

Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague
Department of Photography

Assessment of the Bachelor's Thesis

Author of thesis: Christian Henninger

Title of thesis: COLLABORATION WITHIN PHOTOGRAPHY – THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE PHOTOGRAPHED SUBJECT WITHIN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC PROCESS

Assessment of the primary advisor ✕

Assessment of the opponent ✓

Author of the assessment (first name, last name, workplace): Michal Šimůnek,
Department of Photography, FAMU

Evaluation of the content and final form of the thesis (A/excellent – B/very good – C/good – D/good with objections – E/satisfactory – F/unsatisfactory – not recommended for defence)

Suitability of the selected objective and work approach.....A
Relative completeness of the literature used for the selected topic.....A
Ability to critically evaluate and use scholarly literature.....A
Logicity of the thesis structure, connection of its chapters and theirs proportionality.....A
Language and stylistic level of the thesis.....A
Compliance with citation norms (should the text repeatedly contain adopted passages without citing the source, the work cannot be recommended for defence).....A
Sufficient extent of image attachments, justifiability and suitability of attachments, graphic layout.....A
Originality of the thesis, contribution to the development of the field of study.....B
Overall evaluation of the thesis.....A

Verbal evaluation of the thesis including questions that the candidate must address in his/her thesis defence:

The thesis of Christian Henninger deals with the so called collaborative photography in which photographs are co-created in mutual relationship between the photographer and the person photographed. The aim of the thesis is to describe this approach to photography, find and choose some particular cases of this approach and trace intentions of photographers with the subject in front of the camera.

The collaborative photography is used in social sciences (photo-voice, photo elicitation, storytelling approaches), photojournalism (civic photojournalism),

documentary photography and socially or politically engaged art. Christian Henninger focuses particularly on artistic usage of collaborative photography.

The structure of the thesis is logical and well arranged. Henninger discusses the concept of authorship and collaboration (1st chapter), analyses four selected collaborative photography projects (Anthony Luvera and his assisted self-portraits, Micky Allan's My Trip, Wendy Ewald's Secret Games and Broomberg & Chanarin's Ghetto) and finally summarise pros and cons of collaborative photography.

The thesis is written in a readable academic style, its argumentation is supported by sufficient amount of relevant references. The collaborative photography questions both authorship and traditional epistemological and methodological problem of subject–object relation. Both these are discussed in Henningers thesis in a correct way, but nevertheless Henninger slightly idealises the power of collaborative projects to give an authentic voice to those subjects, who are usually not allowed to express themselves. Simply put, when we pass the camera from the hands of photographer/author to the hands of photographed-subjects does not mean, that traditional power, asymmetrical and hierarchical relation between subject and object is biased in favour of a subject. Power relations are still present even in collaborative photography, although they are not so sharp and asymmetrical as in traditional observational or voyeuristic photography. Collaborative approaches thus do not destroy power relations in photography, but let photographers and photographed to question and reflect on their roles in a given "photography" situation.

I appreciate Henninger's thesis as very well argued, his knowledge about collaborative approaches, his ability to think critically about collaborative photography and the way he can ask relevant questions are very good. I recommend his thesis for the defence and propose A as the final grade.

Questions for the defence:

The thesis of Christian Henninger deals with the so-called collaborative photography in which photographs are co-created in the mutual relationship between the photographer and the person photographed. The aim of the thesis is to describe this approach to photography, find and choose some particular cases of this approach and trace intentions of photographers collaboratively working with the subject in front of the camera.

The collaborative photography is used in social sciences (photo-voice, photo elicitation, storytelling approaches), photojournalism (civic photojournalism), documentary photography and socially or politically engaged art. Christian Henninger focuses mainly on the artistic usage of collaborative photography.

The structure of the thesis is logical and well arranged. Henninger discusses the concept of authorship and collaboration (1st chapter), analyses four selected collaborative photography projects (Anthony Luvera and his assisted self-portraits, Micky Allan's My Trip, Wendy Ewald's Secret Games and Broomberg & Chanarin's Ghetto), and finally summarises pros and cons of collaborative photography.

The thesis is written in a straightforward academic style, a sufficient amount of relevant references supports its argumentation. The collaborative photography questions both the conception of authorship and the traditional epistemological and methodological problem of the subject–object relation. Both these are discussed in

Henninger's thesis correctly, but Henninger slightly idealises the power of collaborative projects to give an authentic voice to those subjects, who are usually not allowed to express themselves. Passing the camera from the hands of a photographer/author to the hands of photographed-subjects does not mean, that traditional power, asymmetrical and hierarchical relation between subject and object is inevitably biased in favour of a subject. Power relations are still present even in collaborative photography, although they are not so sharp and asymmetrical as in traditional observational or voyeuristic photography. Collaborative approaches thus do not erase power relations in photography, but let photographers and photographed to question and reflect on their roles in a given "photography" situation.

I appreciate Henninger's thesis as very well argued. His knowledge about collaborative approaches, his ability to think critically and the way he can ask relevant questions are perfect. I recommend his thesis for the defence and propose A as the final grade.

Questions for the defence:

Mette Sandbye in his recent article "New Mixtures" (see Photographies, 11:2-3, 267-287) discusses those "radical" approaches to documentary photography (he gives examples of Kent Klich and Tina Enghoff) which mixes hitherto separated photographic forms such as family and cell phone photos, reportage, conceptual and archival forms etc. Consider this way of the usage of found images concerning the concepts of authorship, the problem of subject-object relation and collaborative photography itself. Think about the differences when trying to understand, e.g. the life of a community using classical documentary, a collaboration initiated by a photographer (researcher) and collection of founded images. Could we consider founded images as a specific way how to subvert power relations in photography?

Date: 15/06/2019

Signature:.....
