

Abstract

This essay explores the idea of photographs of exhibitions, often used as archival materials for studying the history of exhibitions, as a specific genre of image making. It explores the basic concepts, conventions, and functions of so-called “installation shots” or “exhibition views,” and constructs a basic typology of typical visual elements by studying the approximately 600 photographs reproduced in *Mousse Magazine’s* 2015-2016 issue #51 entitled “Exhibition Views 1985-1995.” In particular, this essay considers the way exhibition photographs reify images of complex spaces and events while simultaneously suggesting narrative, movement, and complexity in their static imagery. ●

Resumo

Este ensaio explora a ideia de que a fotografia de exposições, muitas vezes usada como material de arquivo para o estudo da sua história, pode ser entendida como um gênero de criação de imagens específico. Explorando conceitos básicos, convenções e funções das chamadas “imagens de instalação” ou “vistas de exposição”, constrói-se uma tipologia básica de elementos visuais recorrentes, a partir do estudo das cerca de 600 fotografias reproduzidas no número 51 da Revista *Mousse* intitulado “Exhibition Views 1985-1995” (2015-2016). Em particular, será abordada a forma como as fotografias de exposição reificam imagens de espaços e eventos complexos, ao mesmo tempo que sugerem narrativa, movimento e complexidade através do seu imaginário estático. ●

Keywords

keywords

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Palavras-chave

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EXHIBITION VIEWS

TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF THE INSTALLATION SHOT

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Published in winter 2015-2016, the fifty-first issue of the contemporary art journal *Mousse Magazine* examined the theme “Exhibition Views, 1985-1995.” The 344-page publication presented a roster of 270 “consequential”, “innovative”, or “historicized” art exhibitions – from smaller gallery exhibits like Sue Williams’ solo show at New York’s 303 Gallery (1992) to large-scale events like the 1987 *Skulptur Projekte Münster* – all produced in the critical theory, mass media, big money, new technology, do-it-yourself environment of the late 80s and early 90s. Calling itself an “album of recommendations” compiled from the “favorite shows” of “writers, artists, curators, dealers, and friends” of the editors, the special issue finds its place alongside other anthologies that chart a trajectory of landmark historical art exhibitions.¹ Publications from Ian Dunlop’s 1972 *The Shock of the New: Seven Historic Exhibitions of Modern Art* to Jens Hoffmann’s 2014 *Show Time: The 50 Most Influential Exhibitions of Contemporary Art* construct a canon of well-studied examples at the center of a “history of exhibitions.”² But as much as *Mousse* 51 offers another list of significant events, it simultaneously presents itself as a photo album of “exhibition views”, unique images that offer glimpses of artworks on display. The issue therefore takes up an under-addressed aspect of exhibition studies: the question of photographic images of exhibitions, also known as “installation shots.” As the *Mousse* editors note, their period of focus represents the moment just before exhibitions “went online” and became subject to constant photographic documentation by organizers and audiences alike. This shift has both transformed the way we interact with displays of art as well as cemented the exhibition view as a “requisite genre” of photography.

The idea of exhibition photography as a defined genre with attendant conventions, meanings, and functions begins to take shape in this essay, part of a larger in-progress study that historicizes and theorizes the installation shot. Here, a set of fundamental concepts and a basic typology of conventional visual codes are

¹ This introductory text appears on page one of the magazine as well as on *Mousse* 51’s website: <http://moussomagazine.it/1985-1995-exhibition-views-2015/> (last accessed April 2019).

² Other examples include Altshuler, Roters, and Afterall Books’ multivolume series “Exhibition Histories”.

gleaned from historical examples and the readymade “data set” created from the approximately 600 photographs in *Mousse 51*. This extensive set of images, made primarily by numerous professional photographers both named and unknown, offers a circumscribed, yet randomized, collection, more diverse than the series of regularly reproduced shots from iconic (often modern or avant-garde) exhibitions like New York’s 1913 “Armory Show”, the 1915 *Last Exhibition of Futurist Painting 0,10* in Petrograd, or the 1920 *First International Dada Fair* in Berlin. *Mousse 51* also provides a more manageable set of examples relative to the countless installation shots currently found in exhibition catalogues, books, magazines, newspapers, and archives, but also on museum, exhibition, and gallery websites, as well as online publications, private smartphones, photo apps, and social media accounts across the world. This essay outlines some key issues surrounding exhibition photography and molds an emerging typology of the genre through *Mousse 51*’s unique archive.

Exhibition views and installation shots

Whether called “exhibition views” or “installation shots”³, photographs of temporary exhibitions, museum spaces, and other types of displays share a basic definition. Typically (but not exclusively) documentary in function, they record works of art intentionally on display in a space consciously arranged for viewing. Often they are formally commissioned by museums, galleries, or event organizers with a particular style, strategy, or function in mind. Sometimes they are made informally or independently by autonomous, amateur, or anonymous photographers with greater artistic control. In either case, these photographs are always constructed compositions that remake and mediate their fundamental subject matter.

Installation shots might also be said to possess a special status as images. That is, they are themselves aesthetic compositions that contain and display other aesthetic compositions, although their subjects (“original” artworks and “real” exhibitionary spaces) are more readily and traditionally recognizable as such. Thus, while they function differently, exhibition views are of the same order as their subjects; they are images of images, pictures of pictures, compositions of compositions. Each installation shot invites conscious or unconscious comparisons between the photograph itself and its contents, and therefore between the image-making powers of the photographer and those of the artist. Installation shots also operate (and often represent themselves) as miniature, two-dimensional “exhibits” or “museums” constructed by a photographer who re-curates and archives the scene.⁴ Thus, they not only suggest parallels between the defining power of the photographer who makes “permanent” the ephemeral work of the curator or art institution, they also re-inscribe the significance of “exhibiting” as “the medium through which most art becomes known” and accumulates value (Greenberg et al 1996, 2).

³ Claire Bishop notes that the term “installation shot” originally referred to photos of installation art before the term “installation” became a broader reference to exhibitions (Bishop 2005, 6).

⁴ As I discuss elsewhere, one way to consider the installation shot is as a dialogue among three types of image-making agents: artists, curators, and photographers. See Floyd 2015, 187-188.

⁵ Brüderlin’s text appears in the catalogue of a 1993 exhibition he curated for the Hochschule für angewandte Kunst in Vienna, *Das Bild der Ausstellung/The Image of the Exhibition*. Today, it remains one of the few sustained discussions of this type of photography. Other examinations include Brian O’Doherty’s now-classic *Inside the White Cube*, where installation shots form part of his important argument about the idealizing and commodifying strategies of the modernist gallery. A very recent chapter (2018) by Julie Sheldon tracks important historical examples of the form, including Le Gray’s photographs, in terms of concepts of modernism and considers the relationship of the installation shot to modern modes of display. The vast literature on copies and photographic reproductions of works of art, the relationship of photography to the museum as well as to three-dimensional sculpture, and the history of architectural photography is also crucial to thinking about exhibition views.

Exhibition views, including those in *Mousse 51*, therefore simultaneously exist as exhibitions and images that reproduce exhibitions and images. Or, as Markus Bröderlin writes, “the image turns into an exhibition and the exhibition turns into an image” (8).⁵ The act of looking at an installation shot therefore doubles our spectatorship as we look through one image-exhibition and into another. That these two-dimensional, photographic exhibition “spaces” today may be consumed in increasingly diverse formats, sizes, and media, from printed reproductions in the pages of books, newspapers, and magazines to digital images projected on large screens in auditoriums or on small cellphone displays, speaks not only to their power and ubiquity but to their further complexity. Multiple layers of creating, presenting, representing, documenting, disseminating, and receiving undertaken by sometimes-collaborating, sometimes-competing creators and institutions are bound up in each installation shot and its history. Each photograph raises equally complicated questions about the fundamental, perhaps even determinative power of documentation and mediation in defining and understanding both art objects and the attendant disciplines and institutions that perform the creation and continuation of aesthetic values.

The history of exhibition photography, too expansive to recount in detail here, offers numerous opportunities to locate the installation shot’s longstanding and powerful functions, meanings, and conventions, in some ways little changed since its origins. Gustave Le Gray’s photographs of the annual Paris Salons of 1850-1853, some of the earliest examples of this type of photographic practice, anticipate, for example, the still-pervasive camera angles seen in many of the *Mousse* examples and demonstrate the typical installation shot’s point of view, namely, the approximate eye level of a standing viewer (Fig. 1). This approach frames exhibitions and artworks in ways that signify, replicate, and reinscribe the actual experience of the exhibition, despite the unreal and idealized rectangular frame and fixed, unchan-



Fig. 1 – Gustave Le Gray, Gallery near the Salon Carré, the Salon of 1850-51. Musée d’Orsay, Paris.

ging sightline. While human eyes attached to moving visitors constantly shift and rove, exhibition views often compose their subjects along perspectival systems that reinforce the rectilinear structures of the traditional gallery, especially the modernist “white cube”, and favor symmetry, balance, and harmonious compositions that assert the two-dimensional surface of the photograph. In this way, installation shots are tied to earlier artistic traditions of “images of images”, from various types of reproductions of individual works of art to representations of the spaces and places of image consumption. Paintings and prints of cabinets and *Wunderkammern*, real or allegorical gallery scenes, pictures of artists’ studios, souvenir Salon prints, as well as more general subjects of still life and interior architectural views, all inform the modern exhibition photograph.

Le Gray’s Salon photographs also point to the central problem of authorship that lies at the heart of photographs of exhibitions, a kind of tension among three creative forces: the artist whose original work is on view; the curator who organizes and shapes the exhibition; and the photographer who records it all. Le Gray, who wished to be an artist, experienced the repeated refusal of his works from the annual Salon (Maufras 2002, 340). Nevertheless, Philippe de Chennevières, Inspector of Provincial Museums and organizer of exhibitions of living artists, commissioned him to document the Salons (Bolloch 2006, 20). Le Gray’s photographs, beautiful, harmonious arrangements noted for their “skillful handling of volume, the overhead lighting, and the whiteness of the marble”, exert themselves as aesthetic images on par with the classicizing images and spaces he records (Aubenas 2002, 359). While the Salon was a “theatre of success from which he had been excluded”, the assignment, which seems to have come with little direction from the curator, offered Le Gray “a chance at revenge, of a sort” (ibid., 359). That is, not only could Le Gray assert his own skills by means of the photograph, visually juxtaposing his expressive and technical capabilities with the virtuosity of the real “accepted” artworks (or, rather, with his images of them). As the documentarian of these scenes, he has the last word on the look and meaning of the artworks on display. In the end, photographic records like Le Gray’s photographs and *Mousse’s* album of images are the “only true reality” of these now-historical events (Brüderlin 1993, 8).

Despite their power to record and archive the ephemeral, their close ties to artistic traditions, and the “artistry” they often demonstrate, the intended functions of most exhibition views conspire to mask their makers. Because these photographs are usually produced as records of artworks, art events, and institutional practices, their most basic function is to create an effective portal that allows us to look at or see “into” an exhibition, to a greater or lesser degree, and towards the “original” works of art beyond the photograph’s picture plane. Installation shots make exhibitions, curatorial practices, institutional frameworks, and, in different ways, their contents visible. But rarely does the installation shot vociferously announce its own image-ness, let alone its status as an “artwork”⁶, even when photographers bring their creative and interpretive powers or technical and artistic skills to bear on the displays before them. In short, the exhibition view is almost always trea-

⁶ However, some photographers like Thomas Struth and Louise Lawler have made photographs of exhibitions and displays part of their fine art practices.

⁷ Questions of copyright figure here. “Ownership” of these photographs varies depending on the context of their making as well as other contractual agreements between, for example, artists, exhibiting entities, and archives.

⁸ Since the nineteenth century, a number of photographers, like Le Gray, have made “views of art objects” their specialty, although the history of this photographic trade has been little studied (Aubenas 2002, 332).

ted as a “copy” of something else (an artwork, an event, a space, an institution), rather than its own original. This hierarchy of “real” artwork and exhibition over the photograph-as-artwork-and-exhibition is evident in the way these images are often credited to the artists whose work is reproduced or to the exhibiting (often commissioning) institution. As with many installation shots, a number of the *Moussé* photographs give no mention of a photographer’s name.⁷ Even famous images of exhibitions, photographs that have shaped our understanding of the artists, movements, and events they document, are often “orphans” whose creators and creative origins are completely unknown.⁸

The widespread anonymity of exhibition photographers, despite their power to remediate and author exhibition history, underscores the typical documentary functions these photographs carry out through a wide variety of forms and formats. Indeed, one photograph may be used over time in numerous ways and may appeal to viewers differently depending on their relationship to the event. For some viewers, installation shots recall memories of shows they attended, works they have seen, or spaces they have visited. For others, they may produce a sense of desire and anticipation to see events they will view in the future. Finally, exhibition views may produce a sense of curiosity or longing for events we can never experience because they are in the past or beyond our reach.

No matter their effect, since the 1850s, installation shots have served these goals. They operate as archival records that allow art institutions, organizations, and groups to study and historicize their collections and activities. Exhibition views, made by in-house or contracted photographers, market and promote museums and exhibitions, whether reproduced as postcards, advertisements, announcements, exhibition catalogues, books, and journals, or on digital platforms like websites and social media applications. Print and online mass media outlets that report on art and culture also illustrate features, essays, and reviews with installation shots. And, in recent years, with the development of smartphones, more and more exhibition spectators are not only allowed but are encouraged to make digital photos in exhibition spaces, and share them widely to promote the individual, the art, and the exhibition in different ways. For many viewers today, experiencing an art event in person means viewing much of it through their phone screens as they make pictures and take “selfies” in the space of the gallery. In this way, the exhibition is viewed simultaneously in real-time as both a living experience and as an installation shot. This shift in spectatorship requires us to consider the ways that exhibitions today are constructed less and less as experiences in and of themselves and more and more as potential photographs and opportunities for further remediation and promotion. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some contemporary curators indeed consider the “photogenic” nature of their displays as part of the curatorial process. The expansion of installation shots in the 80s and 90s, as evidenced by the *Moussé* issue, has in fact also paralleled the rise of a “history of exhibitions”, a subfield of art history that originated in the 60s and 70s, developed in the 80s and 90s, and reached more widespread acceptance in the last two decades. No longer simply a backdrop

to artworks, the exhibition itself, whether defined as medium, process, network, or apparatus, has become a discrete subject of study for art historians. In particular, studies of individual historical events often treat them as visual and spatial “objects” as if they were discrete artworks themselves or works of installation art, a form developed contemporaneously with this subfield. Installation shots, primary documents of these examples, have played a special role in developing this field. Specifically, they have determined which events are studied and by what methods they are approached. Historical exhibitions with accompanying photographic documentation are more likely to be analyzed than events with no visual archive, and therefore are more likely to enter a “canon” of historically important events.⁹ The uneven visual documentation of historical exhibitions – Lucy Lippard, for example, notes that her generation often didn’t concern themselves with photo documentation – also skews the field (Lippard 2010, 197).¹⁰ Art history’s privileging of visual evidence, and in the case of exhibition histories, the reliance on images that are themselves highly constructed and framed, reminds us that pictures of these historical events are only small fragments (in some ways, fictive fragments) of the complexities that are an exhibition’s true nature and history. A focus on the public, visual *mise-en-scène* of an exhibition threatens to block our view of the complicated networks, processes, economies, and ideologies that lie “behind the scenes”. In our urgent and habitual desire to seek out the “original” artworks and unique designs in the installation shot, we must not forget to take notice of the photograph’s power and ability to reauthor their narratives. Each exhibition view opens a doorway, but to what?

Mousse 51

Mousse 51’s cover image similarly evokes a kind of entry into the space of an exhibition (Fig. 2). Its grape and salmon-colored design represents a grid-like “architectural” space. Reminiscent of 80s-era video games or digital modeling programs, the image also suggests the basic framework of a traditional installation shot and points to the idea of the magazine itself as a space of display. But beyond *Mousse*’s glossy exterior, typical of high-end art journals, lies a flimsy newsprint interior signifying its up-to-the-moment content. Founded in Milan in 2006 by Italian curator Edoardo Bonaspetti, editor until 2018, the respected periodical’s large tabloid format offers its international readership thoughtful essays, serious reviews, interviews with artists and curators, and numerous illustrations. Highly “curated”, each issue tracks contemporary art issues derived from the interests of staff and contributors. “I’ve always preferred projects and magazines whose editorial slant is clearly visible”, says Bonaspetti (Bonaspetti 2017). Like many journals, an online presence also bolsters *Mousse*’s print distribution. *Mousse 51*, for example, reproduces its photo album in grainy, printed format but also as sharp-focus digital imagery on its website. In another interview, Bonaspetti related this remediation to the theme of *Mousse 51*.

⁹ Bruce Altshuler, for example, notes that the availability of installation photographs was a “fundamental selection criterion” in compiling the cases that make up his two volume *Exhibitions That Made Art History* (Altshuler 2008, 7).

¹⁰ Lippard, discussing her career as a curator, states, “There’s not much documentation available. We didn’t do much of that in those days. I didn’t even have a camera...” (Lippard 2010, 197).



Fig. 2 – Cover design for *Mousse 51*, December 2015-January 2016.

“We have collected hundreds of images of exhibitions”, he notes. “They are not much circulated images. It is a sort of revival of analogue on digital, from fundamental to underground exhibitions. It is fantastic to observe how certain logics of displays and documentation changed radically since those years” (Bonaspetti 2015). *Mousse 51* indeed depicts the wide variety of innovative artistic and exhibitionary forms of the period, from alternative art spaces and massive biennials to white cubes and black boxes containing objects, installations, documentation, videos, performances, and more. And while the evolution of contemporary art since the mid-80s is apparent, the issue also demonstrates that certain aspects of exhibition documentation have remained entrenched. This tension between change and variation and a certain homogeneity and unity may also be found in the issue’s overall design. The over 250 pages of diverse, color and black/white installation shots, from 1/8 page illustrations to full two-page spreads, appear varied and collage-like, despite being arranged austere on a grid. Each exhibition is afforded a few photographs; minimal captions give the exhibition title, location, date, curator, and photo credits, but no further commentary. White space breaks up each spread creating varied, geometric rhythms across each page. Sometimes one exhibition stands alone, but more often photographs from different events converse across the fold.

Mousse 51’s scheme for sequencing the exhibitions remains unclear. Organized neither chronologically, alphabetically, nor by location, the order may reflect sets of personal choices by recommenders, a list of whom appears on page one. If so, this fact goes unremarked. Instead, in their diversity and seemingly arbitrary arrangements, the pages replicate the cacophony of images, multidirectional vistas, and unstructured physical and visual movement one experiences in “real” contemporary exhibitions. But a narrative structure throughout the photo collection sometimes bubbles up in subtle ways, from formal or thematic correspondences among photographs or exhibitions or an image’s relationship with the structure of the issue itself. For example, the issue’s album begins with a single photograph on a double-page spread from

Barbara Bloom: The Reign of Narcissism at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in 1988-1989 (44-45). Bloom, who creates conceptual installations that speak to the relationships among objects, spaces, collections, photographs, books, and other media, makes a fitting opening. The photograph's "perspectival" composition and central doorway signifies an entry point. Conversely, the issue ends with a full-page photograph by Michael Schuster of *Félix González-Torres/Rudolf Stingel* at the Neue Galerie Graz in 1994 (295). González-Torres's curtain of pearls draws a close over the photograph, the exhibition, and *Mousse* 51.

These opening and closing pages of *Mousse's* "exhibition" of exhibitions reminds us that these events are themselves narratives constructed from the discrete objects, environments, and texts that make up their design and concepts, but are also kinetic, temporal sequences produced through the movement of the spectator's eyes and body in their spaces. Sometimes a curator establishes a clear directionality the viewer should follow, but always the visitor constructs an individual self-driven narrative through her movements and choices. Mieke Bal has astutely likened such moving, time-based narratives to films. Furthermore, as Bal discusses, exhibition designs often make use of particular cinematic strategies like "scenes", and "closeups" (Bal 2007). As I argue elsewhere, if exhibitions are like films, then installation shots might in fact be their film stills, fixed (and therefore "fictive") fragments of their temporal, moving networks (Floyd 2015, 190). Film stills, as opposed to frame stills, were traditionally taken by stills photographers, often uncredited, who documented the making of a film by creating composed static images of the moving scenes shot by the cinematographer, either alongside the rolling camera or restaged after the scene wrapped. The pictures functioned as archival documents for the studio, studies for the director, and photographs for advertisements. Both photographers of film stills and of installation shots share the difficult tasks of recreating the experience of a sequential, moving narrative in a single, static image that suggests the concept of a whole and creates an appealing or informative image that can be used for different functions (Campany 2007, 7). Many of the "types" of exhibition views that follow may indeed be categorized by the ways they operate as fragments, suggest exhibitionary narratives, or replicate the "real-life" experience of an exhibition in a static composition, including the contemplation of objects and the movement of viewers in space.

Some "types" of exhibition views

The majority of exhibition photographs mimic views seen by actual spectators, even as they idealize or reauthor those vistas through formal and technical choices. Suggestions of "real-time" experiences serve as convincing "memories" for visitors or allow those who have not seen the show to (imaginatively) transport themselves "into" the event, as a preview of what they might see or as a substitute for what they cannot. In each case, however, photographers must consider how to frame

the readymade arrangements of spaces and objects from which they build their images. Indeed, it is often the architectural or spatial contexts that delimit the composition or determine the position of the camera. The “types” of exhibition views below are a few of the most basic ways that space and objects are typically ordered in installation shots. The various relationships of the camera, a stand-in for the viewer, to art objects, architectural elements, and other spectators make up some of the most common conventions.

1. Eye-level views and aerial shots

The installation shot’s ubiquitous “eye-level” approach can be recognized in most photos in *Mousse 51*. Photographs taken from a low angle near the ground or from high above a gallery, as in Rudolf Nagel’s 1991 photograph of the MMK, Frankfurt (284), are unusual (Fig. 3). Other examples include Werner Zellien’s 1991 view across the atrium of the Martin Gropius Bau at *Metropolis* (76) or a two-page spread of

Fig. 3 – Pages 284–285, *Mousse 51*, December 2015–January 2016.



a 1992 photograph by Rene Pötzscher that looks down from the top of a staircase onto the ground floor gallery of the Documenta Halle at *documenta IX* (164-165). Despite their “magisterial gaze” over and across large swaths of these exhibitions, like an establishing shot in a film or a wide vista of a landscape, these “aerial”, or “panoramic” views (Sheldon 2018, 130) provide a sense of the event’s overall space and design. At the same time, these broad vistas signify the exhibition as a whole while shaping it into an image that can be commanded and consumed in its entirety. In these photographs, the individual artworks are secondary and remain at a distance, waiting to be approached and observed.

2. Distant views and closeups

Exhibition photographs taken at eye-level also offer a variety of distant approaches to works of art as well as the rarer closeup shot. Faraway shots, while similar to panoramic views, also reify a complex space and situation into a single image. They are not always useful for identifying or analyzing particular artworks or details, or for signifying the kind of contemplation traditionally associated with viewing art; instead they suggest spatial and contextual relationships and the geography of the exhibition. Photographs where art objects are in the background, difficult to make out, or beyond the scrutiny of the viewer, create a longing to get a better look or move in closer. They may frustrate by withholding identification or information. Conversely, closeup images focused on a single object or group of objects allow close examination. They may encourage a desire to “touch” or test their “reality”. At the same time, they obliterate an understanding of an object’s placement in space or its relationship to nearby objects. In short, closeups function more like traditional image reproductions. Ben Blackwell’s 1989 photograph of Group Material’s *AIDS Timeline* at the Berkeley Museum of Art, for example, offers a closeup of two “SILENCE=DEATH” t-shirts and some nearly-legible wall text (120) (Fig. 4). A second photograph above and an image on the facing page of Martha Rosler’s 1989 exhibition at the Dia Art Foundation (121), represent more typical “hybrid” compositions in which easily viewable objects in the foreground are juxtaposed with more distant spaces in the back, often through the use of a long depth of field.

3. Floors and doors

The Group Material and Martha Rosler documents capture a common element often emphasized in installation shots. In both photographs, as well as in the photo of *7 Rooms, 7 Shows (Binging)* at MoMA PS1 from 1992-1993, the empty floor becomes significant in the depiction of the exhibition (82-83) (Fig. 5). In Blackwell’s photograph, the floor, perhaps the most dominant element in the image, stretches out

in front of the viewer like an arrow, offering up an entry into the photo and a spacious field in which to imaginatively move about. Such exhibition views construct an idealized picture of the gallery. Rarely are we afforded the space to move about so freely in an exhibition or to have such room to ourselves. In the PS1 photograph the floor also becomes a path in, around, and toward the various objects on display. The background contains a further signifier of movement. An open door proposes that there is more to see or further to go. Doorways often allow glimpses at other artworks in spaces beyond, hinting at what's to come. They suggest directionality of narrative and physical movement. In contrast to panoramic views, they assert the space (and the photograph) as a mere fragment of something larger or not easily contained. Similarly, doorways provide an "escape valve" for the viewer's focused vision and mitigate the feeling that we are held within the circumscribed space of the photograph where walls form compositional barriers on one, two, or three "sides" of the picture.

Fig. 4 – Pages 120–121, *Mousse* 51, December 2015–January 2016.

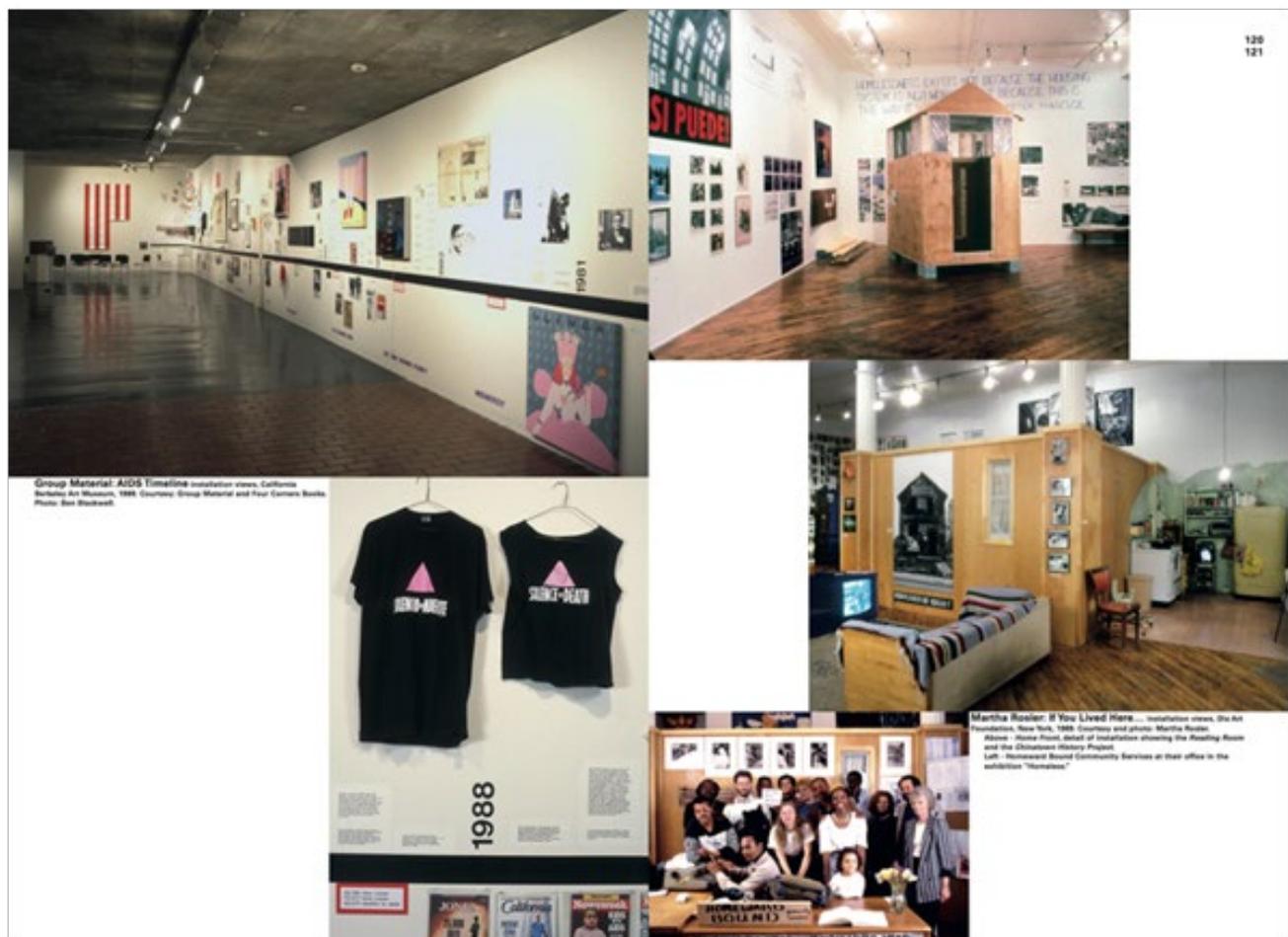




Fig. 5 – Pages 82-83, *Mousse 51*, December 2015-January 2016.

4. Walls

Exhibition photographs documenting typical rectangular galleries tend to frame the straight lines and right angles of these spaces in three ways. Some installation shots position the camera so that its sightline is perpendicular to a single, flat wall, for example, in a 1993 photograph from *Kontext Kunst: The Art of the 90s* at the Künstlerhaus Graz (50, top left) or a similar image by Jeremy Millar on the opposite page from *The Institute of Cultural Anxiety* at the ICA in London in 1994-1995 (Fig. 6). Like closeup views, these photographs depict a focused area of the show and represent the ideal, intended activity of spectators in an exhibition. That is, they replicate the vision of a static viewer, standing still and looking closely at a work or works of art. Some are strictly head-on. Others are taken at an oblique angle suggesting subtle movement down the wall. In either case, the omission of large areas of floor space, open doors, or distant artworks, underscores these images as representations of sustained looking, rather than movement.

While photos of single walls are today fairly uncommon, perhaps because they offer little formal dynamism, visual appeal, or distinct details about location, photographs that frame two walls, often “hinged” at the center of the photograph like a book spine or diptych joint, or three walls, arranged in a symmetrical, “perspectival” composition like a theatre stage, are found much more frequently. In both cases, these images allow the photographer to represent a greater sense of the spatial and object-based relationships in the gallery, create a feeling of both three-dimensional movement and two-dimensional interest. They simultaneously construct an allusion to the overarching power of the installation shot to frame, order, harmonize, and re-stage the complexities of exhibitonary events. The most idealizing views



Fig. 6 – Pages 50-51, *Mousse 51*, December 2015-January 2016.

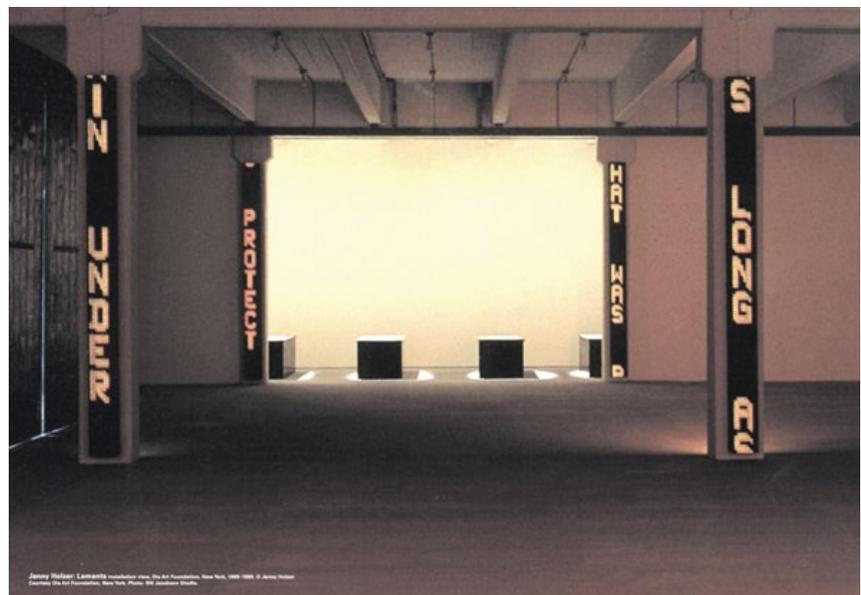


Fig. 7 – Pages 116-117, *Mousse 51*, December 2015-January 2016.

are perhaps those that depict three walls symmetrically as in the two-page photo from 1989-90 of *Jenny Holzer: Laments* at the Dia Foundation (116-117) (Fig. 7). Here, architectural elements become orthogonal projections suggesting Renaissance one-point perspective's idealized systems of space and viewership in which pictures are likened to windows through which one views, orders, and commands an illusionistic world. In this case, the photograph's picture plane becomes the fourth wall of an ideal gallery enclosing a hermetically sealed exhibition and its history within a single image.

5. Visitors and viewers

Breaking the perfect silence of these ideal galleries are the visitors and viewers that populate many installation shots. As in nineteenth-century paintings, prints, and drawings of exhibitions and galleries, figures in most installation shots are captured modeling appropriate art-viewing behavior as they observe, contemplate, converse, read, and move in space. In different ways, they invite us to identify with them and project ourselves into the photograph. Like *Rückenfiguren* in a Caspar David Friedrich painting, the anonymous visitors seen at the MMK (see Fig. 3) match our own position facing the photograph; by identifying with them we enter their scene. The blurry figures at right also signify life in the gallery, in contrast to the static, reified, and timeless perspectival images discussed above. Hans Braun's record of spectators gathered around a Robert Longo sculpture at *documenta 8* (1987) offers a further touch of the human (and humorous) (Fig. 8). Here, in an unusual framing, visitors simultaneously face both the art and meet our gaze (114). Their position around the sculpture urges us to move in, connecting with them and completing their circle.

The legible exhibition viewers in this photograph, with their individual personalities and 80s fashions, now mark this scene as "historical", and might provide a useful visual archive that speaks to a different exhibitionary time and place. But there are limits to what we can "see" inside installation shots, essentially photographic fragments structured in conventional, artificial, or idealizing ways. As they operate in the *Mousse* issue, and in countless catalogues, ads, websites, and Instagram accounts, they become signs and symbols for the idea of an exhibition, evidence of an event's existence, and signposts in the "lives" of individual works of art. As "images of images" or "exhibitions of exhibitions", they can become reminders that ask us to see the issues of power and agency at the heart of mediating and remediating art and culture – not only the overt power of "visible" institutions and practices such as museums, galleries, and art events, but that of more "invisible" conventions and traditions such as the photographic reproduction of objects of aesthetic, economic, political, and cultural value. We must remember to contemplate their structures, histories, and makers as much as we consider them useful tools for understanding "authentic" artworks and "real" exhibitions.



Fig. 8 – Pages 114–115, *Mousse* 51, December 2015–January 2016.

The viewers at the center of the *documenta 8* photograph also unknowingly point us toward the future of installation shots, a future in which exhibition visitors are now becoming central in new and different ways. As we seemingly enter another period in the history of this photographic genre, in which audiences are not just elements of the photograph's subject, but more and more are the primary makers and disseminators of such images, the practice of exhibition documentation seems to be de-centralizing and perhaps diversifying. Various encouraged by the marketing departments of art institutions, by selfie and Instagram culture, and hashtag trends, exhibition visitors, armed with personal cell phones, are not only consuming art and art events photographically thereby amassing their own archives of images. Through social media and other digital platforms, they are simultaneously publicizing, marketing, historicizing, and potentially transforming the practice of exhibition making and documentation itself. Whether this new life of the exhibition view will ultimately reinscribe or remake the practice remains to be seen. ●

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