffa (Italy)
 Christian Gold-Kurz (Austria)

TABLE OF CONTENT

This publication demonstrates the activities of VASA throughout the years 2024-2025. We have grouped the material into four chapters as it appears on the VASA website.

The *VASA Exhibitions* program presents the work of established and emerging artists in photography, video, digital media, and sound arts.

The *Journal on Images and Culture* publishes occasional papers that develop a theme or position. Papers draw from theoretical and research manuscripts, visual dialogs, video and sound works that offer significant perspectives.

The *Video/Film Series* is designed to stream an artist(s) work or to explore a theme. All film/videos are archived when possible.

The *Artist and Author Index* provides a list of all artists, authors, and curators with references to their individual projects in this publication.

VASA Exhibitions	1
Journal on Images and Culture	11
Video/Film Series	19
Artist, Curator and Author Index	22

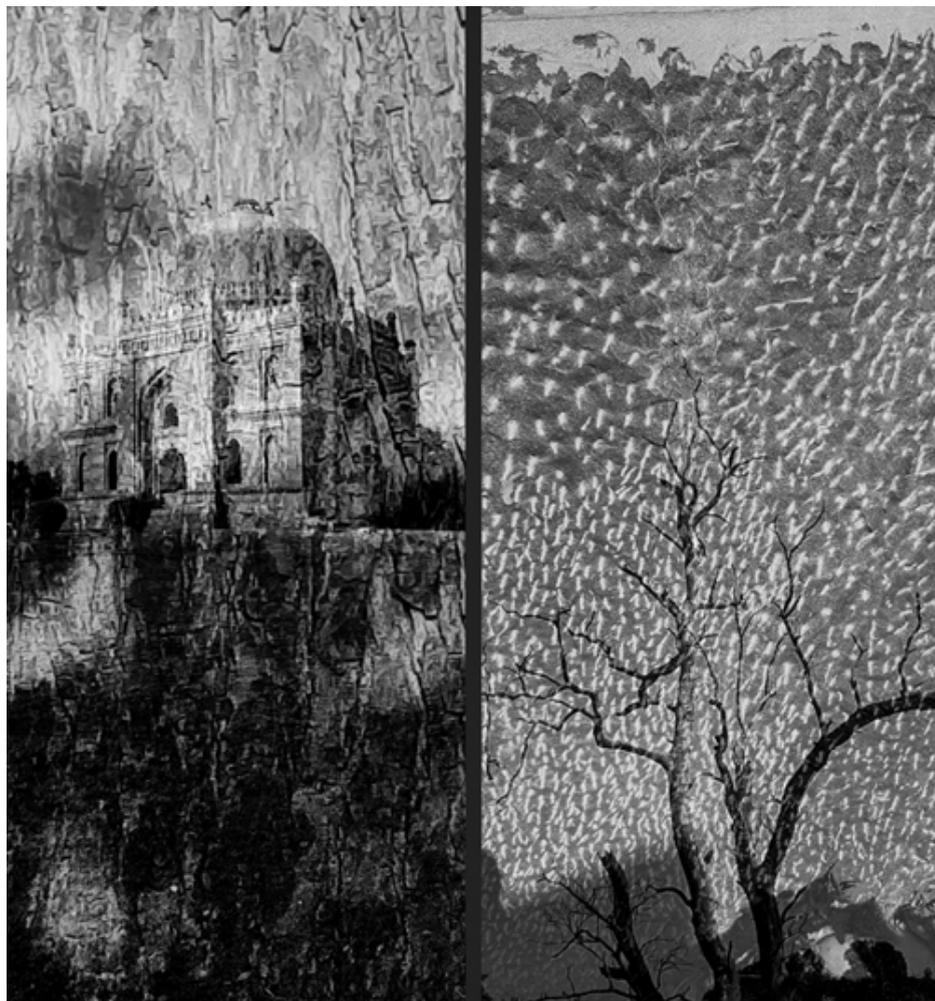
The illustrations are linked to the artists' online exhibitions. The catalog also provides excerpts from the essays and screen grabs of video pages linked to the corresponding online essay and video/film.

VASA EXHIBITIONS



VASA ONLINE EXHIBITION PROGRAM
hosts the work of established and emerging artists
in sound, photography, and the digital media arts

VASA : center for media studies

Sandeep Biswas*India***Between Past and Present***Curator: Roberto Muffoletto*

“Time also changes our observations and memories, which transform into faint fragments of certain personal visual experiences. My series of multi-exposed and sketchy photographic images is a revisit to many such layers of memories and identities. They come from specific locations where I spent the most important part of growing up as a child, and presently they have become a juxtaposition of my own past and present. I am trying to identify everything with the same child-like excitement and enthusiasm, yet it does not feel the same.

I suddenly find myself dealing with that nostalgia at a time when suddenly I find myself revisiting my sense of belonging and a home from my past, which was the true essence of my growing up.

Multiple memories start to play on my mind. I start losing track of time with my vision fading and unclear. I am mapping a fragment of my own history using double exposure, single images as well as diptychs in order to express the vacuum of space and time. I try to search for meaning in everything, yet I resist the effort for the sake of simple pleasures. I am just simply staring through various surfaces.”

Marlena Cechmistrz Milczarek*Poland***The Khoisan. Those Who Speak the Language of Clicks***Curator: Małgorzata Wakuluk*

This exhibition is dedicated to one of the oldest peoples of Africa, the Khoisan, whose culture, history, and identity, despite numerous threats, have endured, constituting a valuable part of human heritage. The Khoisan people, who inhabit southern Africa, are not only among the oldest nations on Earth but also possess a unique bond with nature and a tradition rooted in hunting and gathering. Today, they are a minority, and their traditions and languages, including their distinctive “click” sounds, are endangered by globalization, colonialism, and contemporary social changes. In the face of these challenges, The Khoisan exhibition aims to remind us of this unique culture and to deepen our awareness of their threatened identity.

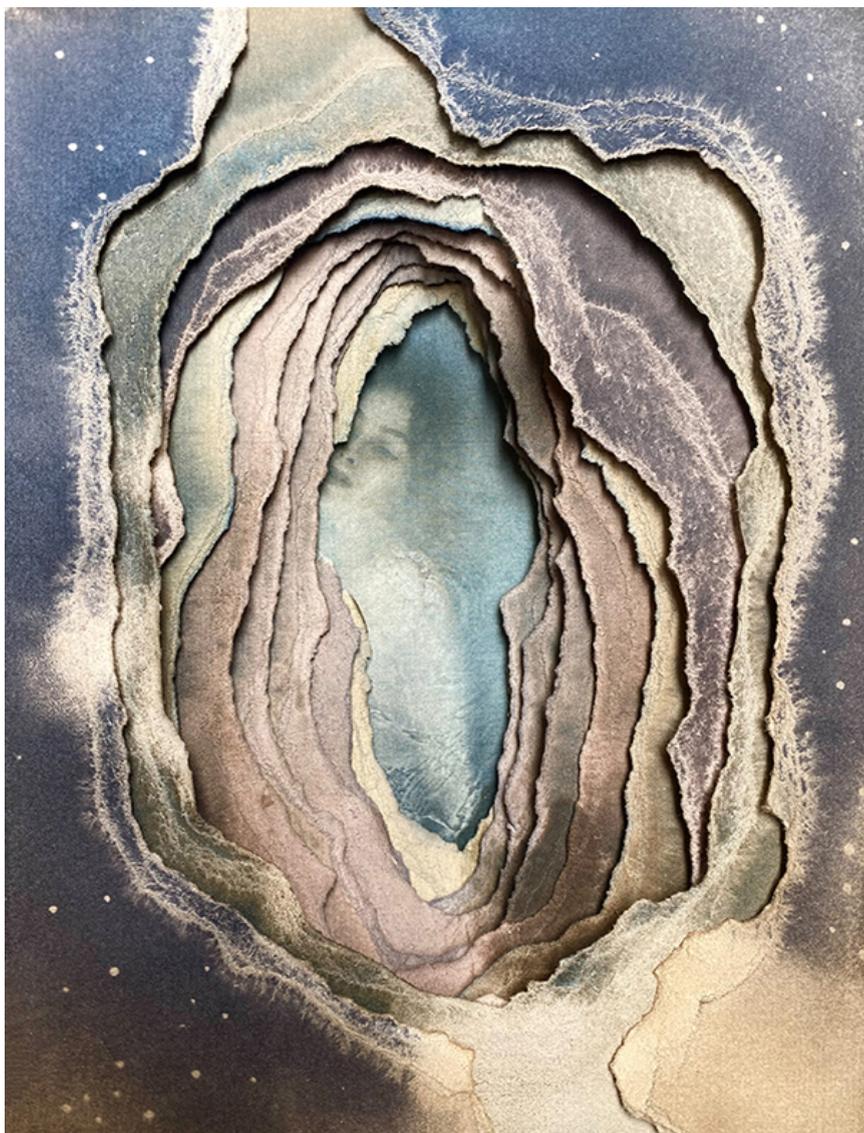
Marlena Cechmistrz Milczarek’s photographs, captured in black and white, are powerful, symbolic frames that provoke reflection on the fate of the Khoisan people. The choice of this technique is not accidental – the absence of color in these images focuses our attention on the essence of the subjects, their emotions, and inner worlds. These subtle, symbolic images not only document but also tell the story of their vanishing identity. They are photographs that call for contemplation and engagement, not offering simple answers but urging us to reflect more deeply on their fate.

Ramona Zordini

Italy

Guidelines Routine

Curator: Stefania Zorzi



“Layer upon layering the world is made up... people’s personalities are stratified on them, but the body does so too, stratifying starting from what is most fragile and vital, composing itself like an onion layer upon layer up to the skin. so also plants, the vegetal world, the whole of nature and the world itself are stratified from the skin to the innermost core.

Starting from here the reflection moves on time and evolution, intertwined and stratified, one on top of the other.

Evolving means adding error after error, victory after victory, defeats and pain, one on top of the other to compose the final work of one’s life. The Cyanotype technique directs the passage of time with its own rhythms, helping to find its own to stratify paper on paper, wetting it and re-wetting it, polluting it, dirtying it, living the paper as one lives an experience, and experience after experience composing the life of this work.

Imagine Narcissus, while you look at yourself in that mirror of water and you fall, you reconnect with the self that you were observing, but only by falling, there is no other way. Have you ever thought that being in the water is like being in another world, with other laws, and another ability to survive, so technically it is like not really being here. And if water is made of many drops, of many molecules that dance together, then it is conceivable that they can behave like the skin of an onion, enveloping everything inside itself and creating layers, layers that envelop or layers in which to look, like a small whirlpool that attracts everything. And in this tear in the paper as in the water the spectacle of life is staged, the life beneath the surface, beneath sociality and masks, life as it is felt only inside the water, when everything is muffled and full only of us.”

Malgorzata Wakuluk*Poland***Narrow Your Eyes***Curator: Roberto Muffoletto*

“Narrow Your Eyes” is an artistic reinterpretation of the contemporary world, which increasingly appears as a space of pain, conflict, and chaos. The photographs in this series are an attempt to escape the brutality of reality through a sensual transformation of its image. The titular “narrowing of the eyes” is both a physical and metaphorical gesture—an invitation to see the world differently, more gently, with a sense of distance and sensitivity.

When we narrow our eyes, the image before us changes its character: sharpness fades, contours soften, light diffuses, and colors become more intense and mysterious. The world seems to pulse with a gentle glow, as if shrouded in mist, behind which lies something unknown and full of secrets. This seemingly simple optical effect carries extraordinary power—it allows us to find beauty and harmony even in what initially seemed overwhelming.

The series “Narrow Your Eyes” is also an attempt to find balance in the daily chaos of brutal events and the gradual loss of moral values, which increasingly dominate our everyday life and ourselves.

In this project, the photographs convey the visual impression achieved by narrowing the eyes: light and shadows are subtly blurred, lines flow, and details take on abstract forms.

Jan Skwara*Poland***Portrait of the Past – The Aghori***Curator: Malgorzata Wakuluk*

Jan Skwara's project "Portrait of the Past. Aghori" is a tribute to vanishing traditions and communities that, though still existing, are slowly fading into history. In a world shaped by globalization, the photographer seeks out cultures that continue to preserve their ancient customs, rituals, and ways of life. His work is not only a visual archive but also an ethnographic testimony of these disappearing worlds. Captured using the 19th-century wet plate collodion technique, Skwara's photographs evoke the feeling of stepping back in time. The method's unique depth and texture enhance the sense that the subjects belong to a different era—one more fitting to the birth of photography than the modern digital age.

The project is also a homage to early travel photographers such as John Thompson, Edward S. Curtis, and Samuel Bourne, who braved harsh conditions to document distant cultures. Skwara follows in their footsteps, carrying a mobile darkroom through challenging landscapes, from the mountains of Peru to the depths of the Indian jungle. His encounters with the Aghori, an ascetic sect devoted to Shiva, offer a rare and intimate glimpse into one of the world's most enigmatic spiritual traditions.

Over two years, Skwara lived among the Aghori, accompanying their gurus, witnessing rituals, and participating in their way of life.

Dmytro Kupriyan*Ukraine***The Art of War / The Art of Machine Gun Maintenance***Curator: Igor Manko*

The title of this project contains two literary references: one to Sun Tzu's treatise *The Art of War* and the other a less obvious hint at *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, a once best-selling novel by Robert M. Pirsig. The latter describes a motorbike ride by a father and a son through the US. It involves a quotidian task of caring for their means of transportation, an old bike that requires day-to-day maintenance.

The war as it is shown in Kupriyan's project is nothing like a heroic battle. It is rather a set of monotonous routines: trainings, shooting practice, and cleaning the weapons so they don't get stuck while in combat. We see the soldiers pose for the camera, attend chaplain services, smoke, and sleep (sometimes even in foxholes). These activities are part of their daily life as well as shooting back at the enemy or raids on the enemy's positions.

Triptychs as a form of images representation serve the same purpose - they add to the boredom of the routine actions and the inevitability of everyday repetitions. They create "stories from the words of single photos", as the artist puts it. It is also a tool to achieve a certain Zen state of mind, like that of a monk who repeats "the same actions and movements every day, bringing them to sophistication, mastery and perfection".

Andrea Zampatti*Italy***The Wild Path/Silence***Curator: Stefania Zorzi*

“There are still places where Nature flows freely, untouched by human interference. This is Wilderness, untamed Nature.

It’s not just a geographical space, but a state of mind—a realm where we can reconnect with the world around us and rediscover harmony with the environment.

To walk in Nature is to truly listen. It means treading lightly, pausing often, embracing the Silence. It’s about becoming part of Nature, as if we were its children.

“The Wild Path” is more than a journey—it’s a return to something essential. A path that brings healing to the heart and soul. From the mountains of Italy to the boundless forests of the Great North, this journey traverses a nature that suffers—and yet, it is Our Nature. Because we are not separate from the Wild: we are a part of it. We just forgot it.

This is a journey both outward and inward. A return to what we have forgotten -- A Wild Path.”

Oksana Parafeniuk*Ukraine***Russian Invasion of Ukraine***Curator: Roberto Muffoletto*

“**Russian invasion** in Ukraine“ is not really a project as we normally refer to one.

It’s rather a series of haphazard photographs that depict the haphazard state of Ukrainian mentality at the moment.

“It’s too much to put into words at this moment for me,” says Oksana Parafenyuk, and it’s easy to understand. Caskets, funerals. A photo of the baby’s pacifier broke my heart. Grief, grief and grief.

It’s too much to put into words for me as well. It’s a human dimension of a tragedy so difficult to comprehend. And still - it’s a very true report of what is going on in Ukraine.

That’s why I don’t like documentary photography.”

(Igor Manko)

This exhibition is part of the “Witness Ukraine”. The 2025-26 exhibition series includes the work of seven Ukraine photographers and their documentation of the war. The series also includes a film series by Alena Grom and her responses to the war.

Kasper Kedzierski*Poland***We tried...***Curator: Małgorzata Wakuluk*

“Photography is my way of understanding a world that often feels incomprehensible. I do not document events to create a record of facts but to move closer to the emotions that accompany them. For me, these emotions are the truest testimony of reality.

The project “We Tried...” was born from a need to understand and remember a moment when thousands of people took to the streets to protest the decision of the Polish Constitutional Tribunal on October 22, 2020. It was a time when anger, helplessness, and hope merged into one shared voice — the voice of those who simply tried.

While photographing these events, I was not searching for sensation or heroism. I tried to look the way I feel — from close up, from the level of a person who is part of what is happening. I did not know where this process would lead me. I only knew that I had to trust my emotions, because they are what guide me in photography.

Over time, I realized that these images are not only about protest. They are also about our collective effort to understand one another, about the longing for agency that may not always bring change but always carries meaning.”

JOURNAL ON IMAGES AND CULTURE



The JOURNAL's aim is to publish outstanding theoretical and research manuscripts, visual dialogs, video and sound works that offer significant contributions to current scholarship and creative efforts

VASA : center for media studies

Robert Hirsch

USA

This essay examines the role of photo-based imagery in the post-Holocaust world of Jewish self-determination that led to the restoration of Israel as a Jewish homeland. The images taken by Israelis and press photographers during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, also known as the War of Independence by Israelis, offer their portrayal of the nascent state of Israel. These photographs capture the complexities and emotions of a nation in the throes of both celebration and conflict. They serve as historical documents and as powerful symbols of national identity and propaganda. It is important to note that, as these events unfolded, the Holocaust was still fresh in the minds of Jews, as the Nuremberg trials (1945-1949) continued. The defendants in this series of 13 trials included Nazi Party officials and high-ranking military officers, along with German industrialists, doctors, and lawyers who were charged with crimes against peace and crimes against humanity. Due to the number of countries and people affected, the following select examples represent uncountable events, locations, and people.

*Senator, we have a secret weapon in our battle
against the Arabs... Senator, we have
nowhere else to go!*
(Golda Meir)

The context was the Yom Kippur War, begun on October 6, 1973, when the Arab coalition, led by Egypt and Syria, jointly launched a surprise attack against Israel on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur. It ended on October 25, 1973, with an Israeli victory and the signing of a peace treaty with Egypt.

Modern Maccabees: Israel's Enduring Battle for Independence*Photography and the Holocaust: Then and Now (11 essays)***Israel's War of Independence**

The history of the Jewish people is one of beauty and horror, hope and disappointment, but their resilience lies in their 3000-year-old foundational belief that their god is in the desert.



© Arnold Newman. David Ben-Gurion, 1967

On May 14, 1948, the day the British Mandate over Palestine expired, David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Jewish Agency, proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel. U.S. President Harry S. Truman recognized the new nation that night with USSR following three days later. The declaration included the following:

*WE APPEAL – in the very midst of the onslaught
launched against us now for months – to the Arab
inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and*

*participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis
of full and equal citizenship and due representation
in all its provisional and permanent institutions.*

*WE EXTEND our hand to all neighbouring states
and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neigh-
bourliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of
cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jew-
ish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel
is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the
advancement of the entire Middle East.*

Israel's socialist government rejected the simple organization of tribalism and extended an invitation for the Arabs to join in finding the possibility of common dignity. It was a clear statement that one's outward identity is not a repository for one's specific character or values. What immediately transpired was neighboring Arab states, including Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia launched a coordinated war to destroy the new state.

This was not surprising as on-going conflicts between Arabs and Jews spilled out in the open after the fall of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War 1. The battle of Tel Hai (March 1, 1920), a Jewish settlement in northern Palestine, exemplifies the early Zionist-Arab conflicts. It was attacked by local Arabs, resulting in the death of its defenders, underscoring the growing tensions between Jews and Arabs in Palestine (...).

Bruce Jackson

USA

This is as much a memorial service as it is a photo exhibit. A memorial to an important piece of Buffalo history, industrial history and architectural history forever, and gratuitously, lost. It is a loss, as architectural historian Frank Kowski put it, on a par with the demolition in 1950 of Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Administration Building in Buffalo to make room for as parking lot.

There are many people who, over the past 14 years, helped me understand the history, character and significance of Buffalo's grain elevators. I want to name one in particular: Tim Tielman, not only for his help in this project but more for his unwavering dedication to saving the Great Northern. If they ever put up a plaque at that now-vacant site, like the ones they put up at battlefields where people needlessly died, Tim's name ought to be inscribed on it.

These photos

I thought I was through photographing Buffalo's grain elevators when *American Chartres: Buffalo's Waterfront Grain Elevators* was published in 2016. I'd taken all the photos I needed to document the grain elevators then; I'd written all I had to say about them.

By the time I finished that work, the scene was already changing: there was a bar (Duende) and new fences at Silo City, the group of elevators on Childs Street. The street had been renamed Silo City Row. And work had begun on Riverworks, what is now a huge entertainment complex that, in large part, makes use of several other grain elevators.

On December 11, 2021, a vicious winter wind blasted a hole in the brick curtain surrounding the Great Northern. When I went down to photograph, it was to get a post-script photo, just for me and for the group of prints that I'd one day give the Buffalo Historical Society.

At first, I didn't think it was a big deal. Almost exactly the same thing had happened once before: in 1907 a similar chunk popped out of the south wall of the same brick curtain in an 87mph windstorm. It was repaired as soon as warm weather returned and that was the end of the matter. But this time would be different, very different.



Hole in the Great Northern's brick curtain caused by December 13, 2021 storm.

The Brick Curtain

The surviving Buffalo grain elevators show you what they are from the outside—the partial cylinders you

Killing a Grain Elevator: A Buffalo Crime Story*Thoughts On Photography (6 essays)*

see at Silo City and Riverworks are the exteriors of the actual silos. There are working spaces at the tops and bottoms, but nothing separates the concrete silos from the world.

The Great Northern was different. Its silos were made of steel and they were entirely hidden behind a brick curtain. That curtain served no structural function whatsoever. It supported nothing. Its only job was to keep foul weather away from the huge steel machine inside and the workers who tended it.

In Spring 2022, as I watched demolition crews destroy more and more of that brick curtain and began tearing away at the steel structure within, something seemed amiss. The huge machine that was being ripped apart seemed unlike the fragile structure described in the demolition stories I'd read online and in the Buffalo News.

Sometimes when I crossed the train tracks between Ganson Street and the Great Northern, and tried photographing through the chain link fence surrounding the whole complex, a security vehicle would appear from nowhere. Usually, the driver would just sit and stare at me. Sometimes the driver would shoo me away. They could chase me from the tracks and along the fence; they couldn't keep me off Ganson Street, although sometimes one of the cars would pull up nearby and the driver would start the staring routine.

I got to know some people who were regulars there. They came to watch the demolition (...).

Alexandra Guerman*Australia*

Alexandra Guerman is a Sydney-based researcher and curator. Alexandra has a Bachelor of Creative Arts and New Media (2001) from University of Wollongong and Master of Curating and Cultural Leadership (2022) University of NSW. Her research interests include critique and methodology of post-Socialism; postmodernism, postcolonialism, as well as global art and global art history.



Brenda L. Croft, Gurindji/Malngin/Mudpurra peoples

While white Australia was getting ready for celebrations that commemorated 200 years since the arrival of First Fleet, the Aboriginal Australia was documenting their protests of invasion. "Australia's Bicentenary provided impetuous for compelling docu-

Colonial to Contemporary Photography in Australia: Re-Representation*Colonial to Contemporary Photography in Australia (3 essays)*

mentary photography, that allowed for First Nations people to reclaim their identity and representations." It is around this time, in the 1980's that a number of Aboriginal Australian photographers emerged on the art scene. This emergence can also be attributed to the increased access of institutional art education, which was a relatively new thing at the time.

Brenda L. Croft, a Gurindji/Malngin/Mudburra woman was one of these emerging artists that started out by photographing protests around and during Bicentennial celebrations. Living in Redfern, an area which was a densely populated by Aboriginal community at the time, she found herself in the middle of action, that enabled her to document freedom marches and protests. Croft recalls, that by being urban-based Aboriginal person she didn't feel the affinity with the traditional forms of Aboriginal art such as dot painting which at the time was being pushed as the only form of art for Aboriginal artists. Croft majored in photography at Sydney College of the Arts in 1985 and in 1986 exhibited in the first photographic exhibition of the Indigenous artists, which was NADOC '86 Exhibition of Aboriginal and Islander Photographers at the Aboriginal Artists Gallery, Sydney.

Croft soon felt dissatisfied with the social documentary style of photography, which in her opinion lacked intimacy. She preferred to photograph people that knew her and felt comfortable with what she was trying to do, which was to show members of



Brenda L Croft (Gurindji/Malngin/Mudburra Peoples), Barangaroo (army of me), Brenda L Croft, (Gurindji/Malngin/Mudburra Peoples) Naabami (thou shall/will see), 2023 photographed by Daniel Boud

Aboriginal community in a completely different setting to what has been the standard ethnographic or documentary style. In her work *The Big Deal is Black*, 1993, Croft depicts themes that are rarely seen in the mainstream media. She is representing Aboriginal women and their families in a truthful and willing way, contrary to the established view of the dominant coloniser culture. These are colour, large almost life scale photographs featuring confident, happy, proud people equal to the viewer. The subjects in her photographs are no longer specimens or victims, they are photographed not the clinical way but in their own homes. These photographs are in complete contrast to the earlier colonial photographs of Foelsche and Lindt (...).

Carla Della Beffa

Italy

Hi, I'm Carla Della Beffa, I'm a visual artist and writer from Italy, my contribution will be about books: photo-books, artist's books, and in between. I use digital photography, don't have a bag full of lenses—I want to stay light. I like to notice a neglected detail and tell the story of what it hides. A bit like Wolfgang Tillmans, who will never know it but is my spirit guide, for his ability to appreciate and photograph everything. Everything matters: not by chance, one of his books is titled *If one thing matters, everything matters*.

For more than a century, photographers have published book after book, often following the same tradition as painting catalogues: two or three introductory critical essays, and then the photos, all together, all laid out on the right-hand pages, with title and year on the left. They're books describing each time a different series, and are often very beautiful. But just as often, they rely on the image to say everything. I love words too much—just looking wears me out. Words add concepts and sounds, a kind of soundtrack (I don't know about you, but I can hear it). They're not always indispensable, but they carry weight, especially if chosen well.

Every author has specific method and processes in choosing what to see and shoot, what to put in a book. The how and why. I will talk about mine, and some others', in this article and in the few that will come next.

In my work, I combine small things and small sto-

ries to reach a bigger story—one that concerns the experience of many, if not everyone: economy, food, colors, travel, women, light. To do this, I can add lists of words, signs, stories, or create image sequences. It depends on the idea, and on my confidence in myself, in that moment, in that project.



In 2002, after an exhibition at the online art gallery of the University of Auckland, NZ, curated by Luke Duncafe, I published a book, *la cucina italiana: just a few pages*, 50 numbered and signed copies. Images of food, with the name and its phonetic transcription. Because everyone loves Italian food, but they don't always know how to pronounce it. Because I wanted it to be an Italian project but not a tourist cliché. And also because when I write, when I read, I hear the sound of words.

If I have an important series, at some point I turn it into a book. The first reason is that I want to refine

Food and people: some epic journeys

Artist's books, photobooks and what's between (A Thematic Thread)

the idea, define it, make it alive and concrete. Bring it out of me. Touch it, instead of just having it in my mind or on the computer. Often, exhibitions follow the book. The motivation changes: a book project isn't the same as an exhibition project. The book is part of the artwork; the exhibition comes later, once the work is finished, and makes it known. The method changes too: there are images, and there is narration. The text isn't a caption, but it creates a dialogue with the image, giving it another depth (I learned that in my previous life, years of a career in advertising). Even Goya's etchings have titles that provoke thought, beyond the caption. Sometimes photos stand on their own and need nothing else. Unfortunately, it's not always possible to make books or exhibitions: some works wait years, and some wither away. They stay there, a bit sad, overtaken by events, by time.

BabelFood is a 2005 book, a project on the history and journeys of food. The photos are part of the series of the same name, marked with an upside-down compass rose. The idea was to recall what we often forget: foods like potatoes and tomatoes, and drinks like coffee, were imported into Europe after 1492, and took a long time to enter our habits. Bread and wine—that is, wheat and vines—came from the Middle East with the nomadic peoples of antiquity. A kind of pizza existed in Roman times, without tomato or mozzarella: just bread, wild herbs, a bit of oil and salt. Wars were fought over salt. "Zuccherò" (sugar) is an Arabic word (...).

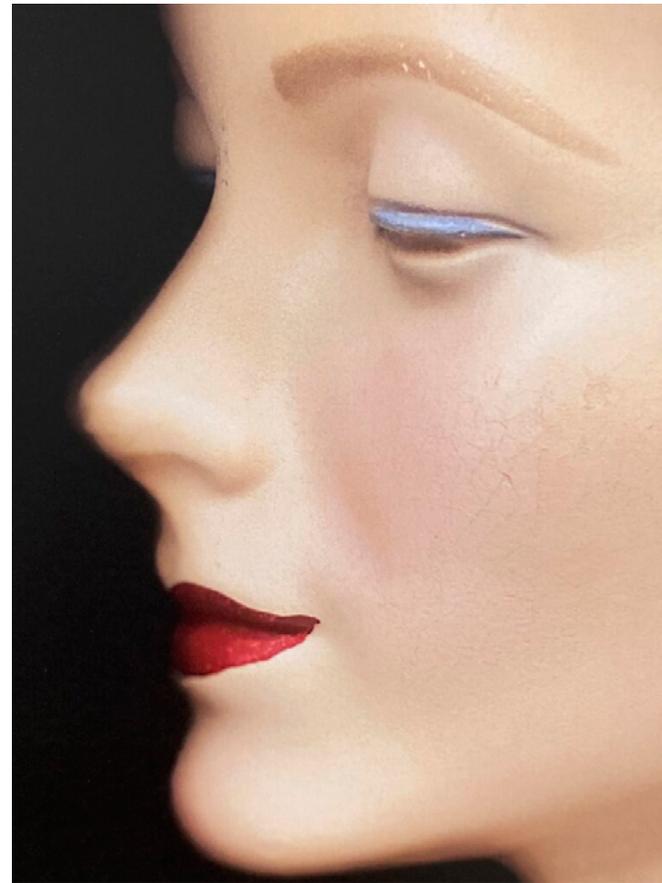
Sarah Jabbari*Iran*

Identity is not a fixed concept, it is constantly shaped, challenged, and reshaped by cultural, political, and societal forces. Under the theme *(Re) shaping Identity: Resistance, Conformity, and Representation*, this series of three essays examines how identity is constructed, performed, and negotiated in contemporary society. Each essay focuses on the work of a different photographer, exploring unique perspectives on identity formation, from the homogenization of self-hood under consumer culture to acts of cultural resistance and reclamation. Harald Woschitz critiques the mass production of identity in consumer-driven societies, using mannequins as symbols of power, conformity, and representation. Michael Michlmayr takes this a step further, replacing human faces with mannequin portraits in public spaces, challenging how visual culture dictates self-perception. Finally, Sarah Jabbari's work shifts the focus from consumerism to political and cultural resistance, capturing how Iranians reclaim their pre-Islamic identity in defiance of imposed narratives. Together, these three essays explore the tension between individuality and societal pressures, questioning how identity is shaped, whether by external forces or through acts of defiance and self-reclamation.

“Identity is a multifaceted construct influenced by cultural, political, and societal forces. Harald Woschitz utilizes mannequins to critique identity's homogenization within global consumer culture. His photographic series *Identities* transcends conventional photography, using mannequins as powerful sym-

Harald Woschitz: Identity and Power in Identities*(Re) shaping Identity: Resistance, Conformity and Representation (3 essays)*

bols to explore complex questions about identity, constructed realities, consumption, power, and representation. His photographs serve as mirrors that reflect societal ideals and trends while also prompting viewers to critically examine their own perceptions of identity and authenticity.



Using mannequins as a focal point, Woschitz raises critical questions about the nature of identi-

ty, the power structures shaping it, and the symbolic drama underlying modern representation. He interrogates whether the ideal images portrayed through mannequins align with real human desires or impose limitations on individuality. He also questions who dictates the standards that mannequins represent and whether these images reflect reality or construct a fabricated version of it. By raising these points, Woschitz encourages viewers to reflect on how visual symbols influence their understanding of self and society.

Woschitz's mannequins highlight the tension between individuality and societal conformity. The mannequins, as “time-bound ideals,” embody how people relinquish aspects of their identity to fit into societal constructs. These static figures, faceless and genderless, echo Erving Goffman's concept of the staged self, where authenticity is often sacrificed for the sake of social approval. Trapped in rigid poses, they metaphorically depict the struggle of individuals seeking recognition while conforming to uniform societal ideals. This duality, the need to stand out and the pressure to fit in, is reinforced by the grid-like arrangement of mannequins, emphasizing a homogenized aesthetic.

Woschitz's theatrical and curated presentations of mannequins challenge the viewer's ways of seeing, compelling audiences to question the authenticity of the images they consume (...).”

Robert Hirsch, Edward Bateman

USA

There is something haunting about H.G. Wells' description of machine intelligence in his 1898 book *War of the Worlds*. "...minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes..." These intellects that we confront today are disembodied – and of our own making: Artificial Intelligences (AI). For our purposes, intelligence is the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills.

There is a digital gold rush taking place, where large and small technology corporations as well as universities are investing heavily in AI, hoping to strike the mother-load. Even technologies that have nothing directly to do with AI are joining in the hype for fear of being left behind amid a mixture of competition, opportunity, risk, and occasionally, speculative frenzy.

Historic gold rush events often reshaped local economies and societies, but also led to conflicts with those whose territories were being encroached upon. Predictions of what AI might mean range from the apocalyptic to the utopian. This has caused concern in disciplines that rely on creativity as part of their productivity and value, such as photography, graphic design, illustration and the motion picture industry. Some fear that AI will surpass our human intellectual and creative abilities. While intelligence remains difficult to define, we humans remain its measure. Biological intelligence, with its imagination, unconscious influences, hopes, and drive for innovation,



© Henrique Alvim Corrêa. H.G. Wells War of the Worlds. Illustration

are likely to remain vital. Although computers can defeat chess and Go masters, people continue to play and value these games for the challenges and benefits they present to the human mind.

Could human creativity itself be a risk? Art making and creativity are considered defining aspects of humanity. Art made in the Upper Paleolithic era is considered a sign that they were beings like us. We have

AI: Creativity & Imagemaking

AI: Creativity & Imagemaking (5 essays)

never before encountered intelligence, the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills, separated from embodiment and sentience. Is this the nature of AI and is it a threat to our deeply held beliefs in what makes humans unique on this planet? Or is it an evolution of our tool creation and use as in photography's transition from a chemical process to a digital one? Already, AI is source of readily accessible information, akin to an enhanced Google search, on almost any topic.

This series of essays will examine the nature of creativity and how AI's capabilities might impact artists and makers.

Predicting the future is always a fraught and risky proposition, but that is not our intention. We hope that a deep dive into the human act of creativity will enhance our understanding of how this evolving technology can be understood and utilized. AI itself will be a participant in these essays. When queried, AI responded with:

The effect of AI on art and artists is transformative. AI tools have enabled artists to explore new creative possibilities, from generative art to automated processes. However, concerns about the impact on artistic expression and the role of human artists remain. It is a dynamic landscape that prompts reflection on the relationship between technology and creativity (...).

Roberto Muffoletto

USA

Over the last few years interest in “street photography” is represented by the increasing number of festivals and YouTube channels focused on street photography and photographers. In addition to an increasing number of festivals and social media channels, there is a growing number street photography workshops, exhibitions and publications. A quick search on Google results in referring to over 200 notable individuals along with dozens of festivals and a growing number of publications focused on street photography. A search on Amazon (<http://Amazon.com>) produces a list of over 2000 publications noted as “street photography”. Include the images uploaded to Instagram and FaceBook, you have a massive amount of activity that falls under the street photography label. This translates into a huge number of photographers practicing street photography. With this amount of image making activity this VJIC theme inquires into the genre framed as “street photography” and will address a number of its narratives and assumptions it holds relative to “the” image, photography and the photographer. I will recognize the viewer or reader of the image, adding to the complexity of the street photography paradigm.

Street Photography Definitions

Street photography has evolved into an international activity, and for many an understanding of what it means to make photographs (images), to be a photographer, what photographs are and what they mean. In a sense street photography has given li-



© Ruth Orkin

cense to casual and committed image-makers to take to the streets and for platforms, festivals and publishers to promote the activity and generate income. After reviewing a number of YouTube channels on street photography I summarized definitions of street photography. My summary is below:

Street Photography: A Discourse on the Narrative

Street Photography (5 essays)

Photographing on the street can be a key element of street photography, but it is not the only criterion for defining someone as a street photographer.

Street photography is a genre of photography that involves taking candid, spontaneous photographs of people, objects, and events in public places.

Street photographers typically aim to capture the essence of a place or a moment and to document everyday life in an artistic and authentic way.

Further more, Mary Warner Marier (2012) offers to us an other working definition of street photography: “Photography conducted for art or enquiry that features unmediated chance encounters and random incidents within public places.” (from “What is Street Photography” YouTube video series by Brian Lloyd Duckett) Mary Warner Marien is the author of several books and hundreds of articles on photographic history, art history, and art criticism. She has taught courses on photography and art, photography and literature, as well as photographic history.

In addition, Ashok Verma in his video “What is Street Photography” offers the viewer a set of guiding keywords that define street photography.

The above definitions provides a framework for understanding and working (making images) on the street. Each word is grounded in an historical discourse that legitimizes the activity. It appears that by working outside the given definitions challenges the activity and understandings of “being a street photographer”.

VASA VIDEO / FILM SERIES



The VASA VIDEO / FILM SERIES is designed to stream an artist(s) work or to explore a theme over a period of time. The series are archived and may be accessed through the VASA platform

VASA : center for media studies

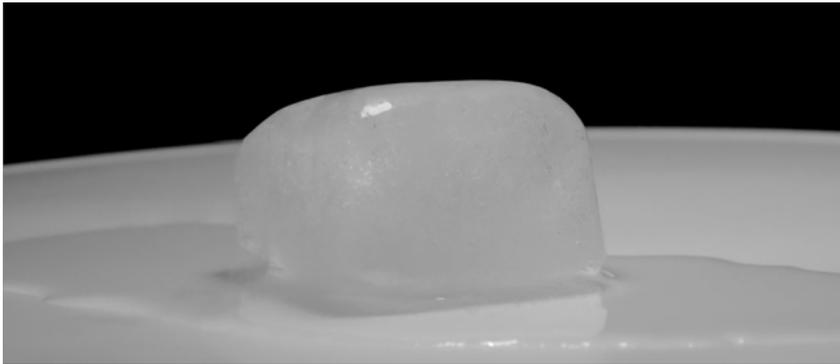
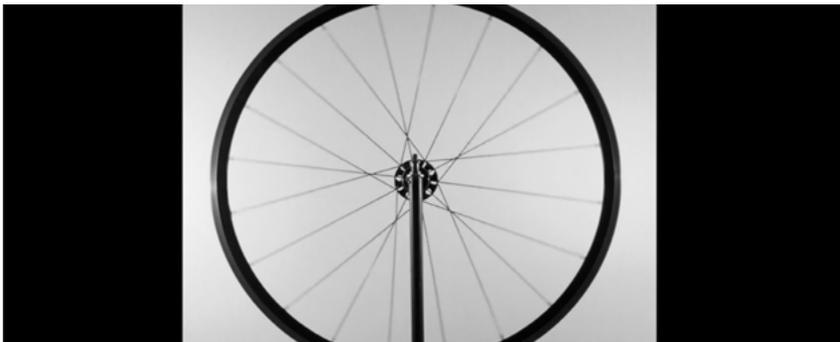
Alena Grom*Ukraine***Harvest***Curator: Roberto Muffoletto*

Alena Grom was born in Donetsk, Ukraine, where she lived until 2014. In January that year she ran a housewarming party in her long awaited newlybuilt house. In April 2014, when the separatist coup began, she had to abandon it and flee to a refuge in Kyiv. Later her house, left unattended, was robbed by marauders, there were shootings and pools of blood inside it.

The artist keeps returning to the frontline territory in Donbas to make her projects. The videos displayed here are the artist responses to conditions in what Grom refer to as the “The Gray Zone”.
(*Igor Manko*)

This film is part of the “Witness Ukraine”. The 2025-26 exhibition series includes the work of seven Ukraine photographers and their documentation of the war. The series also includes a film series by Alena Grom and her responses to the war.
time: 11:57 min/sec

Stills from *Harvest* © Alena Grom

Michael Michlmayr*Austria***Three short films***Curator: Roberto Muffoletto*Still from *Reconversion* © Michael MichlmayrStill from *Circling Wheel* © Michael MichlmayrStill from *Pas de Deux* © Michael Michlmayr

Michael Michlmayr is a photographer and videoartist from Vienna, Austria.

“The future is movement – a constant interplay between acceleration and deceleration, between progress and regression.

In the video triptych Bidirectional — 1 Reconversion, 2 Circling Wheel, and 3 Pas de Deux — this dynamic becomes perceptible through a play of time and perception. Optical illusions inherent to the medium of film come into play here, creating moments of disorientation and making wishful visions appear real. States that are irreversible in reality are restored here.”

time: *Reconversion 3m 22 sec*
 Circling Wheel 3m 20sec
 Pas de Deux 3m 31sec

ARTIST AND AUTHOR INDEX

*Artists', curators', and authors' names
are referred to corresponding pages
in this publication*

Edward Bateman	17
Carla Della Beffa	15
Sandeep Biswas	2
Alena Grom	20
Alexandra Guerman	14
Robert Hirsch	12, 17
Sarah Jabbari	16
Bruce Jackson	13
Kasper Kedzierski	10
Dmytro Kupriyan	7
Igor Manko	7
Michael Michlmayr	21
Marlena Cechmistrz Milczarek	3
Roberto Muffoletto	2, 5, 9, 18, 20, 21
Oksana Parafeniuk	9
Jan Skwara	6
Małgorzata Wakuluk	3, 5, 6, 10
Andrea Zampatti	8
Ramona Zordini	4
Stefania Zorzi	4, 8



Published by VASA, 2026
All rights reserved © VASA
Produced by Igor Manko

The e-catalog may be freely distributed.
Visit VASA: <http://vasa-project.com>
For more information email:
vasa@vasa-project.com