

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

International Research Studio on Architecture Photography

"You can only know that which you have eyes to see"

Buildings and their images as sources of knowledge on German-French relations in the Saar after 1945

The International Research Studio is focused on academic exchange between young researchers from the fields of history, architecture, urban planning and heritage conservation. Architecture photography serves as a starting point for this exchange and a medium through which to approach buildings of the past as objects of historical investigation. On the one hand, photography is understood as a useful technique for emerging academics to learn, and on the other as a fundamental resource for academic discourse that requires critical analysis and skillful presentation.

The following specific learning objectives will be pursued in the Research Studio:

- the ability to read, analyse and interpret photographs in terms of their value as sources of knowledge on architecture and history,
- the ability to see, understand, record and communicate buildings through the technique of photography,
- the ability to use existing photographic material as well as the participants' own photographs in academic research.

Kick-off event (online), 2 September 2024:

In order to ensure interdisciplinary exchange from the outset, participants will be assigned mixed groups during an initial preparatory meeting, to be held online. These groups will choose case studies according to the following (preliminary) list, then will work together to collect information on them as a basis for discussion:

- Franco-German High School (Halbergstraße 112, 66121 Saarbrücken)
- Saarland University, Faculty of Philosophy (Area I, Campus, 66123 Saarbrücken)
- residential buildings in Bruchwiesen ("Professors' Houses", Bayernstrasse and Hellwigstrasse, and the block of flats for the Mission diplomatique, Hallbergstrasse/Bayernstrasse, 66111 Saarbrücken)
- residential buildings in Stockenbruch/St. Annual (Women's Hostel, Koßmannstrasse 12; residential high-rise for civil servants, Stockenbruch 3, 66119 Saarbrücken)
- Saarbrücken State Theatre (Schillerplatz 1, 66111 Saarbrücken)
- State Legislature of the Saarland (Franz-Josef-Röder-Strasse 7, 66119 Saarbrücken)
- Church of St. Ludwig (Am Ludwigsplatz 18, 66117 Saarbrücken)
- Saarland Jewish Community (Lortzingstraße 8, 66111 Saarbrücken)
- former Ministry of Finance (Am Stadtgraben 2-4, 66111 Saarbrücken)

Intermediate meeting (online), 9 September 2024:

At a second online meeting, the groups will report on the progress of their information-gathering activity and will introduce each other to their respective case studies. The discussion will be accompanied by critical reflection on the objects, their context and the way they are perceived and presented in text and images.

Day 1 in Saarbrücken, 16 September 2024:

After the Studio participants have examined their chosen objects of investigation at a distance and from their own disciplinary perspectives, their understanding of architecture as a source of untapped knowledge on historical events and processes will be expanded on-site in Saarbrücken. A broad range of research approaches to architecture and its images will be presented through inputs by established scholars. The focus will be on various aspects of the politics of architecture in the Saarland during the period of French intervention and influence after 1945, as well as on the role of the photography in the practice of architectural conservation and on the cultural significance of selected buildings of outstanding quality.

Day 2 in Saarbrücken, 17 September 2024:

Two presentations will introduce the ways in which our understanding of the cultural significance of built heritage and our practical approaches to the conservation of historic buildings are both shaped by photography:

- Prof. Ulrich Pantle (htw saar) and Dr. Mona Schrempf (htw saar/arbakus): “Architecture as a resource - BauKulturErbe Digital Saar_Großregion”, followed by a visit to the permanent exhibition Denk_mal anders - 50 Jahre BauKunst Mensa using the trilingual, multimedia WebApp mensa.bauarchiv.org
- Prof. em. Markus Otto (BTU Cottbus) with Axel Böcker (Saarland State Conservation Authority): Introduction to the digital archive of the former Europe 1 Broadcasting Centre in Berus-Überherrn. With reference to this structurally unusual building, photography will be discussed as a means of investigating and documenting materials and structure from an engineering perspective.

Afterwards, the photographer and graphic designer Marco Kany will discuss the usefulness of photographic documentation to accessing historical knowledge about the ‘Pingussonbau’ (former French Embassy in the Saarland, today the headquarters of the Saarland Ministry of Education and Culture) and will invite participants to examine critically the structure and composition of photographs in a group studio on image analysis.

This will be followed by a site-visit to the ‘Pingussonbau’, which is otherwise closed to the general public. The building will be viewed and analysed under the guidance of Volker Ziegler (ENSA Strasbourg). The visit will enable participants to relate the theory learned in the morning’s sessions to a concrete object as well as to their own experiences, and thus develop new perspectives on the value of visual source material.

Day 3 in Saarbrücken, 18 September 2024:

The third day will forge a direct link between theory and practice, in the form of a crash course in architecture photography led by the professional photographer and curator Mila Hacke. The course will enable participants to:

- use the camera as a tool of research and analysis
- create photographs that effectively capture and the connection between developments in postwar history and society and postwar architecture
- communicate research findings through the medium of photography.

The building complex of the Hochschule der Bildenden Künste Saar (Saarland College of Fine Art) will provide the setting for this crash course. Studio participants will practice and test different technical, aesthetic and conceptual approaches.

They will then separate into their groups to visit their chosen sites in Saarbrücken and generate portfolios of photographs documenting the case studies.

Day 4 in Saarbrücken, 19 September 2024:

The portfolios will be presented on the last day. The focal points of the workshop (visual description, image analysis, composition, design character and cultural significance of the buildings, historical contextualisation) will then be discussed. In addition, further possibilities for interdisciplinary academic dialogue will be explored in order to identify further research potential.

With the consent of the participant(s), selected results of the Research Studio can be exhibited at the annual conference of the Deutscher Werkbund (Saarbrücken, 3-6 October 2024).