

org is an online platform, collecting, describing, presenting and generating documents of all sorts. It documents documents.

Your path through the collection lead along Starry sky, long exposure, Sandersleben (Saxony-Anhalt), 14 April 2023, Interviews with residents of Sandersleben, no specific location, 2023 [2], Detail of a wall, Salzmünde (Saxony-Anhalt), June 2023, View, Backpack, Another letter from abroad, Straight in the morning, curvy in the afternoon, Croûton d'Or, Another letter from abroad, A peregrine falcon in the internal perimeter, Negative sheet 21, negative 24, negative 24,5, Temporary Photograph, 2017, The Saddle of a Sparta K-10, Rue Verte, Brussels, Interviews with residents of Sandersleben, no specific location, 2023 [1], Huang Baomei, Knee

What constitutes a 'document' and how does it function?

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the etymological origin is the Latin 'documentum', meaning 'lesson, proof, instance, specimen'. As a verb, it is 'to prove or support (something) by documentary evidence', and 'to provide with documents'. The online version of the *OED* includes a draft addition, whereby a document (as a noun) is 'a collection of data in digital form that is considered a single item and typically has a unique filename by which it can be stored, retrieved, or transmitted (as a file, a spreadsheet, or a graphic)'. The current use of the noun 'document' is defined as '*something* written, inscribed, etc., which furnishes evidence or information upon any subject, as a manuscript, title-deed, tomb-stone, coin, picture, etc.' (emphasis added).

Both 'something' and that first 'etc.' leave ample room for discussion. A document doubts whether it functions as something unique, or as something reproducible. A passport is a document, but a flyer equally so. Moreover, there is a circular reasoning: to document is 'to provide with documents'. Defining (the functioning of) a document most likely involves ideas of communication, information, evidence, inscriptions, and implies notions of objectivity and neutrality – but the document is neither reducible to one of them, nor is it equal to their sum. It is hard to pinpoint it, as it disperses into and is affected by other fields: it is intrinsically tied to the history of media and to important currents in literature, photography and art; it is linked to epistemic and power structures. However ubiquitous it is, as an often tangible thing in our environment, and as a concept, a document *deranges*.

the-documents.org continuously gathers documents and provides them with a short textual description, explanation, or digression, written by multiple authors. In *Paper Knowledge*, Lisa Gitelman paraphrases ‘documentalist’ Suzanne Briet, stating that ‘an antelope running wild would not be a document, but an antelope taken into a zoo would be one, presumably because it would then be framed – or reframed – as an example, specimen, or instance’. The gathered files are all documents – if they weren’t before publication, they now are. That is what the-documents.org, irreversibly, *does*. It is a zoo turning an antelope into an ‘antelope’.

As you made your way through the collection, the-documents.org tracked the entries you viewed. It documented your path through the website. As such, the time spent on the-documents.org turned into this – a new document.

This document was compiled by _____ on 29.12.2024 17:05, printed on _____ and contains 16 documents on 35 pages. (<https://the-documents.org/log/29-12-2024-6469/>)

the-documents.org is a project created and edited by De Cleene De Cleene; design & development by atelier Haegeman Temmerman.

the-documents.org has been online since 23.05.2021.

Notes

- De Cleene De Cleene is Michiel De Cleene and Arnout De Cleene. Together they form a research group that focusses on novel ways of approaching the everyday, by artistic means and from a cultural and critical perspective.
www.decleenedecleene.be / info@decleenedecleene.be
- This project was made possible with the support of the Flemish Government and KASK & Conservatorium, the school of arts of HOGENT and Howest. It is part of the research project *Documenting Objects*, financed by the HOGENT Arts Research Fund.

Sources

- Briet, S. *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?* Paris: Edit, 1951.
- Gitelman, L. *Paper Knowledge. Toward a Media History of Documents*. Durham/ London: Duke University Press, 2014.
- *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Accessed on 13.05.2021.



Flanders
State of the Art



A constant, dependable presence. With the camera focused on the North Star for an extended period, the rotation of the Earth becomes visible. Nearby, in the municipality of Wiederstedt, the geologist, poet and philosopher Friedrich von Hardenberg (better known by his pen name Novalis) spent his childhood years between 1772 and 1784. A quote of his is engraved on a stone bench in the park surrounding the chateau where he was raised: “The human being does not speak alone – the universe also speaks – everything speaks – infinite languages.”

Notes

- From *S. Anders Leben. Eine Handlung in Gesprächen/S. Anders Leben – Living Differently: An Act in Conversations*
- Stephanie Kiwitt (1972) is an artist based in Halle (Saale), Germany. Utilizing a large number of images, various perspectives and also textual elements, she is known for her insightful photography that explores spaces emblematic of contemporary phenomena. Over the past three years, she has focused on evolving habitats in rural areas, photographing traces of transformation and conducting interviews in Saxony-Anhalt, the region she moved to in 2020. From 2018 to 2020, Kiwitt was a guest lecturer at the LUCA School of Arts in Brussels.
- In spring 2024 the-documents.org and Trigger co-publish a series of online articles with a focus on the meeting ground between photography and the document.

Starry sky, long exposure, Sandersleben (Saxony-Anhalt), 14 April 2023



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	14.06.2024	Bild 003_mk.jpg	73 MB	Stephanie Kiwitt
category	astronomy, literature, Trigger			

11:04:17

Freely adapted from interviews with residents of Sandersleben (Saxony-Anhalt). Three-act play. The first two acts take place in the present day; the third is set in the future.

From Act 2 ‘The Inhabitants’, Scene 5, ‘Living Differently’.

Characters: MR DUNST club member I, MR WINDORF amateur astronomer

Notes

- Stills from text animation *S. Anders Leben. Eine Handlung in Gesprächen/S. Anders Leben – Living Differently: An Act in Conversations*
- Stephanie Kiwitt (1972) is an artist based in Halle (Saale), Germany. Utilizing a large number of images, various perspectives and also textual elements, she is known for her insightful photography that explores spaces emblematic of contemporary phenomena. Over the past three years, she has focused on evolving habitats in rural areas, photographing traces of transformation and conducting interviews in Saxony-Anhalt, the region she moved to in 2020. From 2018 to 2020, Kiwitt was a guest lecturer at the LUCA School of Arts in Brussels.
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Interviews with residents of Sandersleben, no specific location, 2023 [2]

HERR DUNST I imagine that if nothing were to happen, the future would be a blank canvas, devoid of anything.

HERR WINDORF Just beyond S, there was a Stone Age settlement. When I gaze at the stars there at night, I'm struck by the thought that what I'm seeing has already been witnessed by someone long ago. From Saturn's perspective, Earth is merely a faint dot, yet here we are living on it – tiny, but incredibly beautiful. It's captivating. It changes the way you walk through the forest, the way you move through S.

type	date	filename	size	author
collage	14.06.2024	2-Stone Age.jpg	108 KB	Stephanie Kiwitt
category	archaeology, astronomy, encounter, landscape, Trigger			

11:04:32

Bricks and stones of various origin (aerated concrete blocks, clinker bricks, quarry stones).

the-documents.c

Notes

- From *Fortlaufend/Ongoing*
- Stephanie Kiwitt (1972) is an artist based in Halle (Saale), Germany. Utilizing a large number of images, various perspectives and also textual elements, she is known for her insightful photography that explores spaces emblematic of contemporary phenomena. Over the past three years, she has focused on evolving habitats in rural areas, photographing traces of transformation and conducting interviews in Saxony-Anhalt, the region she moved to in 2020. From 2018 to 2020, Kiwitt was a guest lecturer at the LUCA School of Arts in Brussels.
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type
photograph

date
11.06.2024

filename
CF015874.jpeg

size
54 MB

author
Stephanie Kiwitt

category
architecture, brick, fissure, repair, rural area, Trigger

11:04:36

According to art critic Rosalind Krauss, nineteenth-century stereographic images presented ‘views’, not ‘landscapes’. Looking at a stereographic image through a stereoscope involves a particular experience that is altogether different from looking at other types of photographs, or paintings, as it is defined by ‘the isolation of the viewer with an image from which surrounding interference is masked out’.¹ An image of a violent and sudden eruption, higher up on the mountain, hanging next to a stereographic image of a petrified lava flow, would not be perceived.

Sources

1. Krauss, R. *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge, Mass./London: The MIT Press, 1986, 139.



		filename			
		Foto_2022-02-			
		17_110818.jpg	Foto_2022-02-		
		17_110818.jpg	Foto_2022-02-		
		17_110818.jpg			
type	date		size	author	
photograph	03.04.2022	17_110818.jpg	1,8MB	Arnout De Cleene	

category
impact, landscape, seismology, technology, trompe l'oeil, Vesuvius

_44A6588.dng

At 13:26:43 I took a photograph of a concrete building without windows in an industrial zone just south of Brussels.

_44A6590.dng

At 16:46:15 I photographed a succession of office buildings in the same industrial zone.

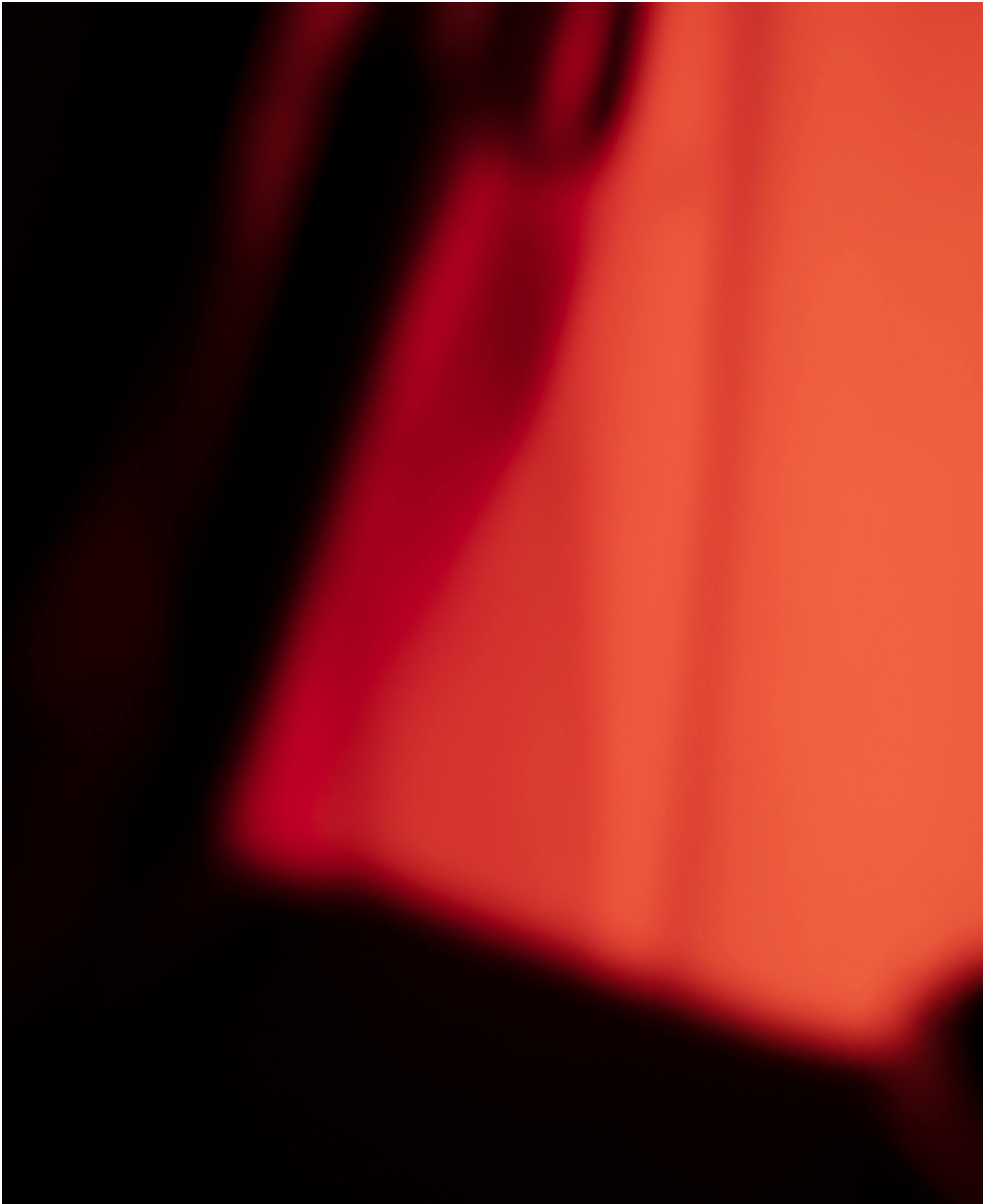
_44A6589.dng

I must have walked about 1 kilometer between the concrete building without windows and the section of the industrial zone with the offices. At 13:43:49, the camera, safely stored in my backpack, recorded 0.4 seconds of the 20 minutes it took me to get there.

In *The Snows of Venice*, Alexander Kluge wonders whether he can take the liberty to conjure up what the sky looked like on 31 December 1799, as Schiller made his way to Goethe's house. He goes on by saying that, historically, there's a 'LACK OF SENSORY ATTENTION AT CRUCIAL MOMENTS'.¹ There are exceptions, though, like the cameraman that was sent out to document the fireworks on New Year's Day 2000. The camera was turned on prematurely. The batteries were used up by midnight, but 'certain gray tones, however, filtered through the cracks of its protective case, conveyed the motion of the walking cameraman, the transportation. The incompletely shut, low-information container was documented exactly [...] To this day it provides inexact testimony as to the qualities of the leather of a twenty-first century carrying case and the precise sensitivity to light and dark demonstrated by a twenty-first century recording medium.'²

Sources

- 1 Lerner, B., Kluge, A. *The Snows of Venice*. Leipzig: Spector Books, 2018, p. 53
- 2 Ibid.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	15.02.2022	_44A6589.dng	37,87 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
architecture, data storage, mistake, packaging, technology

11:04:40

Because an acquaintance of the family was a missionary, the postage stamp collection had a large quantity of stamps from the Philippines. You had to boil water, hold the empty envelope above it, wait until the glue and the missionary's saliva loosened and evaporated, and then gently peel off the stamp. Then, it was put on a piece of pink blotting paper. Once dry, the stamp was slid into a tailor-made booklet.

Between a Horta building's facade and King Baudouin's portrait, there are exotic fish, religious scenes, butterflies, and advertisements for NGOs.

Mango is the Philippines' national fruit. Pope John Paul II visited it in 1995. There was a guerrilla unit in Northwest Pampanga during WWII.



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	23.01.2022	2022-01-22_213134.png	27,7MB	Arnout De Cleene

category
animal, architecture, book, collecting, fruit, sticker

11:04:49

On a pile of fresh hospital sheets, near the radiator, the tangerine curtains and the black marble window sill (the window looks out over the parking lot), underneath the two-day-old bouquet of flowers and next to a pile of magazines with a handwritten note on top (about a syrup that relieves slime and tastes like oranges), lie two sheets of paper.

Earlier that day the physiotherapist had come by. Twice. Once in the morning and once in the afternoon. He had each time drawn the first line, as an example. A straight line in the morning, a curvy line in the afternoon.

With a ballpoint pen my grandfather, who is recovering from an accident, diligently copied the examples (31 in the morning, 5 in the afternoon).



type
photograph

date
09.01.2022

filename
IMG_9441.HEIC

size
862 KB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
family, manual, medicine, parking, replica/copy, hand

11:04:50

The archive of O. Clemminck, architect, was preserved in a box of croutons – by him, the historian who gave it to my father, or someone else (it contains a letter written by Clemminck's widow asking a client to pay the bill her husband had sent). The croutons had a flavor of fine herbs and, a stamp on the box with the plans in it says, should have been consumed before April 1987.



type
photograph

date
14.01.2022

filename
_MG_7420.JPG

size
6MB

author
Arnout De Cleene

category
architecture, archive, data storage, food, O. Clemminck, packaging

11:05:02

Because an acquaintance of the family was a missionary, the postage stamp collection had a large quantity of stamps from the Philippines. You had to boil water, hold the empty envelope above it, wait until the glue and the missionary's saliva loosened and evaporated, and then gently peel off the stamp. Then, it was put on a piece of pink blotting paper. Once dry, the stamp was slid into a tailor-made booklet.

Between a Horta building's facade and King Baudouin's portrait, there are exotic fish, religious scenes, butterflies, and advertisements for NGOs.

Mango is the Philippines' national fruit. Pope John Paul II visited it in 1995. There was a guerrilla unit in Northwest Pampanga during WWII.



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	23.01.2022	2022-01-22_213134.png	27,7MB	Arnout De Cleene

category
animal, architecture, book, collecting, fruit, sticker

11:05:06

At the nuclear waste processing facility. While the photographer and the head of the communication department are making their way from the processing building to the temporary storage building, they walk past the central chimney.

‘On the highest of the accessible levels of the chimney, operators were finding small steel rings. They gathered them, but soon noticed that new rings were added. At a certain point at a rate of one ring a day.

[...]

It took them some time to realize what they were, so they started collecting them by slipping them onto a piece of rope. By now the rings on the rope span about this distance [spreads his arms to indicate a distance of about 1.2m].

[...]

They turned out to be rings that came from pigeon’s legs.

[...]

On top of our chimney resides a peregrine falcon.

[...]

I was told pigeon fanciers have a tendency to give a peregrine falcon – or any other bird of prey in their area – a hand at disappearing, but this one took up residency in the internal perimeter, where – as you know – access is severely restricted.’

Notes

First published in: De Cleene, M. *Reference Guide*. Amsterdam: Roma Publications, 2019



type
photograph

date
02.03.2022

filename
duivenringen_001.jpg

size
20,04 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
animal, collecting, food, Reference Guide, technology, waste, hand

11:05:11

A malfunctioning of the camera leading to a double-exposed negative. The car is decisive in establishing the relationship between the superimposed photographs. In the middle of the image, we see it parked in front of the house. Slightly less visible is the same car, repeated but further away. This makes it possible to deduce that the dark outline of the house, with the roof and the chimney, is also the same house as in the other photograph. This time, the house is photographed relatively frontally (the slightly angled point of view allows to bring the shed at the back of the house in the line of sight), and from nearby. At the bottom left, the lines that make up the street help to see the continuity of the one photograph, while the electric wires at the top right aid to comprehend the other one.

The camera malfunction speculates on a future addition to the plot. The dark, outlined shed's scale is realistic with regards to the scale of the house and itself (the shed) in the other photograph. Its position with regards to the other buildings seems logical. It imposes itself as a possible second shed for the owner to build in the next few years. In that future shed, the car, now standing in front of the house, could be comfortably parked.



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	25.10.2023	021a_14.jpg	1,29 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

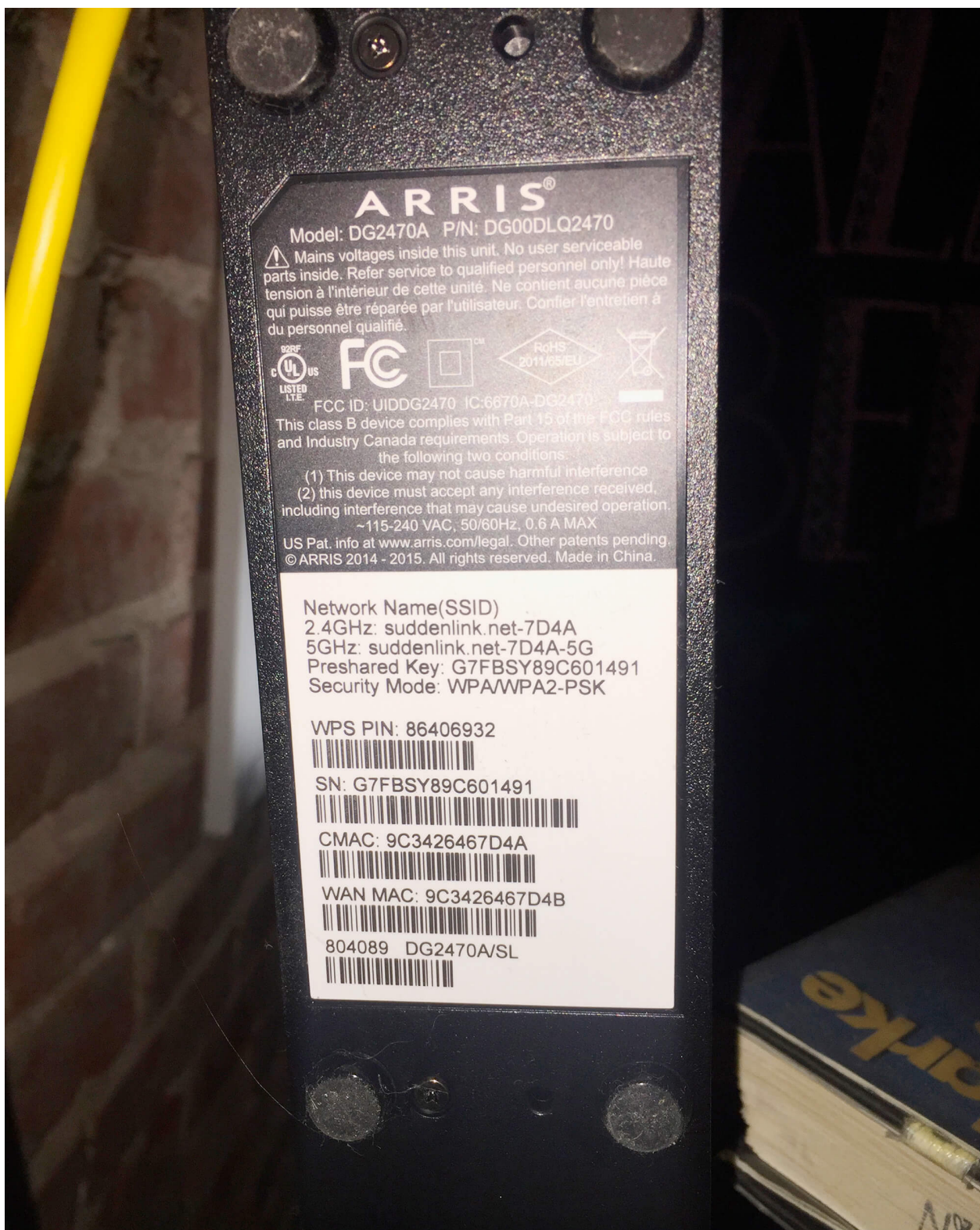
category
architecture, archive, automobile, house, panorama, parking, scale

11:05:19

The bartender didn't remember the passcode, so he pointed out where I could find it: on the bottom of the router box. Instead of trying to read the tiny numbers on the router label in the dark, while at the same time awkwardly typing it into my small, cumbersome smartphone keyboard, I decided to photograph the label. This allowed me to retreat back to my seat, zoom into the image and easily enter the code into my phone. The photograph immediately lost its value the moment this action was completed.

Notes

- Max Pinckers (°1988, BE) and Victoria Gonzalez-Figueras (°1988, CA) are based in Brussels, Belgium. They have been working together for the past ten years on documentary photography projects. Victoria works in the cultural field as a researcher and producer. Max is a speculative documentarian, teacher and occasional writer on photography. They are married, in love, and have a son. Victoria has consistently assisted Max in his projects as a production manager, but they have recently been making new work together as co-authors. "Double Reward" is the first such project.
- In spring 2024 the-documents.org and Trigger co-publish a series of online articles with a focus on the meeting ground between photography and the document.



type
photograph

date
30.05.2024

filename
IMG_0058.jpg

size
3,8 MB

author
Max Pinckers

category
technology, Trigger

11:05:25

How slanted is this saddle? Anyone looking at the full photo of this Sparta K-10 might think that the street fence is pushing its saddle down at an angle. However, the bike and its saddle are leaning against the fence, they are not pushed under it. Whether the saddle is as slanted as the photo suggests, we are not sure. This detail of the photo suggests otherwise. The rail to which the saddle is attached is already mounted slightly less slanted than the line of the fence behind which the saddle is partly hidden, and above that part of the fence something vaguely protrudes from the back of the saddle. Presumably that is the edge of the saddle, which would reassure us about the cyclist's comfort.

Notes

- Lars Kwakkenbos lives and works in Brussels and Ghent (B). He teaches at KASK & Conservatorium in Ghent, where he is currently working on the research project 'On Instructing Photography' (2023-2024), together with Michiel and Arnout De Cleene.



type
photograph

date
22.01.2023

filename
Naamloos.jpg

size
189 KB

author
Lars Kwakkenbos

category
bicycle

11:05:28

Freely adapted from interviews with residents of Sandersleben (Saxony-Anhalt). Three-act play. The first two acts take place in the present day; the third is set in the future.

From Act 1 'The Town of S', Scene 2 'The Past'.
Characters: MR DUNST club member I, OLIVER club member II, ANJA young mother

Notes

- Stills from text animation *S. Anders Leben. Eine Handlung in Gesprächen/S. Anders Leben – Living Differently: An Act in Conversations*
- Stephanie Kiwitt (1972) is an artist based in Halle (Saale), Germany. Utilizing a large number of images, various perspectives and also textual elements, she is known for her insightful photography that explores spaces emblematic of contemporary phenomena. Over the past three years, she has focused on evolving habitats in rural areas, photographing traces of transformation and conducting interviews in Saxony-Anhalt, the region she moved to in 2020. From 2018 to 2020, Kiwitt was a guest lecturer at the LUCA School of Arts in Brussels.
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Interviews with residents of Sandersleben, no specific location, 2023 [1]

HERR DUNST People here often mention the term THE PAST. Was it really like that? What from that era is worth keeping? The concept of 'future' seems to offer little inspiration here.

OLIVER I used to think it was nice being able to shop and go to the cinema here. But that changed once I started driving. It was just the way things evolved.

ANJA Life has changed.

OLIVER We'll find a way to adapt.

ANJA Change is the only constant. The world will continue to evolve, and so will this place.

OLIVER We still have some time before that happens.

type	date	filename	size	author
collage	13.06.2024	1-The PAST.jpg	301 KB	Stephanie Kiwitt
category	economy, encounter, rural area, Trigger			

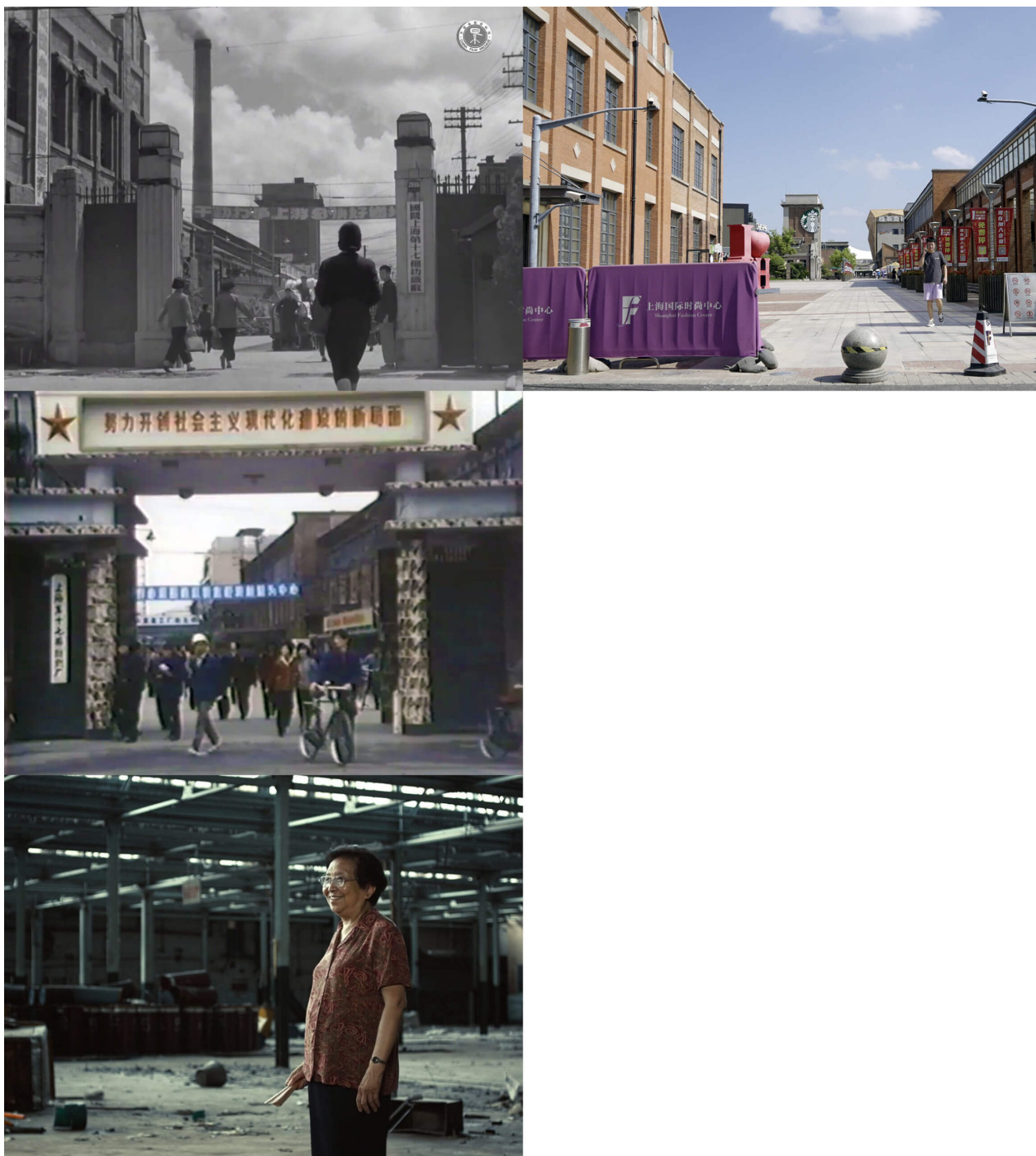
11:05:33

Directed by Xie Jin, *Huang Baomei* (1958) is a docudrama based on the real-life experiences of the national model worker of the same name, who also plays herself in the film. Reflecting the economic priorities of the day following the launch of the Great Leap Forward—a far-reaching and ultimately devastating campaign that sought to replace the prevailing Soviet-style expert-managerial system with workers’ self-organisation and mass mobilisation—the film focuses on the challenges faced by machine operators as they strive for a technical breakthrough while working with their aging machines.

Located at No. 2866, Yangshupu Road, Shanghai No. 17 Cotton Mill, which had its origins in the Japanese-owned Yuho Spinning Company, was one of Shanghai’s best known cotton mills. The launch of China’s economic reforms opened a new era for the mill, as reflected cinematically in *No. 17 Cotton Mill Shanghai Blues* (1984), a British documentary that attests to the vibrant workers’ music scene blossoming within the factory walls. In 1992, the state-owned enterprise was restructured as one of the first batch of joint-stock companies in the Reform era and renamed as Longtou Company after the brand name of a fabric manufactured by the mill. Following the relocation of the mill’s original machinery to Jiangsu in 2007, work commenced to redesign the entire complex and relaunch it as the Shanghai International Fashion Center. In Jia Zhangke’s *I Wish I Knew* (2010), an elderly Huang Baomei is seen walking amidst the ruins that are all that remain of the cotton mill as it awaits refurbishment.

Notes

- [Ho Rui An](#) is an artist and writer working in the intersections of contemporary art, cinema, performance and theory. Through lectures, essays and films, his research examines the relations between labour, technology and capital across different systems of governance in a global age.
- In spring 2024 the-documents.org and Trigger co-publish a series of online articles with a focus on the meeting ground between photography and the document.



type
collage

date
05.06.2024

filename
huangbaomei.jpg

size
2,44 MB

author
Ho Rui An

category
architecture, economy, factory, government, Trigger

11:05:36

The scientific exactitude sought for in the *Iconographie de la Salpêtrière* and the *Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière*, the (in)famous scientific publications stemming from Paris' psychiatric hospital La Salpêtrière (1876-1918), lead to an abundance of photographic images in their pages. The photographs' ideal: 'Trace incontestable, incontestablement fidèle, durable, transmissible'.¹ The ambition of exactitude results in cold, and often cruel depictions of patients. In the digitized version of the Sorbonne library's copies, some photographs have left an imprint on the opposite page. The knee of Charles, 'le géant', adds an unwanted layer upon its measures on the opposite page, while the photograph of the knee itself loses ink.²

Sources

- 1 Didi-Huberman, G. *Invention de l'hystérie*. Paris: Macula, 2014, 72.
- 2 Launois, P.-E., Roy, P., 'Gigantisme et infantilisme', *Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière*, Tome XV, 1902, 548, pl. LXVI, online: <https://patrimoine.sorbonne-universite.fr/fonds/item/2613-nouvelle-iconographie-de-la-salpetriere-tome-15?offset=6>

	mai 1899	novembre 1902
Hauteur de la malléole interne	87 mm.	79 mm.
Longueur du pied	287 »	299 »
Longueur du 1 ^{er} orteil avec le métatarsien	143 »	» »
Longueur du 2 ^e orteil seul	82 »	» »
Longueur du 1 ^{er} orteil (partie libre)	48 »	» »
Largeur bicondylienne.	108 »	» »
Largeur bimalléolaire	81 »	» »
Largeur du pied	126 »	» »
<i>Membre supérieur gauche.</i>		
Hauteur de l'humérus	381 »	422 »
Hauteur du radius.	298 »	298 »
Longueur de la main.	233 »	243 »
Longueur du médus.	118 1/2	124 »
Longueur du pouce avec le métacarpien.	125 »	126 1/2
Longueur du pouce seul	72 »	76 »
Longueur de l'ongle du médus	16 »	16 »
Largeur de l'humérus (extrémité inférieure)	74 »	83 »
Largeur du poignet	67 »	69 1/2
Largeur de la main	97 »	103 »
<i>Circonférences.</i>		
Cou.	370 »	370 »
Thorax	1015 »	1040 »
Taille	892 »	925 »
Bras	280 »	260 »
Avant-bras	271 »	250 »
Poignet	197 »	197 »
Cuisse : circonférence supérieure à droite	544 »	» »
— — à gauche	539 »	450 »
— inférieure à droite.	420 »	» »
— — à gauche	399 »	» »
Mollet : droit.	382 »	» »
gauche	375 »	350 »
Malléoles (droite et gauche).	240 »	» »
<i>Tête.</i>		
Hauteur naso-alvéolaire	87 »	87 »
Hauteur naso-sous-nasale.	64 »	64 »
Largeur biangulaire interne (yeux).	36 »	37 »
Hauteur ophryo-alvéolaire.	102 »	102 »
Largeur biangulaire externe (yeux).	96 »	» »
Largeur bimastoïdienne.	142 1/2	145 »
Diamètre antéro-postérieur glabellaire.	199 »	200 »
Hauteur ophryo-mentonnière.	154 »	159 1/2
Diamètre antéro-postérieur métopique.	195 »	197 »

type	date	filename	size	author
scan	01.09.2023	Pagina's van CS_000015_015_pdf-2.pdf	184 KB	Arnout De Cleene

category
archive, book, interference, medicine, replica/copy

11:05:38



