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Moschovi, Alexandra (2008) "Changing Places: The Rebranding of Photography as Contemporary Art". In: *Photography between Poetry and Politics: The Critical Position of the Photographic Medium in Contemporary Art*. Leuven Gevaert (7). Leuven University Press/Cornell University Publications, Leuven, pp. 143-155. ISBN 978-9058676641

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PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Program in Hellenic Studies

Workshop

A Sudden Gust of Photo-philìa? Rebranding Photography as Contemporary Art in the Museum

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University of Sunderland

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Respondent: Anne McCauley, Department of Art and Archaeology

Long neglected as a second-rate art, photography as such was fully accommodated in the art museum in the late 1970s, a development that coincided, chronologically and ontologically, with the structural changes the museum itself was undergoing at the time. By the late 1980s, the modernist construct of (art) photography, singularly defined by the qualities unique to the medium *itself*, was overshadowed by an expanded lens-media field, now widely termed 'the photographic'. Moving from the medium-specific photograph to the indexical, still or moving, image, this novel category embraces, under the same conceptual umbrella, an array of media, genres, and practices. But is this fusion really a rupture in photography's ontological premises, an advancement to a 'post-medium' condition, or simply the profile of institutionalized photography? This analysis is pursued through a cross-examination of contrasting definitions of photographic practices as contemporary art.

Alexandra Moschovi is a lecturer in photographic theory at the University of Sunderland. She holds an MA in Image and Communication (Goldsmiths College, London) and a PhD degree in the history of art (Courtauld Institute of Art, London). Her main areas of research interest are the politics of the institutionalization of photography as art and the history of Greek photography. She is an independent art critic and curator. Publications and curatorial projects include: *I Ellada mesa apo ti Fotografia* (ed., Athens, 2007); "The Face of Labour" (exh. cat. *Work II*, Amsterdam, 2007); "Distance and Proximity" (exh. cat. *Work*, Malaysia, 2007); "Photography, Photographies and the Photographic: Between Media, Images, Contexts" (exh. cat. *The Athens Effect: Photographic Images in Contemporary Art*, Milan, 2006 / Paris, 2007); *Coincidences and Constructs: Interpretations of the Everyday* (exhibition, Thessaloniki, 2004). She was the curator of the *7th International Month of Photography in Athens* in 2000. As an associate scholar of the Courtauld Institute of Art, she has been, since 2005, the co-convenor of a research-in-progress history of photography seminar. She is also a researcher at the International Photography Research Network (www.theiprn.org) and sits on the advisory board of *a*, the Athens contemporary art review (www.athensbiennial.org).

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

6:00 p.m.

Scheide Caldwell House, Room 103

Light refreshments to follow