

***F/STOP 2012, 5th Festival for Photography:
The History of Now - On documentary in Photography***
short concept

Despite its various proclaimed deaths, photography has proved itself, even at the beginning of the 21st century, a remarkably vital medium. In particular, the technical achievements of the past two decades have carried photography to a boom in terms of production, distribution, and reception. All the doubts over the authenticity and truthfulness of images have been unable to destroy their effective power. Instead, developments like the simultaneity of image production and its publication have led in the opposite direction. In the shaky photos of the shattered atomic power plant in Fukushima the euphemistic expression “residual risk” has met its visual match. Although the instrumentalisation

of photography is almost as old as the medium itself, the ubiquity of photographic images makes them all the more frequently the trite agents of political practice. The demise of the most wanted man on earth is visualised thousands of kilometres away from the actual scene of the event. What Osama Bin Laden leaves behind is not the image of the maimed corpse but rather that of the spellbound media witnesses in some backroom in Washington. Politics makes images. Images make politics. Under this banner, the new edition of the F/STOP Festival seeks to investigate

the contemporary possibilities and conditions of the visual description of the world; a glance at the present, which takes in the past in its sweep. This poses questions about the strategies of artists working with a full awareness of the problematic nature of photographic reporting. How does this awareness bear on the relation between artistic photography and media images? What is the right way to react to current events? What are the effects of the omnipresence of photographic images on our perception and how do artists deal with this?

The situation described here and the questions it gives rise to are the occasions for F/STOP 2012 to intensively discuss the notion of documentation within the framework of the festival.

Supplementing

the festival board, different exhibitions will be curated, respectively, by a notable artist, a private collector and a photo book specialist. The exhibitions will provide expression of each curator’s specific viewpoints on the questions addressed by the festival. With this jagged profile combining heterogeneous perspectives, F/STOP will not only continue Leipzig’s rich traditions of photography and book design but also attain the potential to develop itself into one of Germany’s most important photography festivals. Starting in 2012, the grounds of the Baumwollspinnerei will be available to the F/STOP Festival biannually, creating a high-visibility forum for communication

and exchange among the professional community and the general public. The festival will incorporate guided tours, workshops and a symposium. Artist’s talks and lectures are also planned. Further, a film programme will be drawn up in cooperation with the cinema Luru-Kino focussing on the special relation between photography and film. The fascination photography continues to exercise is grounded in its particular relation to the world, in the way it bears witness to the present and the past. F/STOP 2012 dedicates itself to the promises and disappointments arising from this relation.