

Öffentlicher Abendvortrag  
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# In Absentia: The Politics of Cameraless Photography

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How can a photograph of nothing—of nothing discernable or apparently significant—be said to offer some useful political purchase on the world it inhabits? How can a photograph that represents, but does not depict, a given situation be freighted with historical knowledge and import? Confining itself to examples of cameraless photography, from the 1830s to now, this paper will ask these questions with a view to determining a politics for such photographs in the present. In fact, given our contemporary context, cameraless photographs assume that photography is always already a politics; to engage the visual and chemical grammar of the photograph is to dispute and challenge that fixity of that politics. To make such photographs returns photography to a unique, hand-made craft and away from global capitalism and its vast economies of mass exploitation. Not that these photographs are innocent; on the contrary they are often generated by actions that are toxic, radioactive, enigmatic, violent, dangerous. Nor are they “abstract”. Instead, they redefine the nature of photography’s realism as well as its potential as a political agent.

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Foto: Shimpei Takeda  
Trace #7, Nihonmatsu Castle (Nihonmatsu, Fukushima), 2012  
Silbergelatine-Abzug, 40.0 × 50.5 cm



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