

Photography and image walls

Sixth edition of the Institut's Grant

In the framework of its research and creation support programme

Lately we've been witnessing a proliferation of images - photographic prints, printed photographs, documentation, projections - selected and arranged on the walls of museums and art centres, culminating in the establishment of a new form of expression: *image walls*.

From the second half of the 19th century, thanks to improvements in reproduction processes - printing or photomechanical processes - photography became a collector's item and a favoured iconographic source. From photographic reproductions of art collections, through the illustrated press to the commercial success of the postcard, were used by artists, researchers, writers, thinkers, and amateurs of all kinds for acquisition, accumulation, framing, or pinning on walls.

The vertical accumulation of images has served different purposes. For some thinkers, exemplified by Aby Warburg as a seminal and intricate figure, image walls are exhibited forms of the atlas and serve the construction of thought. André Malraux and Gerhard Richter are two examples. It appears in exhibitions as a means of saturating the eye, like the multi-projections of Charles and Ray Eames or Edward Steichen's *Family of Man* exhibition. Writers have also made it their medium¹, as in the galaxy of portraits and self-portraits on Hervé Guibert's library wall, and the Beat Generation's experiments with assembled or even projected images. Artists' installations such as Bettina Rheims' *La Chapelle*; Thomas Hirschorn's *The Purple Line*; wall installations by Hans Peter Feldman and Jean Louis Schoellkopf; Susan Meiselas' *Médiations* installation, which questions the status of her own images; postcard walls by Oriol Vilanova and Susan Hiller's *On The Edge*; Evan Roth's immersive *Since You Were Born*, or the installations of collected images by artist Rosângela Rennó, not forgetting Wolfgang Tillmans, whose constellation-style wall hangings have paved the way to new methods of conceiving and exhibiting photography.

The 6th edition of the Institut pour la photographie scholarship programme will be devoted to the historical, theoretical, or creative study of image walls. What is their place in a visual history, between the history of photography, affective ritual, the need to accumulate, immersion in images, the phenomenon of appropriation, and the visual impact of the installation? Can we then speak of image gestures, thoughts through imagery, delve into the act of creation through and among images, and question these iconographic practices in the broad context of their presence in the intimate, professional, or public sphere?

The Institut, which is both international and rooted in its local area, will be particularly attentive to projects that allocate specific resources of the region and align with the programme's various public encounters. As every year, the call for entries is open to photographers, artists, researchers, and curators.

¹ Anne Reverseau, *et al*, *Murs d'images d'écrivains dispositifs et gestes iconographiques XIXe-XXIe siècle*, Louvain-La-Neuve, PUL, Presses universitaires de Louvain, 2022.

[Anne Reverseau, *et al*, *Organisation of writers' image walls: iconographic gestures from the 19th to the 21st century* Louvain-La-Neuve, PUL, Louvain University Press, 2022.]