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DIGITAL MEETS CULTURE Official registered magazine Monday, 08 February 2021 PHOTOCONSORTIUM

Europeana Photography Final Conference

'The Impact of Digitization on Photographic Heritage: Memories Reframed'. Chronicles from KU Leuven
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by Fred Truyen, KU Leuven (Europeana Photography Project Coordinator)

The EuropeanaPhotography project ended 31st of January 2015. To mark the occasion, we organized a two-day conference in Leuven on Thursday 29 and Friday 30th of January, under the theme "*The Impact of Digitization on Photographic Heritage: Memories Reframed*". The conference opened with a keynote by **Elizabeth Edwards** on "*Shifting Assemblages: Scale, Scope and Intensity in the Practice of History*". Elizabeth took mass digitization to task with a plea for "close reading" inspired by Moretti. Using examples of colonial photography, she showed the importance of a careful, historical look at the different meaning layers in photos. The lecture kicked off a series of lectures that all seemed to revolve around the issues addressed in the keynote, as an unfolding, spiralling dialogue that kept everyone glued to his seat until the end of the first day.

A nothing short of brilliant overview of early photography by **John Balean** of TopFoto was followed by **Fred Truyen**'s explanation of the choices made in EuropeanaPhotography, where the possibilities of digitization to "reframe" and rediscover the early photos were discussed. Indeed, the enlarged, crystal clear reprints in the exhibition, with blistering dynamic range and razor sharp detail, obtained by directly processing the information from the glassplate have little to do with the nostalgic, somewhat yellowish appearance of original prints.

[Show as slideshow]

After an overview of the project by **Antonella Fresa** from Promoter srl, the afternoon was a mix of lectures and "collection pitches", in which partners displayed their contributions to the total of 430.000 images that EuropeanaPhotography contributed to Europeana. Prof. **Jan Baetens** caught attention with his provocative lecture "Against Crowdsourcing", in which he highlighted some serious issues in the quest to gather crowdsourced input, as is now hyping in many digitization projects.

While **Stephen Brown** and **David Croft** showed a smart algorithm to search for similar images in a collection, **Alexander Supartono** stunned the audience with his "*Re-Visiting the Colonial Archive in the Era of Web 2.0*", where he showed how Indonesian artists re-appropriate colonial heritage in an unsettling way that undoubtedly must come as a shock to many archivalists: current Indonesian people are superimposed on colonial pictures, disclosing and disrupting the colonial setting. A better vindication of Elizabeth's keynote was difficult to imagine. More so, it is a perfect example of the innovative "creative reuse" that Europeana wants to stimulate!

At the end of this long day **Joanna Zylinska's** enthousiasm and rethorical talent gave the audience a much needed energy boost. Her Photomediations project is a very convincing example of Open publishing and how this unleashes new creativity.

During the day collections were presented by TopFoto, Lithuanian Art Museums, IMAGNO, CRDI, Parisienne de Photographie, Arbejdermuseet ,United Archives and Gencat.

The second day of the EuropeanaPhotography Final Conference was dedicated to Europeana and its family of projects. **James Morley** gave an interesting overview of new initiatives Europeana is engaged in, and highlighted the importance of a high quality online experience for the user. This will be enhanced by IIIF technology, now being implemented by some large collections.

The highlight of the day was the enthusing talk by **Sofie Taes**, curator of the Leuven localization of the All our Yesterdays exhibition. A parade of breath-taking images from Leuven's City archive was displayed, unravelling the

story of “Trading Spaces / Changing Places”, the concept behind the expo. The perfectly choreographed presentation was testimony of the enormous, meticulous work that went in the curation of this exhibition, developed in collaboration with the City archive Leuven and Erfgoedcel Leuven. It also revealed that the City archive does host a collection of images that can stand its ground in the face of the collections of the prestigious partners in Europeana Photography. Captivating moments of past city life stole the hearts of the audience.

[Show as slideshow]

This was followed by a collection pitch of both Leuven collections, the collection of the University and the one from the archive. The university collection is very unique, in the sense that it are all images taken with a didactic purpose, to define the canon of Art History. As such, it shows us what belonged to this canon before the second world war.

Four Europeana related project presentations rounded up the morning session, with presentations of Europeana Space, Europeana Fashion, Daguerreobase and RICHES.

In the second keynote of the conference, **Simon Tanner** from King’s college London talked about “*The Impact of Digitization on Photographic Heritage*“. The slides of his presentation are available on slideshare. It addressed many issues as to how museums and collection holders can cope with the digital revolution and adapt their business models to it.

This was followed by a much appreciated lecture by **Bruno Vandermeulen**, digitization expert of KU Leuven, on his photography for the archaeological Sagalassos project.

Charlotte Waelde concluded the lecture series with a talk about “*Digitising photographs: thinking around originality*“, where she addressed novel ideas about IPR, an issue of great concern in the EuropeanaPhotography project, to which we are seeking solutions in Europeana Space.

During the day further collection pitches were shown by

Divadelni Ustav, SGI, ICIMSS, NALIS, Alinari, MHF and PolFoto.

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Show & Tell & Touch: Digital Culture and Education
Contemporary education, formal classrooms, museum educational programmes, lifelong learning are all increasingly embracing 'the digital'. As more and more arts and culture artefacts become available in this digital space, it was only a matter of time before the two worlds, heritage and education, would find each other. But have they really? Show & Tell & Touch: Digital Culture and Education is the second workshop organized by E-Space on education, and aims to reflect on ho...

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Europeana Photography: excellent results
The review meeting, hosted by the project Coordinator Fred Truyen at the premises of KU Leuven, welcomed the Project Officer Krzysztof Nichczynski and the reviewers Makx Dekkers and Tom Wachtel with whom the Europeana Photography WP leaders had the possibility to illustrate and discuss the project achievements. Photo courtesy TopFoto.co.uk

E-Space disseminated @ Europeana Photography final conference
The connection between Europeana Space and Europeana Photography is stronger than ever, basing on a Cooperation Agreement and most of all on common themes of reflection and activites. On 29-30 January, the Final Conference of Europeana Photography was organized in Leuven, hosted by KU Leuven, Coordinator of Europeana Photography and partner in Europeana Space. The title of the conference is: The Impact of Digitization on Photographic Heritage: Memories Reframed. At the conference were pres...

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