



Book Presentation by Giulia Paoletti
and Panel Discussion with the author,
N'Goné Fall, Nanina Guyer, moderated
by Bettina Gockel

26. September 2024, 6.15 p.m.
University of Zurich
Karl Schmid-Strasse 4, 8006 Zurich
Room: KO2-F-150
khist.uzh.ch

Negotiating the Visible: Photography in Senegal and Beyond

Book Presentation

Prof. Dr. Giulia Paoletti, Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Virginia, will present her recent book *Portrait and Place: Photography in Senegal, 1840–1960* (Princeton University Press, 2024).

Based on research conducted over the past 15 years, the book is the first to focus exclusively on Senegal, as one of the epicenters of African modernity, at the intersection of Black Atlantic, Islamic, and African cultures. In her talk, Giulia Paoletti will offer a visual journey from the 1840s, when the oldest-surviving daguerreotype from West Africa was made, to the 1960s, when photography became the most popular medium as Senegal achieved its independence. She will discuss Africa's most celebrated modernists, such as Mama Casset, and also offer insights into lesser-known photographers like Oumar Ka and once-anonymous figures such as Macky Kane. In considering a variety of genres and media including glass painting and lithography, this study privileges the close study of photographs as constantly engaged in a dynamic process of circulation, negotiation, and conversion, within, across and beyond the colonial empire. As such, the photograph appears as a moving image that demands we stop looking at it and "instead start watching it," as it negotiates the visible.

Prof. Dr. Giulia Paoletti is Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Virginia with a focus on nineteenth and twentieth century African art.

Dr. Nanina Guyer is Curator for Photography and Head of the Photo Archive at the Museum Rietberg, Zurich.

N'Goné Fall is an independent curator, art critic, and consultant in cultural engineering with a focus on African contemporary art.

Foto: Macky Kane, Portrait of Mrs. Fatou Thioune, Saint Louis, 1939–1941. Scan from gelatin negative, 3.5 × 5 in. (9 × 13 cm). © Photo Macky KANE [Saint Louis, Senegal] / Courtesy Estate of Macky KANE – REVUE NOIRE Paris. Collection Revue Noire, Paris.

Panel Discussion

N'Goné Fall, **Dr. Nanina Guyer**, and **Prof. Dr. Bettina Gockel** will discuss the book together with the author along the following thematic lines: The social aspects and categories in West-African photography (for instance portrait photography, family albums and the sociocultural and economic backgrounds of the studio clientele), the role of postcards as a mass-produced, widely circulating medium, documentary photography, and, not least, the bigger picture: How do we address early photography in relation to contemporary art photography, the technological aspects of the medium itself, as well as working structures of studio photographers in a global context?

The panel participants will introduce research in their fields and institutions, recent exhibitions, publications, field work, and initiatives of and for younger researchers, presenting a diverse, critical and widened picture of a geography of photography.

Organisation

Prof. Dr. Bettina Gockel, Dr. Stella Jungmann, University of Zurich; Dr. Nanina Guyer, Museum Rietberg

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