

LE MOIS DE LA PHOTO À MONTRÉAL

BIENNALE
INTERNATIONALE
DE L'IMAGE
CONTEMPORAINE

INTERNATIONAL
BIENNIAL OF THE
CONTEMPORARY
IMAGE

LE MOIS DE LA PHOTO À MONTRÉAL 2017

THEME

What Does the Image Refer To?

Guest curator: Ami Barak

Theme

What Does the Image Refer To?

With the rapid development of new technologies, images – both still and moving – have become omnipresent in daily life. Lens-based images have invaded the web and social networks, those new media that have made photography ubiquitous and granted it a prominent position in innumerable practices.

The photographic image – initially intended to reproduce every last detail of reality, and then used to provide records of the personalities and events of its times – is manipulated at will. It has become so powerful that it has obliterated the world of nature and art, giving everything a sense of déjà vu. But does this documentation of daily life convey reality? Is a photograph an objective framing of the world at a particular moment? Is it a symbol or a symptom of contemporary culture? The technical and chemical characteristics of photography provide both artists and scientists with an immense range of possibilities; they even make it possible to manufacture images that do not exist in three-dimensional reality.

For Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal 2017, I intend to explore the concept of photographic evidence in all its guises. Although the camera sees better than the eye, it is the artist who, in the final analysis, imposes on the image of the world his or her own point of view, intuition, and even disenchantment. Using the emblematic work of New York artist Taryn Simon, who constantly challenges the reality and reliability of the image, as my hook, I want to examine the idea of the image, still or moving, as witness to the real, and draw attention to the fantastical and sublimated character of reality. My intention is to encourage artists to expand the question of the veracity of the image to horizons beyond documentary traces and recordings of the real. I also want to invite viewers to take a critical stance toward the testimonial value of lens-based images.

The biennale, organized around the theme ***What Does the Image Refer To?***, will offer exhibitions that explore subjectivity in photographic language. It will feature selected well-known and recognized artists from around the globe, while continuing to give a prominent place to Québec and Canadian artists, and pay special attention to emerging practices.

Ami Barak

Guest curator

Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal 2017

About the guest curator

An independent curator and art critic, **Ami Barak** lives and works in Paris. He has launched numerous exhibitions and projects in France and elsewhere throughout the world. The most recent of these include *Art for the World [the Expo] – the City of Forging Paths*, at the World Expo Shanghai (2010); *Performing History*, at the Romanian pavilion of the 54th Venice Biennale (2011); the retrospective *I am also... Douglas Gordon*, at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2013); *Taryn Simon: Rear Views, A Star-Forming Nebula, and the Office of Foreign Propaganda*, at the Jeu de Paume, Paris (2015); *Julião Sarmiento: la chose, même – the real thing*, at the Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, Paris (2016); and *Peter Kogler: Next*, at the ING Art Center, Brussels (2016). He also curated the *Nuit blanche* in Paris (2003 and 2004) and Toronto (2013), and served as president of the International Association of Contemporary Art Curators – IKT (2002 to 2005). Artistic director of the 2016 Salon de Montrouge, he also teaches a master's degree program in curatorial practice at the Université de Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne.