



Blind Spot

21st October 2016
Exhibition Laboratory
Merimiehenkatu 36
Helsinki

Diaphanes is an interdisciplinary network aimed at connecting researchers from diverse disciplines with an interest in visuality.

The *Blind Spot* symposium, the first event organised by *Diaphanes*, serves as a forum for discussing and developing ideas of visual research. The visually inflected title refers to the fact that aims, notions, and questions shared in multidisciplinary research settings often mark decisive differences in approach as well. When addressed well, blind spots of these kinds can, however, function as generators of genuinely new insights with relevance across discipline boundaries.

Programme

- 10.00 **Opening remarks**
Mika Elo, Academy of Fine Arts, Uniarts Helsinki
- 10.05 **The Diaphanes network**
Asko Lehmuskallio, University of Tampere
- 10.15 **Keynote address: 'To Live Is to Be Photo-Mediated'**
Sarah Kember, Goldsmiths, University of London

'What are we to make of Sontag's enigmatic assertion that "to live is to be photographed"? If that is so, what then is the ontological, political, and ethical status of the photographic – and, for that matter, of life itself? In the wake of digital apocalypticism, a more vitalist account of photography is legitimate but cannot operate in opposition to instrumentalism, surveillance, control, and marketisation, all of which grow in environments of ubiquity. Through exploration of ubiquitous, "smart" photographic practices such as face recognition technology, I will outline an interventionist rather than oppositional strategy, oriented toward the photographic cut and the challenge of cutting better. I will also expose, as a blind spot, the dialectic of an invisible process – that of photo-mediation – and visible/visual photographic power.'

- 11.15 **Discussion**
Moderator: Janne Seppänen, University of Tampere

12.30 **Lunch**

13.30 **Short presentations**

Lived Experience, Multi-sensuous Spectatorship, and Challenges of Contemporary Art

Saara Hacklin

'My PhD thesis, from 2012, discusses Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology in a dialogue with contemporary art. Now I am preparing a manuscript for a book that examines the impact of phenomenology within art research. Besides conducting research, I have been working as a curator and writer. My most recent curatorial project, the current collection exhibition at Kiasma, involved examining affects in contemporary art.'

Exhibition Practices

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger, Academy of Fine Arts, Uniarts Helsinki

'I'm interested in how various exhibiting organisations deal with contemporary technological, social, and aesthetic transformations of photography. Digital culture influences issues such as the status of a work of art and authorship, interdisciplinarity among fields within art, and the visual language – the “new aesthetic” – which means that pictoriality permeates various forms of art.'

Histories of Finnish Photography

Merja Salo, Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture

'My research topic is the history, or histories, of Finnish photography. I have been teaching history of photography since 1991 and been attempting to fill some evident gaps in our national history. My latest book, *Jokapaikan valokuva* (2015), chronicles the development of digital photography in Finland and how this new technology affected the professional fields of photojournalism, studio photography, art photography, and amateur photography. In addition, photojournalism was the topic of my work *Imageware – kuvajournalismi mediafuusiossa* (2000) and the discussion of fashion photography in *Muodin ikuistajat – muotivalokuvaus Suomessa* (2005). Writing these histories involved using methods such as structured interviews to gather data.'

Urban Aesthetics: Building upon Visual Cues in the Everyday Environment

Sanna Lehtinen, University of Helsinki

'How urban space sustains, reflects, and affects urban everyday experiences is at the focus of the research project. Various intentional activities – from guerrilla gardening to property development – aimed at enhancing the urban experience are examined in the context of everyday aesthetics, in application of a relatively new approach within the field of environmental aesthetics. Better understanding of the role of the aesthetic in relationship to our immediate surroundings should be of assistance to cities' residents, design professionals, and decision-makers alike.'

A Media Aesthetic Approach to Visual Culture

Mika Elo, Academy of Fine Arts, Uniarts Helsinki

'My most recent research focuses on the relationship between visuality and algorithmic processes. I am especially interested in culturally conditioned hierarchies related to the various dimensions of sense.'

Visual Expertise in Radiology: Evidence from Eye Movement Experiments

Raymond Bertram, University of Turku

Mathematics and Photography

Samuli Siltanen, University of Helsinki

'Digital photographs are, in essence, arrays of numbers. These numbers specify the colour of each pixel in the image. Therefore, any enhancement or processing of digital images means modifying the numbers via mathematical operations. Modern mathematical research offers many interesting techniques for artists and other image professionals. For example, inpainting methods automatically fill in missing areas (such as portions covered by text), thereby creating specific visual effects, and noise removal and de-blurring algorithms produce their own look. Examples of mathematical image processing are presented, in the hope of finding new and surprising applications for them.'

Museum Writes History

Elina Heikka, Finnish Museum of Photography

'I will discuss the historiography of Finnish photography and outline the active role of the Finnish Museum of Photography among other actors in history-writing. The Finnish Museum of Photography, founded in 1969, is the oldest museum of photography in Europe.'

Interdisciplinary Research on the Relations between Images, Pictures, and Minds

Jukka Häkkinen, Poika Isokoski, Asko Lehmuskallio, MIPI

'By focusing on seeing photographs, we discuss some of the blind spots that our respective disciplines' approaches cast light on while they leave other areas of possible interest in the shadows. Our respective approaches have their roots in the fields of perceptual psychology, human-computer interaction, and visual studies.'

15.30 Exhibition laboratory

Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger, Academy of Fine Arts, Uniarts Helsinki

16.00 Reception

You can join Diaphanes and the network's e-mail list by following the instructions at: <https://goo.gl/J8Qge6>

