Franz Roh and Visual Juxtaposition in Foto-Auge

Irini Zervas

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Franz Roh and Visual Juxtaposition in Foto-Auge

by

Irini Zervas

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, Department of Art History, Hunter College of the The City University of New York

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INTRODUCTION

Experiencing an unstable political, social and economic climate, image-makers in the 1920s Weimar Republic staked their ground within a fluctuating context for art making. The production of magazines, advertisements, posters, films, newspapers, books and other kinds of popular printed materials flourished, aided by new methods of reproduction and growing urban populace. Central to all these diverse forms of media was the photographic image. A relatively new genre, photo books, where photographs found a prominent role in the sequencing and narrative of the printed page, played a pivotal role in Weimar photographic culture. The purpose of these publications varied, depending on their audiences. Some photo books were conceived by photographers as viewing platforms for their work, while others functioned as exhibition catalogs, or an opportunity to disseminate key ideas about photography’s position in society. It follows that photo books also exhibited striking differences in format and content. Indeed, the Weimar era is frequently referenced as a breakthrough period for photo book production in Europe and other regions due to the large number produced and the experimentation with printing, binding, typography, and design. The differences among photo books illuminate how those involved in their production, from photographers to printers, publishers, editors, commissioned writers, and designers collectively used the intrinsic elements of the book—especially the interaction of photographs and text—to advance their ideas.


2 Ibid.
This thesis focuses on one photo book in particular, Franz Roh and Jan Tschichold’s *Foto-Auge*, or *Photo-Eye* (Figure 1), which they published on the occasion of a major event in photographic history: the 1929 *Film und Foto* exhibition, known as *Fifo*. The exhibition was held in Stuttgart and it traveled to various locations in Europe and Japan, evidencing the broad audience for “New Vision” photography and film. Showcasing around one thousand works, the Stuttgart event also demonstrated this era’s embrace of a vast array of photographic forms, including art photography and examples from advertising, journalism and propaganda, in addition to a section of historical works shown for context. *Foto-Auge* comprises seventy-six photography-based illustrations, taken for the most part from the *Fifo* exhibition, with others culled from news bureaus. Some of the most well known artists of the time are represented, including George Grosz, Hannah Höch, László Moholy-Nagy, Florence Henri, Man Ray, El Lissitzky, Edward Weston, and graphic designer Piet Zwart, among others. Roh, art historian, artist and critic, wrote the introductory text, “Mechanism and Expression,” while the book was designed by Tschichold, a graphic designer and typography teacher at Paul Renner’s master classes for book printers in Munich, who in 1928 had published *Die neue Typographie* [The New Typography], an influential manual that attempted to codify graphic design standards.

This study of *Foto-Auge* is grounded on the particular theoretical approach of Franz Roh and aims to unlock the book’s complex meanings through a careful analysis of layout and visual sequence according to image binaries. I argue that this pictorial schema had little precedent in other photo books published during this period, and that it was precisely Roh’s theoretical approach that activated this use. Roh’s scholarly background in art history, his engagement with

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photography in the 1920s - early 1930s, and his lifelong experimentation with collage provide a means to understand this unique format. Furthermore, not only does the image binary structure find its genesis in Roh, but also, many of the themes in the book recall his own photography and groundbreaking theorizing on “Magic Realism.” *Foto-Auge’s* presentation of works in dynamic comparisons allows the reader to find a new meaning in the onslaught of different types of images, embodying the experience of visual oversaturation that characterized this period. Ultimately, I argue that *Foto-Auge* proclaims photography’s ability not merely to record but to disrupt any sense of reality.

Given Roh’s indelible connections to *Foto-Auge’s* themes and format, this thesis positions him as an agent of the book’s content and organization, despite Tschichold’s role as a designer, and his designation, in the book’s front matter, as a co-editor. As such, this thesis treats Roh as *Foto-Auge’s* author is limited to a discussion of his influence. It also considers Roh’s scholarly background, book publishing and artistic practice with a close reading of *Foto-Auge* to shed light on how these various endeavors, many of which took place synchronously, informed each other. Examining the entirety of Roh’s undertakings to include his authorship of *Foto-Auge* reestablishes him as a major thinker of this period, and does not mean to take away from Tschichold’s historical impact. The lack of strong archival evidence distinguishing the editors’ specific roles in the making of *Foto-Auge* also leads to this thesis’ methodology, which is, by definition, speculative. In order to gain a truer idea of the book’s meaning and significance, later discussions of *Foto-Auge* must look more deeply into both agents’ histories to determine their means of collaboration.

Scholars of Weimar photography have generally explained *Foto-Auge* according to its zeitgeist, with little elaboration of how or why the book was made, the historical, artistic, and
theoretical background of its editors, or a close reading of its images or analysis of its format.\(^5\)

The resonance between Roh’s introductory essay and established dialogues about photography in this era, as well as the book’s connection to the *Fifo* exhibition, have led to previous interpretations of the book as a compendium or summa of this specific moment in photography, rather than as a unique intervention in its own right. In particular, little attention has been given to the book’s image selection and arrangement. The inclusion of works, such as Max Ernst’s painted photographs (Figure 2), not typically exhibited, published or discussed with “New Vision” practitioners, including Brett Weston and Herbert Bayer (Figure 3),\(^6\) suggests that an understanding of the book as a “New Vision” primer is inadequate.

The book’s title refers to a period of extensive technical and stylistic changes in photography, including the development of a hand-held camera, experimentation with new darkroom and post-production methods such as photograms and montage, and the photographing of objects from new vantage points. Although the new freedom of expression made possible by these tools and techniques resulted in a diverse aesthetic production, Weimar photographs from

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6 These images appeared sequentially with Ernst’s in *Foto-Auge*. 
this era have come to be grouped together under the umbrella term “New Vision” due to their capacity to depict the everyday in novel ways.

“New Vision” implied a set of theories promoted in particular by Moholy-Nagy, an artist who co-led the preliminary course at the Bauhaus and sought to define the function and goals of photography. His 1925 photo book, *Malerei, Photographie, Film* [Painting, Photography, Film] (*PPF*) is a treatise on photography that defines and illustrates these new camera aesthetics. The book’s large proportion of images to text, as well as the many shared images and image types among them, has led to scholarship that discusses *PPF* in tandem with *Foto-Auge*. For example, Pepper Stetler has aligned *Foto-Auge* with *PPF* and two 1929 books that were commissioned for the *Fifo* exhibition, distinguishing them from *Foto-Auge*: Werner Graeff’s *Es kommt der neue Fotograf*! [Here Comes the New Photographer!] and Hans Richter’s *Filmgegner von Heute – Filmfreunde von Morgen* [Enemy of Film Today – Friend of Film Tomorrow]. Stetler has argued that these books functioned didactically to provide visual lessons to audiences, communicating in a way that was wholly new and unique to the medium. For example, a caption might instruct viewers to detect the photographer’s vantage point or illustrations of consecutive images on celluloid might demonstrate how animation is made. Textual and visual elements functioned in relationship to each other as a “product of dialogues and relations between disparate formats.”

Stetler has not dealt with the particular layout of *Foto-Auge* but has discussed key ideas from Roh’s introductory essay that explain photo books’ design and the relationship of image to text.

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8 Stetler, *Stop Reading! Look!*!, 8.
Her analysis breaks with previous discussions of photo books and photographs, such as that of Daniel Magilow, who uses the term “photo-essay,” to ascribe rhetorical meaning to images.\(^9\)

Stetler’s assertion that photo books offered an active, perceptual experience for viewers that was more akin to film or montage guides my own examination of *Foto-Auge*.\(^{10}\)

Despite Stetler’s identification of similarities between these books, there exist numerous differences between them that she does not address. *PPF’s* wide variety of images, which typifies books from this period, were arranged in easily recognizable comparisons; two images of similar type would be placed side-by-side in order to illustrate didactically a concept that had been detailed in the book’s substantive text. *Foto-Auge*, in turn, juxtaposes dissimilar works and builds a sequence that is based on striking contrast and dissonance rather than typological similarity (Figure 4). Further, *Foto-Auge’s* two-page arrangements and binary layout break with established photo book conventions, which typically arranged one photograph or motif per spread. As I will argue, *Foto-Auge* is not as didactic as other books from the Weimar era, discussed by Stetler, and instead prioritizes dissonance between images.

In this thesis, I compare photographs in *Foto-Auge* with images that were not selected for the book, such as works by Roh and illustrations that Roh knew from other publications. In line with Stetler and Magilow’s treatment of this era as one of media transition, such comparisons prove the fluid boundaries between mediums and an interest in the development of new visual formats.\(^{11}\)

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\(^{10}\) Stetler, *Stop Reading! Look!*, 9.

\(^{11}\) Ibid, 13-14.
demanding high levels of intensity and focus, as well as criticism from the period that compared books with film, for example, led to a transformation in the visual experience of books. In sum, these books helped readers to adjust to the visual experiences of modern life without directly simulating their conditions, an argument that this thesis extends to Foto-Auge through a close examination of its images.

To a greater extent than PPF, Foto-Auge’s design recalls other expressions that rely on what Patrizia McBride called the “fragmented, non-narrative products of avant-garde experiments in montage.” McBride has described the significant relationship of montage to photo books, asserting that montage creates a particular kind of narrative, which is often not linear, by structuring relationships between objects. The placement of dissimilar fragments together in montage “produces experience” rather than “represents reality.” McBride’s analysis about the ability of objects to shape reality recalls Stetler’s idea that books induce the viewer’s perception. These analyses differ, however, in that McBride, unlike Stetler, relies on a type of modern vision engendered by the mechanical reproduction of objects; McBride sees a relationship between “new technologies of mechanical reproduction” and the “human sensory apparatus.”

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13 Ibid.

14 Ibid. Stetler notes that some scholars have questioned the over-generalized treatment of Weimar visual practice: “Signs of historical coherence and unity were becoming increasingly difficult to identify during the Weimar Republic…Turvey (and other scholars) have argued that concepts of simulation, fragmentation and shock that lie at the core of the modernity thesis are too vague to be applied to cinema in any way beyond the analysis of certain avant garde films…It is more plausible to consider modern vision as a group of visual skills, while also admitting that these skills are instilled unevenly across a population.” See Stetler, Stop Reading! Look!, 14.
McBride’s discussion of the relationship between the montage aesthetic and the experience of viewing works in this period derives from historical debates, and it acknowledges how Moholy-Nagy, Roh, and others singled out this form. Although McBride does not address montage in regard to Foto-Auge’s image juxtapositions and perceptual experience, which this thesis does address, the analysis of montage enables her study to bridge the gap between Roh’s engagement with photography and his earlier work. According to Roh, as McBride writes, the “traditional logic of representation...is replaced by a logic of recombination.” She emphasizes Roh’s intent, common to his discussion of Neue Sachlichkeit [New Objectivity] in painting and of “New Vision” photography, to suggest that the fascination with actual objects causes an estrangement from them, an “awe-inspiring magic...the trigger for a perception that did not simply record experience but rather shaped it in fundamental ways.” This thesis extends the “activeness” of the image to induce experience, as discussed in both Stetler and McBride, to the image layout of Foto-Auge.

Other studies that have investigated Foto-Auge in some depth have related it to the social, political and economic concerns of its time, to the New Objectivity in painting and photography, and to a discussion of Magic Realism, drawing directly from Roh’s ideas. Michael Jennings, one of few scholars to closely examine Foto-Auge’s images and to ascribe meaning to the book beyond its anthologizing function, contextualizes it with others from Weimar Germany, including Albert Renger-Patzsch’s Die Welt ist schön [The World is Beautiful] and August

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16 Ibid, 27.
Sander’s *Antlitz der Zeit* [Face of our Time].\(^{17}\) Focusing on the books’ relationship to the social, political and economic climate in Weimar, Jennings describes the 1928 crises in agriculture, arguing that these photo books were reacting to the volatility of their time period. He aligns *Foto-Auge* with this type of social commentary, discussing how this publication charts the dystopian future of the Weimar Republic. Jennings identifies themes such as the loss of the real, the conflict between a doomed agricultural society and the rapidly urbanizing population, and the sense of chaos, which he characterizes as “drowning.”\(^{18}\) Undoubtedly, some of these themes run through *Foto Auge*. Jennings’s argument, however, contradicts the optimism that informs Roh’s introductory essay, and for that matter, most of Roh’s writing on photography, which delights in the possibilities of the modern visual language.

While many of Jennings’s correlations of formal analyses with social problems are insightful, his arguments occasionally seem strained and neglect the multiplicity of meanings encoded in *Foto-Auge*. Further, it is important to consider that, as many readers of the book had already been exposed to many of these images through exhibitions and publications, they did not approach the works with completely fresh eyes, and probably had prior associations with them. The unusual formatting and juxtaposition of images in *Foto-Auge* works both to elucidate these a-priori meanings (such as the works’ connections to the “New Vision” style and philosophy), and to suggest new interpretations.

Aspects of Jennings’s methodology guide my analysis in this thesis. Although Jennings does not address the significance of Roh’s image binary to *Foto-Auge’s* format and meaning, he

\(^{17}\) Michael Jennings, “Agriculture, Industry and the Birth of the Photo-essay in the Late Weimar Republic,” *October* 93 (Summer 2000), 23-56.

\(^{18}\) Ibid, 39-46.
does look first at the images as pairs, and then addresses “reconstellations” of pairs with an emphasis on thematic groupings.\textsuperscript{19} Jennings remains focused on these thematic concerns, stating that they are more significant, versus formal similarities, to assigning meaning to the book. This reading is questionable, and my argument aligns with that of Felicity Gee, in her assertion that Jennings’s examination neglects the important formal and stylistic qualities in the book.\textsuperscript{20}

Writing about \textit{Foto-Auge} as it pertains to Magic Realism in cinema at mid-century, Gee teases out many of the resonances between Roh’s interests and the images in \textit{Foto-Auge}. Her approach differs from the main studies of Weimar media culture in that she does not solely contextualize \textit{Foto-Auge} in relation to other well-known examples of “New Vision” photography that appeared in the book. For example, she anticipates the connection to Surrealism that many scholars have neglected to discuss. In doing so, Gee brings to light the important conceptual similarities between Roh’s Magic Realism and many of the works in \textit{Foto-Auge}, offering a new discussion of many of the “outlier” images that are not often studied in relation to this book (see Figure 2). Her study, however, remains limited to works with more pronounced Surrealist themes that fit with her definition of “cinematic magic realism.”\textsuperscript{21} This thesis highlights how \textit{Foto-Auge} is positioned within a larger scope of Weimar cultural production and cultural commentary, which goes beyond the Surrealist references in \textit{Foto-Auge} and Roh’s work, as outlined by Gee.

In her dissertation on New Objectivity photography and painting, Julia Kreinik discusses \textit{Foto-Auge} in terms of the general interest of this period in “truth telling” and pictorial veracity, a

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 40.


\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, 16.
view that diverges from Gee’s primary interest in the Surrealist aspects of *Foto-Auge*.22

According to Kreinik, *Foto-Auge*’s bringing together well-known images in one compendium is proof of the impulse to categorize images at this time. Kreinik also argues that the critical difference between publications in this period was subsumed by the desire to identify signifiers of the New Objectivity or the New Vision; images were chosen for these publications or exhibitions because they fit particular requirements, such as a view from above, a closely cropped, candid portrait, or a photogram. This interpretation allows Kreinik to contextualize *Foto-Auge* within a larger field of cultural production, including the relationship of painting to photography, but neglects some of the book’s particularities. In fact, I would argue that this book includes many works that do not relate to the truth-telling instinct, but rather confuse and test its audience.

This thesis builds on and challenges these earlier interpretations. As a means of explaining *Foto-Auge*’s position in regard to larger debates about photography in print in this period, chapter one describes the book and examines other prominent photo books of the Weimar period, such as Moholy-Nagy’s *PPF* (1925), the exhibition catalogue for the *Fifo* exhibition (1929), *Here Comes the New Photographer!* (1929), and Albert Renger-Patzsch’s *Die Welt ist schön* (1928). Elements such as choice of images, context in which the book was made, design and relationship of text to image are taken into consideration. The display and placement of images in these books will also be contrasted, shedding light on how, when positioning photographs in their own books, designers and photographers conceived of these images in relationship to each other.

All of these books were well known in the Weimar period for engaging with “New Vision” photography. As I discuss, Foto-Auge has many elements in common with PPF. A photography manual with a substantive, twelve-chapter introduction and a visual treatise on photography’s role in society, PPF employs photographs and text for explanatory purposes. Following a similar format, Foto-Auge’s introductory text precedes its images. In this essay, Roh describes the photographs and photo-based experiments that comprise the book as elements of a unified medium, helping to define photography amid its explosive growth and the diversification of its viewing platforms. The images in both books are full-page, showing the autonomy of images in conveying meaning. Most of the images in PPF, however, are accompanied by captions that explain the type of image and its function or how it was made—a significant departure from Foto-Auge. Captions in the latter instead identify the artist or source and title in three languages, but do not provide any further clarification. Information on image types, such as advertisements or montages, are given in Roh’s short introductory essay. Each of these books prompts readers to make connections between text and image. While, ultimately, PPF advances an argument developed in text through images, Foto-Auge’s use of dynamic image binaries to convey meaning with minimal captions pushes the function of images beyond that established in PPF’s illustrations and distinguishing it from PPF and the other books mentioned.

Past scholarship on PPF guides my use of image binaries to describe how Foto-Auge is not just read or observed but rather, experienced. Stetler frames PPF in terms of its ability to induce a perceptual experience in the viewer, treating the work as a three-dimensional object to be handled, experienced in time as one flips its pages. As she explains, each spread in the book
prompts the viewer to have a distinct sensory experience.\textsuperscript{23} Magilow has also noted that it is essential to analyze Weimar photo books in the context of how they were actually experienced - as whole books - rather than to merely examine individual photographs.\textsuperscript{24} By comparison to \textit{Foto-Auge}, \textit{Fifo}’s exhibition catalogue serves to provide helpful contextual information and guide viewers through the entirety of the massive exhibition’s program. There are many illustrations in common between the catalogue, \textit{Foto-Auge} and \textit{PPF}, attesting to the wide circulation of certain images in this period.

Werner Graeff’s \textit{Here Comes the New Photographer!} (1929), one of two official companion publications to \textit{Fifo}, includes images from the exhibition with some additions. The book differs from the \textit{Fifo} catalogue mainly because of its lesson in visual literacy. In this regard, it recalls \textit{PPF}, communicating its main arguments through strategic placement of images and text. The structure of this book, however, is even more didactic than \textit{PPF}, as photographs, often printed several to a page, become linear, explanatory vehicles for ideas expressed in text, often on the same page.

Renger-Patzsch’s \textit{Die Welt ist schön} (1928), a commissioned object, contains only the work of this photographer and typifies a particular genre of photo book. Renger-Patzsch does not use images to express a point, but rather, to communicate an aesthetic. This book, like the others described above, aimed to legitimize photography as an art form, but it differed fundamentally from the others as it championed the supposedly “objective” photograph. In contrast, the other authors’ enthusiasm for technical experimentation shows how a wide range of manipulated images can communicate with the viewer.


\textsuperscript{24} Magilow, \textit{The Photography of Crisis}, 6-7.
Chapter Two delves into the genesis of the “image binary” through Franz Roh’s academic interests and development. As a student of Heinrich Wölfflin, a prominent art historian in Munich, Roh learned his mentor’s comparative method of art history. Wölfflin’s treatment of style in terms of binary opposites allowed him to characterize art movements, and this method guides Roh’s discussion of 1920s European painting in his publication, Nach-expressionismus: magischer Realismus: Probleme der neuesten Europaischen Malerei [Post-Expressionism: Magic Realism: Problems of the Latest European Painting] (1925). Roh lays out binaries between Expressionism and its reactive correspondent. The subtitle to this scholarly text exemplifies this type of juxtaposition – an otherworldliness that coexists with real objects. Roh is attributed with the initial discussion of the term Magic Realism, however, its first use goes back to Italian artist Giorgio de Chirico, who painted eerily unnatural scenes colored by a veneer of real objects, structures and pictorial strategies, such as linear perspective. Works by de Chirico, included in Nach-expressionismus, attest to Roh’s interest in the construction of an image, an idea that had also been elaborated by German art historian Erwin Panofsky, in 1925. The symbolic functioning of perspective in de Chirico’s paintings links Roh’s interest in painting to photography. I argue that Roh’s investigations of methods of pictorial representation crystallized in his work in photography.

Around the same time that he published Nach-expressionismus in 1925, Roh began showing an interest in writing about and creating photographs. Chapter three details how his photography practice, begun prior to Foto-Auge, informed his book. Several themes emerge in Roh’s work, from his experimentation with various techniques including photograms, negative printing, montage and collage, to the visible expression of the photographer’s manipulation.

through light effects and the construction of perspective. Other elements like the use of mirrors, diptychs, cutting and rearranging contact prints, prove that Roh plays with photography as a direct transcription of reality. In particular, the negative print emblematizes the fluidity between Roh’s theory of Magic Realism and his practice of tone reversal, which created an artificial “day” and “night,” effect, presenting a sense of the uncanny and defamiliarization.

Techniques of duplication of forms and rearrangement of photographs form a bridge between Roh’s photography and his lifelong practice of collage. The “montage” aesthetic, which emphasizes juxtaposition of fragments of modern life, as characterized by films such as Dziga Vertov’s *Chelovek s kinoapparatom* [Man with the Movie Camera] (1929), is found in the practice of collage and through Roh’s relationship with Surrealism and an artist like Max Ernst. Overall, Roh’s engagement with a few significant techniques, most notably the negative print and collage, enable him to work through his aesthetic interest in juxtaposition, setting the stage for his image arrangement in *Foto-Auge*.

Chapter four examines *Foto-Auge* through its image binaries. In order to discuss the potential meaning and significance of the book, I have identified five themes from within its images. The first, which highlights how new imaging technologies are represented in photographs, shows that photographers utilized these methods to enhance and transform vision. The concept of the photographic double, which aligns with Franz Roh’s interest in the binary, is explained through a second group of works. These images capture Roh’s belief in how photography – an interplay of light and shadow - can symbolize a dualistic world. A third, a selection of graphic montages, examines the book’s exploration of the intersections between writing and image, a theme with references to both Constructivism and Surrealism. The prevalence of images of the body, albeit a manipulated body, is detailed in a fourth section on
violence. These works evince Foto-Auge’s engagement with this period’s debates on the nature of subjecthood, a key theme in John Heartfield’s publications that act as forms of protest. Lastly, a fifth section on montage and cinema references film, such as Vertov’s concept of cinema-eye or kino-eye, and I discuss how the juxtapositions, or montages, in the book approximate the experience of watching film.

This reading of themes into Foto-Auge departs from previous scholarship on this book. The identification of these themes, in addition to the image binary format, is motivated by my deep analysis of Roh’s other work and its connection to this book.

Roh’s guide to the visual comprehension of images and argument on the state of photography has greater resonance when considered in the context of other Weimar debates on photography. Cultural critic Siegfried Kracauer’s description of an age of “distraction” – in which images form a “mirage” over everyday life – is addressed by Foto-Auge’s chaotic jumble of images, suggesting the visual conditions of this age. Foto-Auge speaks to this debate about “distraction” by highlighting the photograph’s capacity to be deceptive. It would seem that this propensity to deceive viewers counteracts the goal of most other books during Weimar. As I propose, Foto-Auge does not contradict Moholy-Nagy, Werner Graeff, Renger Patzsch, and other figures who claimed that photography can more clearly show the world. Rather, the book makes an argument for a need to amplify one’s understanding of the world through seeing the uncanny in the everyday.

By studying Foto-Auge in its intellectual context, including other photo books as well as Roh’s scholarly background, critical writing, and artistic engagement, this thesis reevaluates its significance within debates about photography in the Weimar period. Roh’s layout choices and

image selection solidifies his important role in disseminating theories about photography to an international audience. By gaining a better understanding of Roh’s background and practice, it becomes possible to understand what drove this key thinker and producer of images and how this book functioned for an international audience.
CHAPTER 1 – FOTO-AUGE AND WEIMAR PHOTO BOOK CULTURE

This chapter explains the significance of Foto-Auge in relationship to other photo books from the Weimar era and places the publication in dialogue with major ideas from that time. Foto-Auge contributed to the cultural debate on the image as a means of communication and also supported the aesthetics of the “New Vision” promoted by László Moholy-Nagy. Its author, Franz Roh, emerges as a key figure in Weimar photo book culture, engaging with these ideas in his introductory essay in Foto-Auge, as well as in other books, articles, lectures, exhibitions, and photographic experiments (to be discussed in chapters two and three).

Foto-Auge was in direct communication with Fifo, a pivotal international exhibition organized in 1929 by the Deutscher Werkbund, a group of artists, architects and designers dedicated to promoting and advancing their profession. This exhibition, first held in Stuttgart, was the most famous of the many photography exhibitions in Germany in the late 1920s.27 The manifold projects that accompanied and followed it testify to its status as an engine of modernity and internationalism. Included in the show were photographs associated with the avant-garde and images culled from news media outlets, government archives, scientific and commercial sources, and films. After Stuttgart, Fifo traveled to six more locations throughout Europe and Japan, and many of its images were integrated into a 1930 exhibition, Das Lichtbild [Photography], in

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Munich, curated by active Lichtbild committee member Roh.²⁸ The Lichtbild show then spurred the 1931 exhibition in Basel, Die neue Fotografie [The New Photography].²⁹ While these exhibitions varied in content from location to location, they shared many images and collaborators, another indicator, in this period, that the wide dissemination of ideas about photography was a shared goal across disciplines and national boundaries.³⁰

As Olivier Lugon points out, Fifo enjoyed significant editorial coverage. Four of the exhibition’s European venues – in Stuttgart, Zurich, Berlin and Vienna – produced accompanying catalogues.³¹ Three additional volumes were made in connection with Fifo, including Foto-Auge and two others, the latter two being advertised by the Werkbund. These were Es kommt der neue Fotograf! and Hans Richter’s Filmgegner von Heute - Filmfreunde von Morgen.³² The last two publications were commissioned by the exhibition manager, Gustav Stotz,

²⁸ Ibid, footnote 16. For this point, Lugon references Roh’s papers in the Getty Research Institute and Deutsches Kunstarchiv im Germanischen Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, which say little on his involvement with the Lichtbild exhibition.

²⁹ At the same time as Fifo, Fotografie der Gegenwart [Photography of the Present] at the Museum Folkwang in Essen, traveled to twelve venues from 1929-30. This exhibition generated another, Photography Essen [Das Lichtbild Essen], in 1931. In addition to the exhibitions discussed here, which are acknowledged to be the most well-known, there were also several others in Germany. For a chart that lists exhibitions by location and date, see Appendix in Lugon, “Prints from the Thomas Walther Collection and German Exhibitions around 1930,” 8.

³⁰ Several art historians’ archives are testament to the international nature of collaboration on these projects. Ibid, 5.

³¹ Ibid, 4.

³² According to Lugon, unfortunately, the archives of the Deutscher Werkbund in Berlin did not keep any records of the organization of Fifo, and the archives of individuals involved do not contain relevant information. Ibid.
a crucial distinction from *Foto-Auge*. It is possible that Stotz sent Roh and his designer, Jan Tschichold, photographs from the exhibition to be printed in *Foto-Auge*, and it is significant that they thanked Stotz and his wife for their assistance in *Foto-Auge*’s front matter. The exact nature of Roh and Tschichold’s involvement with the organization of *Fifo* is not known, making it difficult to determine *Foto-Auge*’s status in relationship to the exhibition, but it is clear that the two projects had strong connections throughout. That *Fifo* alone generated three publications separate from the catalogues reflects the organizers’ interests in disseminating ideas about photography through the book format, and has perhaps contributed to the exhibition’s lasting impact.

The text published for the *Fifo* exhibition functions primarily as a practical guide to the event and typifies the exhibition catalogue category in Weimar photo books. The book includes several essays by Werkbund figures and curators, twenty illustrations, comprehensive lists of artists, titles of works and film selections, and advertisements. *Fifo*’s cover, with minimal text arranged in a geometric style reflective of the Bauhaus, features a map of the exhibition layout as a useful feature for audiences. Further evidence of its practical function is the book’s very small, handheld size, which resembles a guidebook. The advertisements that appear throughout give the book a magazine-like quality and recall the exhibition’s lack of distinction between business and fine art applications of photography and design.

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33 Magilow notes that Graeff had been asked by Gustav Stotz to develop two companion publications to the exhibition. See Magilow, *Photography of Crisis*, 20.


35 Perhaps this lack of distinction between the commercial and fine arts is reflected in not just the content but the format of some books from this time.
The catalogue’s image selection and arrangement also betray this pragmatic function. For example, images are frequently grouped according to type, theme, or formal similarity, which helps the reader to identify the important visual formats and styles in the exhibition. For this reason, in the Fifo catalogue, still life photographs by Rudolf Kramer and Walter Finsler (Figure 5) are pictured side-by-side. Portraits by Peterhans and Edward Weston (Figure 6) are next to each other, as are commercial works by Piet Zwart and Tschichold (Figure 7). In a few cases, image spreads in Foto-Auge have a similar function: to show multiple examples of one type. The arrangements depicting two similar images by one artist, such as Hans Finsler’s still lifes and Man Ray’s photograms, in two respective spreads (Figures 8-9), demonstrate several versions of an artist’s technique, rather than prompt the viewer to make comparisons. Other image spreads in the Fifo catalogue have no identifiable point of comparison, proving the book’s role of sampling images in the exhibition rather than making an argument in itself. For example, one of those photograms by Man Ray appears beside a Hannah Höch collage (Figure 10), having little in common except that collage and photograms are both forms experimented with and promoted by Bauhaus figures. On the other hand, a similar image by Höch appears in Foto-Auge in a more complex arrangement (Figure 11) that calls attention to, even playfully mocks, the viewer’s position, by the masks’ and hippopotamus’ stares at the viewer.

Roh and Tschichold, who were friends and both lived in Munich, had decided to create Foto-Auge after traveling to Stuttgart to view the exhibition, and may have had individual motivations. They were in contact with many of Fifo’s organizers and curators and, in some

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36 Tschichold’s poster appeared in Foto-Auge, but it was given a whole other meaning next to a photomontage. See Foto-Auge, plates 24-25.

37 This difference may help explain why the book looks so different from Graeff and Richter’s books.
cases, had been directly involved in its arrangement, becoming part of an international network. Tschichold designed the exhibition’s promotional poster (Figure 12) and was on the exhibition selection committee alongside many other prominent figures, including art historian Hans Hildebrandt and Bernhard Pankok, director of Stuttgart’s School of Applied Arts. Major figures of the interwar avant-garde were also involved in curating the show. Moholy-Nagy curated the first room, which was the German section of the exhibition; Edward Steichen and Edward Weston organized the United States section; Piet Zwart, Holland and El Lissitzky curated the portion on Russia. Dr. Siegfried Giedion, a professor in Zurich, worked on the Swiss segment. Roh had met Giedion while studying under art historian Heinrich Wölfflin at the University of Munich, again showing Roh’s position in this network.

Foto-Auge’s promotion of the “New Vision” and its timely compilation of signature images of the era ensure that it remains regarded as a great promoter of the Fifo exhibition and its avant-garde ideals, even more than its official catalogue, which had a limited distribution and fewer illustrations. Scholarship has also cemented Foto-Auge’s prominence as a major promoter of the “New Vision,” as the book is almost always referenced in relation to the exhibition, despite its unofficial status. In articles, books and encyclopedic entries on artists from this era, inclusion in Foto-Auge is frequently considered as a marker of the prominence of his or her work.

Neither an exhibition catalogue nor a standalone treatise, Foto-Auge is a hybrid publication that straddles the line between existing photo books and exhibitions in 1920s Weimar.

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Germany. While the book capitalizes on the excitement of the epoch-making exhibition, it remains an incomplete documentation of the event. Roh discusses *Fifo* only once in his introduction. Calling it the “most important event in the visual field in the last few years,” he invokes the exhibition, which displayed the work of amateur and non-professional photographers, as evidence for his argument about the utility of the camera to the broader public.40 Besides Stotz, the book does not identify *Fifo’s* curators, organizers or individuals involved with the event, but it merely contains a page listing the names and addresses of the artists in the book. The minimal mention of *Fifo*, in conjunction with the book’s other unique features, suggest that its editors intended for it to have its own power beyond promoting *Fifo*. To start with, its size was unusual, measuring 11 5/8” x 8 1/16”,41 noticeably larger than other photo books from this time. The book’s essay appears asymmetrical on both pages, the left side almost flush with the inner fold. Following the introduction, seventy-six photographs appear in arrangements that feature two per spread; each image is identified by a brief caption in three languages. The layout creates a tight visual sequence that enhances the impression of viewing, rather than reading. The images, culled from over one thousand images from the exhibition in Stuttgart,42 present an idiosyncratic sequence and reveal Roh’s creative interests – as will be discussed in chapter Two.

Not only was the book significant in Germany, its international scope was made evident by the three languages - German, French and English - applied in the title (*foto-auge*\ oeil et \ *photo*\ *photo-eye*) as well as in the essay and captions. El Lissitzky’s photomontage *The


41 Moholy-Nagy’s *PPF*, for example, measures 9” x 7.”

Constructor is printed above the blind-stamped title (see Figure 1). Key ideas on graphic design by Tschichold, a renowned theorist in his field, recur throughout the book. His use of lowercase lettering, black dots and bars as structuring devises for the layout, and the block-like arrangement of text and images are consistent with books from this culture. Other design elements, as discussed by Tschichold, distinguish the book:

My aim was to produce an unpretentious, un-pompous book that should be beautiful but inexpensive. Above all without a hard cover. I used only single-sided art paper (Chromo paper) but with Chinese folds (doubled), for otherwise the book would have been too thin. The unusual binding technique, my own invention, held the book block tight, yet the flexible covers opened clear to the left edge.

The book’s layout with two-image spreads differentiates it from other photo books, such as Albert Renger-Patzsch’s Die Welt ist schön, which features one image per spread beside a blank page. Foto-Auge’s layout evinces its grasp of photography as visual communication according to Moholy-Nagy’s theorizing in PPF. Roh’s selections were purposefully made for the viewer’s apprehension of visual principles and technologies. Unlike the captions in PPF and Werner Graeff’s Here Comes the New Photographer!, the captions in Foto-Auge do not explain image content or style, allowing the image to be the primary vehicle for communication.

Fifo’s catalogue, Foto-Auge, and PPF have many images in common, each book helping to disseminate the “New Vision” photography style and ideas. Yet, while Fifo’s catalogue acts as a companion to an event, PPF models a type of Weimar book as a perceptual practice that uses text and images to enter the viewer’s space dynamically. By discussing some of the strategies

43 Ibid, 1.

through which Moholy-Nagy reframed the act of seeing in his book, I provide context for Foto-
Auge, Es kommt der neue Fotograf!, Die Welt ist schön, and the Fifo catalogue.

First published in 1925, László Moholy-Nagy’s Painting Photography Film is regarded as a central essay on “New Vision” photography. The book, featuring one of Moholy-Nagy’s photograms on the cover, originally appeared as volume eight in the Bauhaus-Bücher series, with a second edition printed in 1927 (Figure 13). The forty pages of text, seventy photographs, and fourteen-page film script disseminate the author’s views about the nature of photography in modern society. Central to his observations is the distinction between photography and painting. Photography’s ability to capture the world, he notes, surpasses the capabilities of the human eye, and he illustrates this idea by publishing photographs of the cosmos and x-ray images. The photography medium’s drawing with light lends the ability to represent reality more accurately than painting, as he writes: “No manual means of representation (pencil, brush, etc.) is capable of arresting fragments of the world seen like this; it is equally impossible for manual means of creation to fix the quintessence of a movement; nor should we regard the ability of the lens to distort…(as) merely negative, for it provides an impartial approach.”45 Now that photography has taken up the mantle of more truthfully representing reality, Moholy-Nagy argues, new developments and uses of the medium have led to new ways of seeing the world. He demonstrates the breadth of his argument by using the phrase “present day optical creation” to refer to all of the creative activities associated with the visual. In this sense, photography is useful as a tool for apprehending reality - to “represent” it, and to engage with the world in newer and more fruitful ways.

45 Moholy-Nagy, Painting Photography Film, 7.
Moholy-Nagy’s twelve brief chapters extend his argument into the specifics of photography and deal with terminology, experimental techniques, and theories about the medium’s future. This theoretical portion of the book is followed by illustrations, which comprise the majority of the publication. In *PPF*, images take up the majority of the page. The diverse photo-based works, including “New Vision”-style photographs, photograms, and other experimental images, botanical photography, montage, film-strips and aerial photography, illustrate the theories outlined in the text. For example, one of Moholy-Nagy’s own works (Figure 14), which make up a significant number of the book’s illustrations, together with its caption, serves a didactic function – to teach viewers how to “read” the photograph, to examine it from various angles, scrutinize details, and determine how pictorial elements function as a complete image. Similarly, on the facing page, the caption underneath a photograph of a girl sitting on a beach, and taken from above, reads: “Formally regarded as distortion, today a startling experience! An invitation to re-evaluate our way of seeing. This picture can be turned round. It always produces new vistas.”

The author retools visual elements formerly considered less than ideal, such as the blurriness on the woman’s face or the viewer’s sense of confusion regarding visual orientation. The disparity between the woman’s gaze to the left and her body position to the right encourages viewers to turn their heads or rotate the photograph. In his captions, Moholy-Nagy labeled these elements as “invitations” to reconfigure the photograph’s composition and rotate it so as to experience “vistas” in new directions.

46 Ibid, 61.

47 Moholy-Nagy’s interest in experimenting with an image’s orientation was not limited to photography. He also published images of his paintings, such as on post cards, for example, with varying orientations.
Captions identify the subject and its photographer or source. Bolded areas of the captions highlight significant points of information and clarify complicated ideas. Below these descriptions sometimes appears more explanatory text that might explain a particular technique or a photograph’s style in historical context, alerting the reader to a striking compositional element or offering a metaphor that is drawn from the image. For example, a caption underneath a photograph culled from the magazine Zeitbilder showing repair work on the largest clock in the world (Figure 15, right) reads, “The experience of the oblique view and displaced proportions.” Here Moholy-Nagy’s emphasis on the “experience” touches on the shift in the agency of viewers as a result of new photographic means. On another page, Moholy-Nagy uses photomontage to discuss the experience of the modern city (Figure 16), suggesting that the structure of the photograph becomes a metaphor for how to look at reality. For Moholy-Nagy, Paul Citroen’s Weltstadt [The City] and its accompanying text demonstrate how form can guide perceptual experience. As the caption states, “The experience of the sea of stone is here raised to gigantic proportions.” Moholy-Nagy again makes the argument that viewing a photograph can bring about the feeling of the city, including the awareness of one’s own proportions in relation to skyscrapers, a sense of simultaneity, a constant bombardment with visual images, and altogether, a sense of paralysis. The photograph prompts a multi sensory experience that goes beyond the page.

The relatively new technique of photomontage, which distorts the plane of sight through a fragmentation of pictorial elements, was a significant photographic form for both Roh and Moholy-Nagy. Foto-Auge and PPF include montages explicitly to relate to the experience of modern life. PPF’s arrangement of montages shows the form’s development over time and in

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48 Ibid, 57.
scope, beginning with Dada and moving to Moholy-Nagy’s later applications. Its culmination in film shows the relationship between photomontage and time-based media, a relationship that *Foto-Auge* also proves, as will be discussed in chapter four. Emphasizing the relatedness of several versions of montage, Moholy-Nagy grouped them all together in his book so that the reader could take them in consecutively. On the contrary, Roh dispersed montages throughout *Foto-Auge*, putting the reader in the position to reorder these images conceptually: George Grosz and John Heartfield’s *Dada-Merika* appears early in the publication next to an eerie, “New Vision”-style cropped portrait of a doll’s head (see Figure 4). Commercial posters by Tschichold, Piet Zwart and other well-known designers that include the technique appear later on, and Hoch’s *von oben* [From Above] (Figure 11) appears near the end of the book. In *PPF*, two commercial objects by Moholy-Nagy – an advertisement for the circus and a propaganda poster (Figure 17) – follow the works by Citroen and Höch. Different from the montages on the previous page, in which photographic shards are flush against each other in seemingly chaotic order, Moholy-Nagy’s works place fragments within rigidly organized graphic systems, linking them to Constructivist poster design. The photographs in the circus poster are neatly arranged according to a strict geometric logic, what the author refers to in a caption as a “richness of tension” in intersecting lines and blocks. The individual elements in the propaganda poster (perhaps selected to demonstrate the variety of commercial applications of photomontage and ironically placed adjacent to the light-hearted circus content) are arranged along a line that arcs backward.

*Foto-Auge* contains works with a similar geometric orientation, showing a shared interest with *PPF* in graphic design and montage. Vordemberge Gildewart’s *Komposition* is placed next to Tschichold’s cinema poster (Figure 18). Both works show photographic fragments on top of
dark backgrounds and have light-colored lines in reverse of each other. Lines also shape the structure of Tschichold’s image, which fits the text of the advertisement and an image, perhaps a film still, within their confines. In both publications, the category of montage encompasses a variety of styles of this varied and widely used medium.

Moholy-Nagy closes his section on montage with two of his own works, a cover for a 1922 issue of the New York magazine *Broom and Leda and the Swan*. Crucially, the term that Moholy-Nagy uses to identify his different techniques is written underneath, “Typo-photo” and “Photoplastic,” respectively, differentiating these works from the earlier montages. These terms had been explained earlier in the book’s textual section; thus, their reappearance in the book with corresponding images provides illustrative examples for the reader.

In similarly diverse ways, authors also show a mutual interest in experimental photographic forms, such as negative prints and photograms, among other types, that use light to distort everyday objects. Negative prints and photograms accentuate light and shadow as dominant compositional elements, and are thus illustrative of Roh and Moholy-Nagy’s interest in photography as a play with light. *PPF* only included one negative print, despite the fact that its author was one of the most prolific experimenters with that technique. In this work, the woman’s head juts forward, distorting the relationship to other elements in the image and disrupting a sense of stable perspective (Figure 19).

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49 It is unclear whether Gildewart’s image served as the basis for an advertisement, although it seems likely due to the large empty space in the top left that could have been left for text.


51 It is placed next to Höch’s double exposure portrait, showing two methods with which the photographer distorts the subject of a photograph. These images’ inclusion in a sequential arrangement with other portraits suggests a grouping according to composition, and like montage, according to type, and facilitates comparisons.
Moholy-Nagy’s negative print process - a form that reverses signifiers of the real - was an important influence on Roh. He discussed the style in the introduction to his book, Moholy-Nagy: 60 Fotos: “Magical effects lie hidden in this inversion of light and dark.” Consequently he included four negative prints among Foto-Auge’s seventy-six images, illustrating the form’s significance to Roh among the wide array of styles that circulated in that time.

In defining photography as a distinct medium with various applications, a theme that runs throughout PPF and Foto-Auge, a major tenet pertains to the ability of photography to capture reality more clearly than painting. Moholy-Nagy states that photographs are not “copies” of reality, but represent it better than painting does due to the camera’s use of mechanical processes. His description of Citroën’s photomontage as bringing about the experiential qualities of urban life acts as an example. The year in which The City was published in PPF, it also appeared in three other publications: Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, Pásmo: revue internationale moderne, a Czech Constructivist journal, and Roh’s first book, Nach-expressionismus (1925). The montage illustrates Roh and Moholy-Nagy’s similar ideas regarding photography’s ascendance over painting. Roh’s association of The City with the “New Objectivity” (which he labels “Magic Realism” throughout his book) links it with a sort of truth-telling capacity of observation, despite the sense of distortion it generates. The image was the only photo-based work published in Roh’s first book, which focused on trends and styles of post-war painting. One


53 Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung 24 (June 14, 1925): 743; Moholy-Nagy, Malerei, Photographie, Film, Bauhausbücher 8, p. 95 (as Die Stadt I); Pásmo: revue internationale moderne 2, nos. 6-7 (1926): cover, 69 (as Mesto); Roh, Nach-expressionismus, p. 141 (as Weltstadt [Fotoklebild]) (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1925). See citation on object page for Paul Citroen, Metropolis: Museum of Modern Art Object:Photo https://www.moma.org/interactives/objectphoto/objects/83984.html#recto.
chapter, entitled “Eigenausdruck der Natur (Kunst und Fotografie)” [“Particular Expressions of Nature (Art and Photography)’’], was dedicated to the relationship of art and photography, marking the first time when Roh engaged critically with photography. Significantly, he chose to present Citroen’s photomontage adjacent to a painting of a Paris scene by Robert Delaunay (Figure 20), entitled Weltstadt [Metropolis].

Through this comparison, Roh references Moholy-Nagy’s idea that photographs evoke a more accurate experience of the city than painting. Both works are composites: Citroen’s is a literal cut-and-paste and Delaunay represents a multitude of perspectives, consistent with many Cubist landscapes, developed from earlier Post-Impressionist conventions. Citroen’s The City, by contrast, elicits a dispersed sense of movement across the page and eschews a consistent sense of perspective. Other than the top of the page, where each photograph contains patches of visible sky, the covering of the page with city scenes from edge to edge creates a sense of flatness.

Roh’s comparison of the two images, the contemporary photomontage versus the Cubist painting, illustrates his equating of photography with painting as a work of art in its own right, an idea that Moholy-Nagy fervently champions in PPF. While Roh prompts a comparison by placing two very different images side-by-side (a key strategy that will be explored in chapter two), Moholy-Nagy, in turn, places The City next to another photomontage, Hannah Höch’s The multi-millionaire. Both images share similar thematic concerns, including an interest in signifiers of modern life – skyscrapers for Citroen and fragmented machine parts for Höch. This image relationship proves that Moholy-Nagy is preoccupied with representation as an “objective” way of presenting the world, while Roh contradicts this claim (as will be further discussed in

54 Commonly known as The Cardiff Team (1912-1913)

55 Moholy-Nagy, Painting Photography Film, 13.
chapters three and four). Other kinds of montages in Foto-Auge, such as Max Ernst’s painted collages (see Figure 2), use photographic fragments not to clarify relationships but to complicate them. These images’ pasted-together fragments and nonsensical inscriptions create dream-like worlds.

Both Moholy-Nagy and Roh use a comparative approach to promote the efficacy different types of photographic representation and to position themselves within the history of the medium. Moholy-Nagy prints early photographs that he relates to more recent efforts in the medium. He begins his illustration section with an image of the Zeppelin, and associates it with the “brilliant” period of photography’s genesis. By invoking the daguerreotype in his caption, although the image pictured is from a much later era (evidenced by the Zeppelin), Moholy-Nagy links photography’s nascent period with the current modernity of vision. Yet he characterizes both this image and a work by Pictorialist Alfred Stieglitz as emblems of photography “misunderstood.” Stieglitz’s photograph, printed in 1911, depicts a New York City scene much like an Impressionist painting, with an “in-the-moment” quality and blurry lack of focus (Figure 21). Stieglitz shot straight on with a strong sense of perspective leading to a horizon line. The Pictorialist photograph relies on the linear construction of space that had historically characterized painting. The image of the Zeppelin shows the anachronism of depicting a modern invention using an outmoded means. The Zeppelin’s presentation from an oblique angle, however, shows a new possibility offered by the camera, as zeppelins were associated with modern views from above. These views are demonstrated on the following page, which depicts images of birds and planes taken in mid-air.56

Like *Foto-Auge*, Werner Graeff’s photo book *Es kommt der neue Fotograf!*\(^7\) also published in 1929, was directly associated with *Fifo* and featured a diverse selection of works, most of which were included in the exhibition. Significantly, at the time of *Fifo*, Graeff was working for the *Werkbund* as a press secretary. Unlike Roh, Graeff was not a professional photographer or a critic.\(^8\) Graeff had, however, published several books commenting on the visual culture of his time. He also had authored instruction manuals for new automobile drivers, drawing on his own experience.\(^9\) As Daniel Magilow has pointed out, this background would later come into importance. First of all, there was a didactic quality in Graeff’s book. Images were structured in relation to the text in order to induce a perceptual experience and understanding of camera vision. This practice drew inspiration from Moholy-Nagy’s concept of *Produktion* versus *Reproduktion* explained in *PPF*, where he stated that creative experiments were useful if they expanded vision. Aiming to create a visual literacy, Moholy-Nagy saw art as foundational for the creation of new experience and perception. By arranging images in seemingly no order in *PPF*, Moholy-Nagy induced the reader to turn the page without indicating what might come next, fostering a sense of curiosity. Graeff’s book relied heavily on sequences that connected images on various pages and explanatory text, giving the book a more didactic appearance than *PPF*.

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\(^8\) Roh had been working as a critic since 1921. Graeve Ingelmann, “Mechanics and Expression: Franz Roh and the New Vison,” 5.

\(^9\) Ibid.
Here Comes the New Photographer! is organized in chapters that lay out different ways of seeing photographs, another crucial difference from Foto-Auge, which lacks chapters. Chapter one, in particular, features instructional photos (Figure 22), which are mostly press images and snapshots taken by Graeff himself. The text does not operate in the form of descriptive captions, but rather, is a significant part of the viewing experience, explaining how the reader should interpret the images. On many pages, sentences are interrupted by images, which stretch panoramically across two pages. Graeff’s use of text lends a sense of narrative structure and sequence to the book. In the third photo spread of his book, Graeff invokes painting, particularly the Renaissance painters, just in the text, in order to call attention to earlier forms of representing the world (Figure 23). The caption describes a street scene of Berlin by contemporary photojournalist Sasha Stone that, in Graeff’s commentary, results in a traditional perspectival view and static illustration. Underneath Stone’s photo is an unidentified montage in which the same man is pictured facing different directions, positing a world in which multiple perspectives coexist. By juxtaposing the single-point perspective photograph with this montaged sequence, Graeff shows the many ways in which photographs can present the world, independently from the constraints of perspectival conventions. Graeff notes in the text that it is not true that we see from a central perspective. We turn our heads and can take a picture with any horizon line that is

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60 The amount of text present and sizes of the images seems to correspond to whether or not Graeff intends to use them for a specific, instructional purpose. At the beginning of the book, the photographs do not take up the whole page. Graeff gives more space to text, choosing two photographs per page so that readers can make connections between them. As the images appear more avant-garde and experimental, they are enlarged on the page and accompanied by much less text.

61 Stone was a photojournalist contemporary of Graeff and had published widely in journals associated with the avant-garde, including G, Die Form, Gebrauchsgraphik, Das Kunstblatt (for which Franz Roh wrote) together with mass culture magazines such as Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung. Ksenia Nouril, “About the Artist: Sasha Stone,” accessed Nov. 12, 2017, https://www.moma.org/interactives/objectphoto/artists/24573.html.
not necessarily horizontal. The accompanying text states that man’s predisposition is to look around him and take pictures that reflect this variance in perspective. The author continues to use this motif in the following pages, reflecting on the many possible ways in which the camera can frame and present the world. Graeff uses photographs to support his written commentaries. Such ideas show a preoccupation with “New Vision” theories and reflect the same sense of wonderment and excitement about man’s potential use of the camera. As Magilow notes, the photographs in Here Comes the New Photographer! communicate in a highly polemical and didactic fashion. Although Here Comes the New Photographer! and Foto-Auge included many of the same photographs, they exhibited many differences. Foto-Auge is by no means an instructional guide and it presents new kinds of photography for the purpose of introducing the viewer to a sampling of different styles and techniques. Unlike Graeff’s, Roh and Tschichold’s presentation of material conveys meaning in a way that is not guided by words.

Another publication that emerged in 1929, Renger-Patzsch’s Die Welt ist schön: Einhundert photographische Aufnahmen [The World is Beautiful: One Hundred Photographic Images], takes an entirely different approach to the Weimar photo book. Renger-Patzsch was a photographer and all of the images printed in Die Welt ist schön were his own. This work was circulated and discussed widely at this time; close-up images of plants by Renger-Patzsch appeared in Foto-Auge, the Fifo catalogue, and PPF, and in Graeff’s book. While the aforementioned books are assemblages of photographs, Die Welt ist schön has a narrower thematic focus and aesthetic. Even though Graeff published some of his own photographs, as

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62 The website for MoMA’s Object:Photo exhibition, itself a kind of online repository of materials related to the exhibition, categorizes Die Welt ist schön as a monograph. Other books in the category include August Sander’s Antlitz der Zeit, (Verlag/Kurt Wolff Verlag in Munich, 1929), and Professor Karl Blossfeldt’s Unformen der Kunst, (Verlag Ernst Wasmuth A.G. in Berlin, 1928). Foto-Auge, Es kommt der neue Fotograf? and Malerei, Fotogaphie, Film are
Moholy-Nagy did in several pages of his book, those images were used not as a way of showcasing a portfolio but rather, of proving a point. Renger-Patzsch’s photographs, although showing a plethora of objects and scenes, depict images from daily life in ways that highlight the beauty in line, form and shape. Organic and mechanically reproducible objects alike are photographed close up, allowing the viewer to glimpse minute details of seemingly mundane items.

Furthermore, *Die Welt ist schön* was a commissioned text. Printed in 1928 by Kurt Wolff Verlag in Munich, the book was supported by Carl Georg Heise, art historian, curator and collector. Describing Renger-Patzsch’s work to Kurt Tucholsky, a literary critic who would assist with publishing it, Heise associated the artist’s work with a sense of “total” photography, capable of picturing the whole of the world. As he noted, “He photographs hands, machines, plants and animals… but in the last analysis [he photographs] everything, from headstones and herring nets to roof gutters and cathedral spires and everything that lies in between.”

Heise’s quote emphasizes the range of contents in the photographer’s images as well as the images’ ability to depict that which may not be immediately visible (Figures 24-25). His promotion of Renger-Patzsch’s work as opening up an exciting world of new possibilities for photography assumes it is representative of “New Vision” photography.

In describing the historicizing tendencies in photo book culture in this era, Matthew Witkovsky writes that such attempts to codify the new medium aimed at legitimizing photography as an art form, and book publishing was a means of clarifying the state of considered “Books.” Accessed Nov. 12, 2017, https://www.moma.org/interactives/objectphoto/meeting-points.html.


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photography at the time. As Witkovsky writes, it is Renger Patzsch’s lens’ “encyclopedic reach” that has the capability to render any object before it, and his sober, clean shots that depict clarity and purity of form. Renger-Patzsch’s opinions regarding the function of photography in society differed from those of the other figures, however. He had published articles in the 1920s delineating his position on “New Photography” as detracting from photography’s main purpose, which he believed was to showcase the world as objectively as possible. In fact, he had published a critique of Fifo in the Bauhaus journal, likely with Ernő Kallai, lambasting the exhibition as excessive in number and the quality of commercial works. Specifically, he critiqued the exhibition’s “random” assortment of photographs, a descriptor that would also typify the diverse image selection in the books discussed above. Overall, like Moholy-Nagy, Renger-Patzsch claimed that photography should not imitate painting, but where Moholy-Nagy and others saw “new relationships” in experimental photography, Renger-Patzsch believed that straightforward detailed depictions were the purest expression of the medium.

Against this background, in Foto-Auge Roh placed the highest regard on manufactured or heavily manipulated images, and one can see his fascination with the creation of montaged and other experimental works as related to a sort of archival building process. For him, the act of montaging images was akin to collecting and sifting through prints. This chapter shows how all these book projects, despite their similar premises and inspiration drawn from Fifo, diverged in the structuring of image and text, reliance on the image to communicate, and the organization of

64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Originally published as Ernő Kallai and Albert Renger-Patzsch, Postscript to “Photo-Inflation/Boom Times,” in Bauhaus (Dessau) 3, no. 4 (October-December 1929), 20; trans. in Christopher Phillips, Photography in the Modern Era, 140-142; Orig. published as Renger-Patzsch, “Photographie und Kunst,” Das Deutsche Lichtbild, 1929; trans. in Phillips, 142-143.
their books, and overall messages they conveyed. Nonetheless, despite the varied content, different layouts, and diverse purposes of their books, Roh and Tschichold, Moholy-Nagy, Graeff and Renger-Patzsch, in addition to the *Fifo* catalogue producers and exhibition organizers, all worked to disseminate ideas about photography’s capacity to represent modern life.
CHAPTER 2 – ROH’S BACKGROUND AND MAGIC REALISM

While Roh’s theory plays a significant role in its relationship to *Foto-Auge*, it is first necessary to delve into its genesis. Roh’s art criticism, book editing, lecturing, teaching and art making reflect a rigorous scholarly training. Born in 1890 in Thüringen, Germany, Roh studied literature and art history at the Universities of Leipzig, Berlin, Basel, and Munich. In 1918, he received a PhD for his dissertation entitled, “*Holländische Landschaftsmalerei des XVII. Jahrhunderts*” [“On Dutch Painting of the 17th Century”] at the University of Munich. 67 His doctoral education in Munich was pursued under prominent German art historian and theorist Heinrich Wölfflin, for whom he became an assistant in 1916. Wölfflin’s well-known book, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe; das Problem der Stilentwicklung in der neueren Kunst* [Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art], published in 1915, was highly influential for the young scholar, even as he began to focus primarily on contemporary art. 68 Wölfflin’s book describes the evolution from Renaissance to Baroque art and asserts that style evolves independently of context or intellectual argument. Wölfflin’s example of “perfect” clarity of form, which he associates with 15th-century styles, is classical art, while he identifies the Baroque pejoratively as sacrificing clarity for other effects.

Wölfflin’s theory had an impact on Roh especially because of his binary methodology. He discusses art movements in terms of binary opposites such as linear/painterly and closed


form/open form. For example, one of these conceptual pairs - absolute or relative clarity of the subject - deals with objects’ painterly representation as based on either their plastic qualities or how they are seen in the real world. Moholy-Nagy had discussed a similar idea in PPF, relating a superior clarity of representation to photography, rather than painting. Roh would address it in his own work, to be discussed in chapter three, which is concerned with using light manipulations to distort or reveal his subjects.

Wölfflin’s systematic explication of formal qualities in painting guided Roh’s argument in his first book, Nach-expressionismus: magischer Realismus: Probleme der neuesten europaischen Malerei (1925), which is comprised of an introduction, sixteen short chapters, and a chart and image appendix.  

69 Seeking to find a common visual strategy in the painting of his time and looking at artists working in Germany but also in France, Italy, Scandinavia, Russia, and Spain, Roh discussed those painters associated with the Neue Sachlichkeit [New Objectivity] - Otto Dix, George Grosz, Georg Schrimpf, Carlo Mense, Kay Nebel, and others, including Giorgio de Chirico, Carlo Carrà, and Picasso - as reacting to the earlier German art movement Expressionism. 70 Following Wölfflin’s comparative methodology, Roh employed conceptual

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70 The book was also published in Spain, in 1927, by the Editorial de la Revista de Occidente. Fernando Vela translated the text from the German (from which the first English edition (1997) was translated). The book influenced Spanish artists at the time including Salvador Dali, Maruja Mallo and Timoteo Pérez Rubio, among others, and historically has had the most significant
and visual couplings to prompt the reader to make visual comparisons – to explore facture, use of perspective, values, and psychology, among other reference points.

Nach-expressionismus was radical because of its use of Wölfflin’s ideas about competing, binary characteristics in images towards the definition of a new artistic genre – what he calls “magischer Realismus” [Magic Realism]. This term merges two seemingly opposed ideas – the otherworldly and the veristic – into one, and thus demonstrates Roh’s unique interest in exploring juxtapositions. For example, George Grosz’s work identified as Daum marries... (Figure 26), in Nach-expressionismus, embodies this contradiction in its penetrating realism belied by a lighthearted surface and its use of photographic fragments that, ironically, reveal the work’s fiction. The sensuousness of the woman, Daum, a nickname for Grosz’s then girlfriend and eventual wife, contrasts with the cool, mechanical George. Aspects that would ordinarily suggest realism, such as clean lines, modeling, and three-dimensional perspective, are contradicted by Grosz’s substitution of machine parts or flat, blank features for real ones, a use of multiple perspectives, and sense of humor in the disembodied hand touching Daum’s exposed breast.

Not only does Magic Realism unify two seemingly opposing terms within one umbrella term but also it characterizes a mode of existence. Roh’s description of this work in Nach-

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71 In the book’s preface, Roh discusses having come to the name after writing about the concept, having debated several terms that were circulating at the time.

expressionismus explains the two-fold nature of Magic Realism as a designation of style as well as a philosophical argument: “There is a realism of the light side and a realism of the dark side of life.” In this quote, Roh addresses both the work’s playfulness and its allusion to the harsh realities of modern experience. The revelatory aspect of realism that Roh describes is also seen in a literal uncovering - in Daum’s clothes and in the depiction of George’s machine insides. This dualistic relationship between the sides of life, which Roh relates to dark and light, would find its literal correlation in photography in his later work.

While Grosz’s work demonstrates Magic Realism as juxtaposition in a single image, an appendix to the book entitled “Post-Expressionist Scheme” graphically illustrates the concept. In two columns, Roh lays out binaries between Expressionism and its reactive correspondent, Magic Realism. Roh defines the styles, in part, by their material and formal qualities. The former includes “thick pigment, textured, rich in diagonals, contesting the limits of the frame.” By contrast, “thin pigment, smooth, usually at right angles, parallel to the frame,” describes the latter. Roh also adds a moral dimension to his discussion, describing Expressionism as “primitive” and Nach-expressionismus as “cultivated.” Whereas Expressionism is defined by “ecstatic objects, many religious themes, suppression of the object, dynamic,” Nach-expressionismus lists “sober objects, very few religious themes, clarification of the object, representational,” among its qualities. Roh’s association of pictorial clarity with accurate

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73 Roh quoted in Ángel Gonzáles, “Meditation on the Cacti,” in Realismo Mágico, 278.

74 Roh relates the concept of the dualism of life to photography in an inscription made (the name of the recipient is unclear) in a copy of Foto-Auge: “‘Mechanismus und Ausdruck’/Die 2 Pole unseres heutigen Daseins” [“Mechanism and Expression”/The two extremes of our current existence.] Translation by Alyssa Di Cara. See: Roh and Tschichold, Foto-Auge (1929) in the collection of the Thomas Watson Library at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

75 See chart printed in Washton-Long. 295.
representation recalls Wölfflin’s descriptive term “clarification of the subject,” which becomes a significant theme in Roh’s book.

The arrangement of illustrations at the end of Nach-expressionismus also recalls Wölfflin’s art historical binaries and shows how a graphic schema illustrates, for example, the concept of pictorial lucidity. This comparative format shows the genesis of Foto-Auge’s visual format. In the section entitled Ex- und nachexpressionismus in vergleichspaaren [Ex-and Post-Expressionism in Comparison], Kandinsky’s spare rendering of Reiter [Rider] is paired with Carrà’s representation of the same subject, which, for him, becomes an observable reality (Fig. 27). While Kandinsky only suggests the outline of the horse and rider using lines and patches of color, Carrà uses modeling and three-dimensional perspective to place the rider in space. Significantly, Carrà’s work, which is linked back to an artistic group, Der Blaue Reiter [The Blue Riders], is the first Magic Realist work in the book, although it was painted well before the other post-expressionist examples, showing the usefulness of the comparative method across movements. The second is de Chirico’s Stadtplatz [Town Square] (Figure 28), which depicts a cold, isolated monument in a town square. This scene of solidity, rendered in harsh lines and shadows, is contrasted with Delaunay’s Stadtplatz. The latter’s movement, energy and soft paint handling culminate in a composite image that represents the feeling of the metropolis, rather than an elucidation of spatial relationships.

Roh juxtaposes Paul Citroen’s photomontage, Weltstadt, with Delaunay’s work by the same name, as discussed in chapter one (see Figure 20). These images are compared because of their similar subject matter and the different visual techniques applied to representing the city’s

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76 Faris and Zamora, Magic Realism, 17.

77 Commonly known as The Great Metaphysician (1917).
sensations of multiplicity and simultaneity. Delaunay’s fragmented urban landscape uses multiple perspectives and inconsistent shading, resulting in a depiction of the city as a mostly undifferentiated mass. The chaotic jumble of photographic fragments in Citroen’s photomontage achieves a similar visual experience of movement and jarring perspective, showing the artist’s control in manipulating perspective. In discussing the two works, Roh concluded about the montage’s superior ability to depict daily life, and discusses how everyday experiences should be greater integrated into works of art.78

The presence of Citroen’s image in Nach-expressionismus, a discussion dominated by painting, seems strange; however, the work’s depiction of city sensations using lucid fragments, a seeming contradiction, justifies its inclusion in a book about Magic Realism. For Roh, the photomontage surpasses the Cubist painting because it heightens the juxtapositions and inconsistencies between realism and artistic manipulation. Citroen’s work represents Roh’s fascination with juxtaposition and photography’s unique role in activating these polarities, an interest he would explore later on in his creative life. The photomontage activates a more “realistic” demonstration of modern perception, even if the combination of disparate fragments obscures such equivalence.

Roh’s interest in writing about contemporary art was uncommon for someone with a PhD in historical subjects, and this fact speaks to this scholar and thinker’s wide ranging production in diverse fields. By publishing the book, Roh defines a period characterized by a lack of unity among artists, identified by the absence of manifestoes, self-appointed spokespeople, institutions

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or pedagogy. The book underscores his interest in identifying, sorting, and naming a group of works from his present day. Similar concerns and spirit of intellectual discovery resurface in *Foto-Auge* and the two books in the Fototek series. Prior to publishing *Nach-expressionismus*, Roh had written art criticism for scholarly publications *Cicerone* and *Der Kunstblatt*. In fact, before or shortly after the publication of *Nach-expressionismus*, he had already discussed several artists in the book, including Karl Haider, Georg Schrimpf, Kay Nehl and Alexander Kanoldt, among others.

Roh’s scholarly essays also reveal some of his early critical interests in addition to defining contemporary artistic movements. Among these pursuits are his involvement with art by the untrained and his writings on artist development, explored in his repeated engagement with the Munich Secession artists. Several of the essays written in the early-mid 1920s contextualized individual artists within larger movements. In particular, three essays published between 1925-27 looked at amateur artists such as Grete Jacobsen, a Scandinavian painter. Throughout the mid-late 1920s, Roh continued to engage with these artists’ works and the movements addressed in *Nach-expressionismus*, including the Munich New Secession and post-expressionist Italian painting.

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80 These are two books, each with 60 illustrations, on Moholy-Nagy and Aenne Biermann, respectively. For the full list of planned (but never realized) titles, see chapter four, note 8.


82 For biographical information on Jacobsen, see [https://www.kulturarv.dk/kid/VisWeilbach.do?kunstnerId=7512&wsektion=alle](https://www.kulturarv.dk/kid/VisWeilbach.do?kunstnerId=7512&wsektion=alle).
These interests would later resurface in his writing on photography. Roh’s first article on photography, published in 1928, was on Aenne Biermann, a photographer then considered an amateur. His noteworthy interest in work by the untrained, as in an essay on children’s artwork that he published in the same year as Biermann’s, suggests that issues surrounding the amateur practitioner may have provided an entrée to photography. Prior to this article, in 1924, he had written on the Bauhaus, signifying an interest in artist training as well as “New Vision” photography.

In 1925, art historian Gustav Hartlaub, curator at the Kunsthalle Mannheim, presented a selection of works by many of the same artists discussed in Roh’s book - Schrmpf, Kanoldt, Georg Scholz, Otto Dix and Grosz – proving the timeliness of Roh’s scholarly work. Hartlaub’s exhibition designated these artists as within a movement of contemporary art, which he called the Neue Sachlichkeit, or New Objectivity. Hartlaub first coined the term in 1923, when he circulated a letter to prominent museum directors and art dealers asking them for help contacting artists for an exhibition. He identified these artists as “(those) in the last ten years [who] have been neither impressionistically nor expressionistically abstract…those artists who have remained unswervingly faithful to the positive palpable reality, or who have become faithful to it

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84 Roh, “Die Staatliche Bauhaus in Weimar,” Cicerone 16 (1924): 367-369. See also Roh’s statement and discussion in “Mechanism and Expression,” p. 14, that the “majority” of images in the Fifo exhibition were created by non-professionals. It is unknown whether this is true (the exhibition catalogue does not list the number of images for every artist or source), however it is still significant that this is Roh’s focus.

85 Roh, quoted from an article in Der Kunstblatt, printed in Manfred Fath, “Franz Roh and Hartlaub,” in IVAM, 284.
once more.”

Two main traits of this work were outlined in this letter – a return to figuration, and a faithfulness to a tangible reality. The work of Schrimpf exemplifies the concreteness of form identified by Hartlaub. Schrimpf’s Schlafendes Mädchen [Sleeping Girl] (Figure 29), which appears in Nach-expressionismus, renders a classical image of the woman in repose through smooth, clean lines. The lack of identifying details in the image contributes to its connection to an art historical past.

Roh and Hartlaub never met but they shared many of the same contacts and had extensive correspondence in 1924-25. Their dialogue proves Roh’s interest in representational painting and his prominence in contemporary debates in Germany. In a 1921 talk about a Munich exhibition, Roh had discussed a “revolution” in European painting that “led to New Objectivity.” As outlined above, Roh had also engaged with the work of several of the artists mentioned before publishing his book. Hartlaub’s exhibition opened in June 1925. In early June, Roh wrote to Hartlaub that the book was going to the printer shortly, even though the book was not actually published until after the close of the exhibition, in the fall. Nevertheless, their correspondence and knowledge of each other’s work would deepen their understanding of this period. These figures’ connection is confirmed by Hartlaub’s review of Roh’s Nach-expressionismus, published in 1926 in the Mannheimer Tageblatt. Here Hartlaub gives high

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87 Hartlaub’s decision to proceed with the exhibition after abandoning it in 1923 due to financial and political difficulties has been attributed to his awareness of Roh’s criticism. Fath, “Franz Roh and Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub,” 284-6.

88 Ibid, 286.
praise to Roh’s approach but he critiques Roh’s preference for “classicizing” artists over social realists as well as Roh’s use of the term “Magic” Realism.  

Not only did Roh and Hartlaub examine many of the same artists but they also used categorization, and in certain cases binary systems, to impose a visual order on these works. Both Roh and Hartlaub were chiefly concerned with representations of reality. In Nach-expressionismus, Roh describes a continuum from “left” to “right” and divides artists into seven categories. On the “left” are those concerned with social issues and the “world of real events, evoking experience in its actual tempo, its specific heat,” in Hartlaub’s words, such as Grosz. On the other hand are artists “searching for the timelessly valid object,” a sort of philosophical truth embodied by an ossified, classicizing look, a category into which he placed Kanoldt. Hartlaub identifies only two subdivisions, “left” and “right” wing artists who, together, comprise the New Objectivity.

Roh’s use of the term Magic Realism is borne out of “Metaphysical Art,” or Pittura Metafisica, of Italian painters such as Giorgio de Chirico and the circle around the journal Valori

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89 It is also speculated that the reason why Roh did not assist Hartlaub more officially with the exhibition was because of Hartlaub’s decision to include a substantial portion of works by more socially oriented artists. As Roh had very close contact and even considered himself a mentor to the “classicizing” Munich based artists, perhaps he felt slighted by this decision. Fath describes the two figures’ connections in great detail, explaining the contents of some of their letters. Roh had offered to co-organize the exhibition with Hartlaub, and that he would help bring it to Munich. In the end, this did not occur, but correspondence shows that Hartlaub asked Roh to help with the selection of artists. Fath, ibid.

90 “(Hartlaub and Roh) distilled aesthetic and ideological differences to compel a sense of order within the movement...(a) cultural regulation and visual cataloging.” See Kreinik, “The Canvas and the Camera in Weimar Germany,” 23.

91 Hartlaub, preface to catalogue of Neue Sachlichkeit exhibition, 291.

92 Ibid.
Plastici who, in their work, challenged representations of reality. De Chirico’s writings and his eerie, psychically distant paintings, both of which were published in Valori Plastici, were especially significant for Roh, an avid reader of the publication. In particular, de Chirico’s use of perspective to distort and challenge an objective view of reality must have inspired Roh, who dealt with the nature of realism in the first chapter of Nach-expressionismus. In fact, several of the Magic Realist artists in Roh’s book participated in this discussion by using classical, historically academic techniques such as modeling and the construction of Cartesian space to effectively undermine realism.

Roh’s unifying treatment of Magic Realist works through their use of perspective proves his distinct interest in this particular technique. It also shows how Magic Realism can be treated as not just a historical designation, but also as a broader theory of the juxtaposition of pictorial

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93 De Chirico describes this “magical” element: “Everything has two appearances: a common appearance, which is the one we almost always see and which people in general see, and the other spectral or metaphysical appearance which can only be seen by exceptional individuals at moments of clairvoyance or metaphysical abstraction.” Giorgio de Chirico quoted in Paz, “Franz Roh’s Magic Realism,” 273. For the original Italian, see de Chirico, “Sull’ Arte Metafisica,” Valori Plastici 3 (April-May 1919), 360. See also See Emily Braun, “Franz Roh: tra postespressionismo e realismo magico,” in Realismo magico: pittura e scultura in Italia 1919-1925, ed. Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco (Verona: Galleria dello Scudo, 1988), 57-64.

94 By the early 1920s, German art historians had been exposed to these Italian works through an exhibition and publication of these images in Das Kunstblatt and Der Cicerone. See Kreinik, “The Canvas and the Camera in Weimar Germany,” p. 35-38, for an identification of which issues published works by Italian artists, and greater background on the influence of Italian painters on the Neue Sachlichkeit. For example, Grosz wrote in a 1921 article in Das Kunstblatt that, while he distinguished himself from the Italian painters in the lack of metaphysical themes in his work, he identified their influence. In the same year as de Chirico’s 1919 essay in Valori Plastici, Sigmund Freud published an article, from the perspective of psychoanalysis, addressing a sense of estrangement. Freud’s theorizing of the term Unheimlichkeit, or the uncanny, refers to an unease toward everyday objects. Similar to what is identified as “metaphysical” by de Chirico, and “magical” by Roh, this concept is discussed as a type of nostalgia for the womb. The unheimlichkeit references that which has been repressed, a nostalgia for that which we can never return to – both familiar and strange. The term, often used in Nach-expressionismus, also appears in Foto-Auge, and is another link between the mediums of painting and photography.
elements or their effects, perspective being one example. According to prominent German art historian Erwin Panofsky, perspective illustrates an inherent discrepancy between pictorial vision and human vision. Panofsky’s discussion of Byzantine and Renaissance art illustrates how perspective works not to represent directly or undermine the painterly construction of space, but merely to make it apparent. In “Perspective as Symbolic Form,” Panofsky argues that perspective is an artistic phenomenon that subjects the world to a historically and mathematically contingent way of seeing.\textsuperscript{95}

The comparison of Panofsky’s concepts to those explicated in Roh’s book shows how the art historians’ ideas were in dialogue.\textsuperscript{96} For example, in 1925, the same year \textit{Nach-expressionismus} was published, Panofsky had articulated his sense of perspective as the “consolidation and systematization of the external world, or the triumph of a distancing, objectivizing sense of reality.”\textsuperscript{97} As described by Marga Paz, for Roh, de Chirico’s work represents this visible affirmation of the laws of Euclidian geometry in a painting: “The illusion of space created by the scenic cube seemed to be capable of reestablishing an objective order based on scientific laws: those of geometry and mathematics.”\textsuperscript{98}


\textsuperscript{96} Pepper Stetler has addressed the similar conceptions of perspective between Roh and Panofsky, and how, for both, the photograph is uniquely positioned to show perspective. Stetler notes that this conception of perspective differentiated Roh and Panofsky from other practitioners of photography who worked to actively undermine linear perspective, such as El Lissitzky and Aleksandr Rodchenko. See Stetler, “Franz Roh and the Art History of Photography,” 7.

\textsuperscript{97} Panofsky, quoted in Paz, “Franz Roh’s Magic Realism,” 272.

\textsuperscript{98} Paz, “Franz Roh’s Magic Realism,” 272.
In de Chirico’s *Römische Landschaft* [Roman Landscape] (Figure 30), published in *Nach-expressionismus*, illustrations of deep space are employed as a tactic to render visible the logical perspectival system. Two buildings are prominent in the image. While one of them recedes back in space, the other one seems to face the viewer head on, creating a contradiction in perspective. A further complicating factor is the rising landform, or cloud of smoke, in the background, which at first appears amorphous behind the buildings, but then takes on solid form at the top of the canvas. Roh placed this image next to the artist’s *Selbstbildnis* [Self Portrait], a close-up portrait with a puzzling inclusion: the recessed columnar structure in the upper right. While this element is a painting, it has the appearance of a window that gives the viewer a peek to a world beyond. De Chirico’s paintings exhibit a tension between the illusory and the suggestive. The world they depict exists halfway between ostensibly real space and fantasy.

Marga Paz has discussed this “autonomous visual reality” enclosed in the space of the work of art. She uses this term to relate Roh’s interest in problems of vision in *Foto-Auge* to his writing about painting. Roh’s belief that the viewer should “see the world in a new way,” Paz claims, could also describe European artists’ desire, after the first world war, to create a new reality, or at least the appearance of one, through painting.99 Perspective, in particular, represents a return to the use of formal models to structure a painting, as Paz notes: “But perspective operates in its function of symbolizing real space, and so is accompanied by a truly ghostly quality, the longing for the object that is *reality*, which proves to be impossible to apprehend - since it does not know what it is - and hence the many attempts to define it.”100

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.
This description of the “ghostliness” of painting is truly photographic, and even evokes a definition of the medium, thus creating an important bridge between these two dimensions. Photographs are but substitutions for reality; they recall the objects that they represent in the impossibly apprehensible instant. The moment that the photograph is taken, it freezes a time gone past, a “continuously-stopped time – a Magic Realist time,” as Emily Braun has argued. Roh’s early interest in the Magic Realism of *Valori Plastici*, metaphysical painters, and the construction of perspective led to his late 1920s work in photography.

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101 Emily Braun describes the concept of magic realist time in relation to Lucio Fontana’s mid-1930s installations and sculptures by Italian painters from the period including Arturo Martini. Braun also attributes the coining of the term Magic Realism to Roh, although she says it came out of de Chirico’s writing. Braun, “Bodies from the Crypt and other Tales of Italian Sculpture Between the Wars,” in *Chaos & Classicism: Art in France, Italy and Germany, 1928-1936*, ed. Kenneth Silver (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2010), 155.
CHAPTER 3 – FRANZ ROH'S PHOTOGRAPHY – THEORY AS PRACTICE

Franz Roh joined many other prominent theorists of the time, including El Lissitzky, Siegfried Kracauer and Erwin Panofsky, in his investigations of the relationship between sight and representation. This chapter examines how the work of a few influential artists, in particular, László Moholy-Nagy, Aenne Biermann and Max Ernst, illuminate Roh’s artistic practice and way of thinking, which crystallized in his work in photography. Examining works by Roh in relationship with these three figures illuminates the philosophies underpinning Roh’s practice, demonstrating their contributions to Roh’s interest in binaries and image juxtaposition as a means of destabilizing reality in the photograph.

Photography’s binary formalism—of light and shadow—is the filter through which Roh views all photographic expressions. He is interested in this chief contradiction of photography, due to the opposition of reality and abstraction, and thus privileges a few particular forms: the negative print, the photogram and the montage. Roh’s engagement with these forms is also strongly connected to Moholy-Nagy’s theorizing about light-manipulation and photography, albeit to more subversive ends. Photograms and negative prints, Roh believed, highlight photography’s binary formal qualities, while allowing for a “thousand”\textsuperscript{102} gradations. Lastly, photograms bring objects into close contact with the mechanical photographic components because the object is placed directly on photo-sensitive paper, which is then exposed. Thus, although photograms are direct recordings of real things, their final product can be completely non-representational. Their “mechanism” appears straightforward, but their “expression,” to use

Roh’s terms from *Foto-Auge*, can have a multitude of variations, revealing the slippery nature of terms such as “reality” and “documentation,” and photography’s relationship to them.

Roh’s fascination with how objects can be abstracted or transformed through the art making process naturally connects to his interest in collage. It is known that Roh had viewed and discussed Ernst’s “collage novels” featuring the artist’s illustrations alongside Paul Eluard’s poems, and that the two artists were in correspondence. Roh and Ernst created similar work from found sources, and each engaged in bookmaking. Not only was Ernst’s work a possible impetus for Roh’s collage practice, but also, Ernst’s writing had an affinity with the visually fragmented style of *Foto-Auge*.

In “Mechanism and Expression,” his introduction to *Foto-Auge*, Roh designates negative prints as “reality-photos,” one of five variants of photography in addition to photogram, photomontage, photo with etching or painting, and advertising photograph. Roh’s categorization of negative prints evinces his belief about photographs more broadly – that they are an inherently paradoxical form anchored in the real, yet signify something beyond the original objects they depict. Negative prints, he believed, show two sides of the same reality, suggesting a comparison with the binary formalism of Magic Realism that underpinned his book *Nach-expressionismus*.

In *Foto-Auge* Roh uses dualistic structures to describe the form of negative prints. Weaving and wicker work, the forms which Roh compares to negative prints because of the binary of warp and weft, are created through interlaced sets of yarns or straw. Significantly, Roh describes photography, a two-dimensional medium, through three-dimensional forms.

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103 Roh, *German Art in the Twentieth Century*, 139-140 and Spies, *Max Ernst Collages*, 88-89.

104 Ibid.
Further descriptions employ comparisons to the major and minor keys, a binary musical system, bringing a multisensory dimension into a discussion of photography.

Roh’s *Untitled* (Figure 31), a negative print, questions any association with naturalism, in its eerie, almost magical quality. The reversal of values turns day into night, and its geometric composition creates a scene that hovers between fantasy and reality. Despite the expectation that this beach scene takes place in daytime, Roh transforms it into a kind of night vision. The woman’s eyes gaze toward the camera, alit but blank in expression. Various lines, from the sprocket holes to the umbrella and architectural details, create a sense of play, and the viewer’s eye dances around the image between the high-contrast areas. At the borders, the imprint of the negative and awning frame the scene, create a tableau upon which the artist builds a mysterious narrative.

Roh’s understanding of realism as hybrid explains his interest in photograms as well. As recordings of objects that have been exposed on photo-sensitive paper, then transformed by the photographer, photograms’ symbolic potential would have attracted Roh, who had exalted a renewed “joy in recognition” of objects in *Nach-expressionismus*. As he described photograms as the “painting” of the future, he pointed out a connection between these mediums. Two extant photograms produced by Roh (Figures 32-33), dated to the 1920s and 1928-33, evidence

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105 Roh, quoted in Kreinik, “The Canvas and the Camera in Weimar Germany,” 50-51. This quote is a further point of comparison between Roh and Albert Renger-Patzsch, who famously proclaimed the beauty of objects in his book *Die Welt ist schön*.

his interest in photographs’ capacity to record or transform objects, and reflect Roh’s statement in “Mechanism and Expression,” that photograms “hover excitingly between abstract geometrical tracery and the echo of objects.” Roh’s photograms resemble Man Ray’s “Rayographs” since their components are distinguishable. In one image, objects form interlocking shapes in a positive/negative spatial interplay. The other photogram by Roh depicts a single light bulb as a glowing orb, undoubtedly an experiment in making visible the translucency and three-dimensionality of glass.

The visual effect of photograms and negative prints derives from an inherent paradox. While they are mimetic, they may not depict reality but rather signal another perceptive system that sees the world according to inverted values. Roh’s writing about the “expansion” of the reality photo that allows us to “experience objects anew” aligns him with Moholy-Nagy’s theorizing about photography’s potential for perceptual reform, rather than classifying it as attempt to communicate a truth about the modern world. As Jennings has also remarked in connection to Moholy’s ideas on photography as “production” rather than “reproduction.”

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107 Roh, “Mechanism and Expression,” 16.
109 Roh also states that Moholy-Nagy became interested in the form very early in his practice. See Roh, Moholy-Nagy: 60 Fotos, 6-8 and Foto-Auge, 16-17.
wholly abstract photogram, in its manipulation of the reflection and absorption of light by varying surfaces, can play a more important role in this process [production] than can the most aesthetically revolutionary depiction of a radio tower or a bridge in Marseilles.\textsuperscript{110} The capacity of photograms to induce new relationships for the viewer, their “productiveness,” was surely influential for Roh’s thinking.\textsuperscript{111}

In \textit{PPF}, the chapter on “Production/Reproduction” directly precedes that on photograms, suggesting that this form materializes the concept. As Moholy-Nagy wrote, “Art attempts to establish far-reaching \textbf{new relationships} between the known and the as yet unknown optical, acoustical, and other functional phenomena so that these are absorbed in increasing abundance by the functional apparatus.”\textsuperscript{112} The “known” in photograms were the “real objects” used in their making: everyday items like gloves, nails, and kitchen tools. Hands, the ultimate familiar tool, are not only depicted in photograms but used to shade parts of the image.

As early as 1926, Roh traveled from his home in Munich to the Bauhaus in Dessau and began working with Moholy-Nagy, encouraged by this artist to take up photography, a practice that he would continue until 1933.\textsuperscript{113} While the details of Roh’s involvement with the Bauhaus are unknown, it is certain that Roh and Moholy-Nagy were good friends, and their artistic


\textsuperscript{111} Given their capacity to induce an experience, it is not surprising that photograms are given such special treatment in \textit{Moholy-Nagy: 60 Fotos}, in a format that allowed readers to view them successively, but intermittently, with other material.


\textsuperscript{113} Virginia Heckert, “Introduction,” in \textit{Franz Roh: Photography & Collage from the 1930s}, unpaginated. Heckert states that Roh does not begin making photographs until after his encounter with Moholy-Nagy at the Bauhaus. Heckert cites the Franz Roh Papers in Special Collections, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, noting that the two artists began corresponding in 1925.
collaboration intensified in Dessau. In addition to making photographs in this period, Roh also actively published criticism on photography exhibitions and books, curated a historical section for Das Lichtbild’s 1931 photography exhibition in Munich, gave numerous lectures on the history of photography, and began editing Fototek, a planned series of books on avant-garde photography.

The first book of the series was dedicated to Moholy-Nagy [1930], showing Roh’s deep engagement with the artist’s work. The text also demonstrates the continuation of some of the strategies from Foto-Auge, such as the two-image spreads, the use of text in three languages, and minimal captions. It also proves the importance for Roh of Moholy-Nagy’s negative prints and photograms, the latter of which was especially addressed in Roh’s introductory essay. A photogram was selected for the book’s cover (Figure 34), which was created by Jan Tschichold, who was the designer of Foto-Auge. Nine other photograms were included in this publication, as well as five negative prints. The cover image contains abstract shapes that glow and pulsate. Light evokes both a subtle smokiness in tone, receding in the background and creating highlights on the stripes that jump forward. The work experiments with value, texture, and shape, all floating on an abstract plane. In his introductory essay “Moholy-Nagy and die neue Fotografie” [“Moholy-Nagy and the New Photography”], Roh notes how the artist creates space on the two-dimensional page through “unheimliche”[“uncanny”] transparent light. He also remarks on the mesmerizing formal qualities that are unique to the photogram. Only this medium, he observes,

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115 Ibid.
can produce such: “Sublime gradations, from gleaming white to a thousand shades of gray down to deepest black.”

A spread from Moholy-Nagy: 60 Fotos (1930) (Figure 35) that depicts a positive and negative print side-by-side illustrates photography’s paradoxical nature and aligns this quality with the negative print’s light and dark tones. A caption under the negative print designates it an “inversion and enhancement of the former picture,” asserting that the negative offers something the positive does not, even though the positive print is a more faithful representation. Indeed, almost like an x-ray’s revealing invisible structures, the negative print renders ocean ripples with greater precision, and this comparison is facilitated by the binary format.

Roh and Moholy-Nagy thus insist on the productive capacity of photography, which stems from its mechanical components and process. Moholy-Nagy’s theories regarding the photogram in PPF, which Roh had access to, reflect the artists’ similar thinking. In “Photography Without a Camera – The ‘Photogram,” Moholy-Nagy had made a strong case for the photogram as a distinctly new mode of construction and light manipulation:

Possibilities of light-composition, in which light must be sovereignly handled as a new creative means, like colour in painting and sound in music. I call this mode of light-composition the photogram (note to ‘see plates 71-78.’) It offers scope for composing in a newly mastered material.

Explaining the process of creating a photogram, Moholy-Nagy called attention to the mastery of an entirely new vehicle for expression made possible by photography.

116 Ibid.


118 [Emphasis in original] Moholy-Nagy, Painting Photography Film, 32.
The photogram is the privileged form in Roh’s discussion on photography and this bias recurs in all his publications. In Foto Auge, Man Ray’s photograms, known as “rayographs,” illustrate for Roh a play with the “real,” the hand, and the constructed, in the glove-like shapes to the left (see Figure 9). Man Ray’s images show their process by depicting the artist’s hand, typically used to control the amount of light. A similar figuration appears in Roh’s book on Moholy-Nagy (Figure 36). In both works, echoes of objects, like the paintbrush and grate of a fan, create a play of abstract lines and shapes.

Furthermore, Roh’s ownership of large framed photograms made by Moholy-Nagy posits that he may have viewed these works not as incidental or darkroom bi-products but as artworks in their own right, worthy of distinctive display.\(^{119}\) Records indicate that Roh held many of Moholy-Nagy’s original photograms, a few exceptionally large 90 x 60 cm photograms, some of which he placed in period frames,\(^{120}\) as well as other photographic prints, and photoplastiks (images that combine graphics with photographs).\(^{121}\) Even though the provenance of these works is not known, the diversity of works in Roh’s collection indicates his fascination with Moholy’s technical innovations. This interest was carried forward in his own work.


\(^{120}\) It is unknown who enlarged the photograms in Roh’s possession. Moholy-Nagy did not create photograms of this size until he moved to Chicago in the 1940s, although enlarged photograms may have appeared in the gallery of his work, which he curated, at the Stuttgart Film and Photo exhibition in 1929. These then could have been passed on to Roh for publication in 60 Fotos. Dating of Moholy-Nagy’s work has generally been done on the basis of the type and size of paper used. Moholy-Nagy, et al, Moholy-Nagy: The Photograms: Catalogue Raissoné (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009), Notes on Provenance.

\(^{121}\) Ibid. The authors note that these works were kept by Franz Roh and sold through Munich-based art dealer Hans Helmut Klihm, or through Roh’s wife Juliane.
It is likely that Roh learned Moholy-Nagy’s negative print technique while at the Bauhaus. Roh’s images, however, are differentiated from Moholy-Nagy’s by a crucial attention to realism. This difference is explicated through a comparison of two negative prints by Roh and Moholy-Nagy, both female nudes (Figures 37-38). In each, a reversal of values abstracts the body and alters the sense of space. Luminous outlines surrounding each body, coupled with unusually light backgrounds, create a floating effect. As a result, the body appears disconnected from its context, as if in a ghost-like effect. Nonetheless, these renderings are different. While in Moholy-Nagy’s negative image the figure floats atop a mostly indistinguishable background, with dark creases suggesting bed linens, in Roh’s image the same subject shows further background details, situating it within a domestic scene. The woman’s inclined head is also present in Roh’s work, while Moholy-Nagy leaves out the head completely. In both images the sitter’s gender is clearly indicated, yet sexual characteristics are downplayed in Moholy-Nagy’s work and become more prominent in Roh’s. A great number of Roh’s photographs include the female body, hinting to an erotic figuration, and furthering the tensions in his work between realism and abstraction.

One of Roh’s image’s content and suggestiveness differentiates it from New Vision photography and Moholy-Nagy’s influence, aligning him instead to Surrealism and French photography, another significant theme in Roh’s work. For example, Roh features the female nude to different effect, prominently layering the figure atop a barren forest (Figure 39). The position of the sitter’s arms behind her head and the frontal view indicate eroticism. As another indicator of the fluidity of Roh’s practice between New Vision and Surrealist influence, Roh’s

122 Roh’s negative print that appeared in formes nues, one of two images by the artist, bears a strong resemblance to one of Moholy-Nagy’s negative prints in the book. See formes nues, Albert Menzel and Albert Roux, eds. (Paris: Art graphique et photographique, 1935), plates 72-3.
negative print (Figure 37) also appeared in the 1935 French photography book, *formes nues*, attesting to its circulation in both New Vision and Surrealist contexts.  

*Untitled* (Figure 37) was also part of a longer sequence, which was featured in *Foto-Auge* as one image of a multi-photo page that represented Roh’s only inclusion his own photography in the book. Titled *Unter Wasser* [Under Water] (Figure 40), this work showcases two columns of negatives made from contact prints, a format that embodies the iconoclasm of Roh's theory turned into practice, as there was little precedent for this type of photography assemblage. Firstly, the publication of the works’ actual-size shows their materiality, which is then challenged through the fantastical themes and jarring juxtaposition in the photographs; the cut-and-paste form of this image is contradicted by the unanimity in its content. The vertical arrangement suggests a film-strip but its succession of seemingly unrelated images does not contain narrative coherence. Rather, it emphasizes the works’ process of creation – the printing, cutting and recombination used to make this resolutely unintelligible arrangement. Each of these high-contrast images showcases the extreme effects of negative printing, which de-familiarize the viewer in terms of space, time and location. Extreme angles and close cropping further confuse the viewer. Cropped bodies appear to float on brightly-lit backgrounds; small human

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123 The book presented nudes by a selection of the most prominent photographers working in Europe and the United States, including Moholy-Nagy, Man Ray, Florence Henri, André Kertesz, Brassaï and others. Roh’s works in *formes nues* indicates its role as a distinct image and as a nude, rather than just part of a larger, experimental composition, as in *Under Water*. It is also interesting to note that his work was published in France – something that happened rarely for German photographers.

124 This was the only image in *Foto-Auge* that was arranged in such a multi-part assembly.

125 I have selected this illustration because it more clearly shows Roh’s cut-and-paste method. The closest images in common to *Unter Wasser*, from what I have found thus far, were film strips that depicted the non-narrative scenes from films of this era. Some of these were printed in photo books and popular magazines, such as in *Es kommt der neue Fotograf!*
figures are barely distinguishable as tiny silhouettes on undifferentiated black surfaces, and buildings are shown from severe angles or tightly cropped. The second image from the top in the right column is printed upside down so that the curvature of the shoreline is continuous throughout two photographs. These disruptive features and the severity of the other effects serve to unify the images and their shared formal concerns. A harmony, or dis-harmony, in black and white is reiterated in nine different variations.

Roh addresses photography’s paradoxical nature in his introductory essay on Aenne Biermann’s work, setting up a series of theses and antitheses (itself a binary structure) to the theme examined in “Mechanism and Expression.” Here he clarifies the medium’s intrinsic challenge to staid notions of truth or realism. Stating that, “the photograph does not tell the truth,” he writes, “After all, naturally not.” His defense of the photograph as an unreliable source for truth telling coexists with his discussion, in the same paragraph, of the stellar optical opportunities offered by the camera, which he describes as “superior to the human eye.” An image binary from Roh’s book on Biermann demonstrates that, although the camera enhances vision, it never guarantees a veristic representation (Figure 41). Explosions of fireworks against a dark sky are complemented by a negative image of poplar trees, allowing for a comparison the formal effects created by diverse sources of light, shadow, and line. These formal comparisons are enhanced through the camera’s ability to arrest the fireworks’ motion, and by the photographer’s control in the darkroom.

Roh’s Untitled ca. 1930 (Figure 42), contains two negative prints within one frame. This dual photograph of one scene depicts a light side and dark, high contrast complement. By

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showing the negative holes and emphasizing light and dark, Roh reveal’s the photographer’s tools – the light and dark binary - and process. The work contains a row of holes from the negative strip, a feature that appears in another untitled work (Figure 43); this element demonstrates Roh’s binary compositional device, with its emphasis on high-contrast oppositional values. The presence of the holes enhances the graphic quality in both works and characterizes the photograph, in general, as a hybrid image, both as a picture window and as a material object.

In another Untitled work from the 1920s, (Figure 44), Roh shifts the viewer’s perception away from narrative and toward the object, rendering incomplete glimpses of two adjacent images on a filmstrip. Instead of developing one image that fills the whole print, he turns and shifts the negative to show the strip itself and the division between images.

Other photographic experiments pursued by Roh reiterate an emphasis on the double, which can have hyper real effects, and another way of exploring the concept of the binary. In several of his negative prints, mirrors present ghost-like duplicates, as in one where an image of a woman peering into a mirror contains a doppelgänger that stares back at the viewer (Figure 45). The female torso is rendered in dark tones, causing the contours of her arm to blend in with a dark background. The negative print brings out the pattern that covers her clothing, while the light tones of a string of rounded beads around her neck, her hair, and her facial features punctuate an otherwise dark composition. The only texture visible in the image, aside from the slight contours of her arm and its reflection at the right, is the hair, which has a plastic-like luster. A luminous, white glow rings her face. Although it is clear that the second image of the woman is a reflection, the hyper real aspect of the work lies in the animated nature of the reflection’s eyes, which are more prominent and “alive” to the viewer in the mirror. Another

127 Note: the moiré pattern in the bottom right is not present in the actual photograph, and is just distortion in the reproduction.
work (Figure 46), possibly a different version created during the same shoot, crops the woman’s body more closely and uses effects to render the reflected face with mask-like features. In line with Roh’s interest in binary comparison, he also printed this work in positive (Figure 47).\footnote{See Roh’s images of bathers for another example of this practice.}

Another example, an image of a torso (Fig. 48), shows how Roh uses binary formalism to create Surrealist effects, here using light to create an echo. A headless body lies atop a bed, its legs curled in front of it.\footnote{This image of the headless torso would be popularized in Surrealist photography. See numerous examples, including photographs by Moholy-Nagy, Jacques Lemare, Maurice Tabard, M.P. Verneuil, Raoul Ubac and others in formes nues.} In the image, taken from behind and slightly above the figure, the torso’s dark tones appear on a section of the bed. The repetition of this tone and of a white hand that extends onto the figure’s back and on the bed creates the sense of a reflection where there is actually a shadow, and the suggestion of an uncanny figure caressing the subject’s back.

Many other works by Roh explore the concept of the binary in double and multi-image arrangements to suggest filmic interpretations, a theme that would also be explored in Foto-Auge. These positive prints, which do not disrupt a sense of realism like the negative prints, show how the concept of the binary also extends to form. In two works in a format that he designated “double photos” [doppelfotos] (Figures 49–50), diptychs of positive prints visually reject the idea that the photographer produces singular images, but show their subjects with variations in position or expression. It is unknown whether these images’ order is the same as they were shot on film, or whether they were cut and rearranged, as in Unter Wasser. It appears that they show the former, given the images’ slight variations from each other. Each final, known image is not a single perfect shot, but reflects a time-based process of multiple clicks with the same sitter and setting. These works simultaneously refer to the photographer’s tools and process
while developing a narrative that recalls the form of contact sheets. Roh made hundreds of contact prints from rolls of negatives, cutting and recombinining them into strips or pasting them onto boards. These works stand out from other known contact print strips by Roh because they are enlargements, suggesting that he may have intended them for display. Several dozen original-size contact print strips (Figures 51-54) evidence Roh’s strong interest in cutting and pasting prints from different projects into new orderings, then studying photographs in various combinations and formats, conveying techniques associated with the “New Vision,” such as extreme angles, and putting emphasis on texture and negative printing. In these images, Roh explores the image binary format that operates in Foto-Auge, plays with light and shadow, and reveals the photographer’s process in deciding whether to cut and rearrange negatives in a final print arrangement.

The montage-like process of Roh’s photographic arrangements comes out of his interest in collage, a practice he began in the early 1920s and that he would continue throughout his life. The ideas of Max Ernst, whose collages Roh reviewed in Das Kunstblatt in 1927, have commonalities with the concepts that guided Roh’s photographic practice, with an emphasis on binaries, juxtaposition, and the resulting distortions they can cause. In a 1926 letter to Roh, Ernst describes purposefully recombining disparate images in order to create new associations and tensions:

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130 Stetler describes the organizational system of Roh’s negatives and contact prints that are housed at his former home in Nuremberg, Germany. Most of Roh’s contact prints on board are held in the collection of Galerie Kicken in Berlin. See Stetler, “Franz Roh and the Art History of Photography,” 5.

131 This is significant, as according to Roh’s wife, art historian Juliane Roh, the artist stopped making photographs in the 1930s. See J.A. Schmoll and Franz Roh, Retrospektiv Photographie (Düsseldorf: Edition Marzona, 1981), 111.
It meant less to me to construct new entities than to create electric and erotic tensions by relating elements which until now we have felt were alien and unconnected. This resulted in explosions and high voltage, and the more unexpected the associations…the more surprising was the flashing spark of poetry.\textsuperscript{132}

While Ernst’s explanation gives meaning to his collage works, it also sheds light on many of Roh’s photographs that join in one single image what Roh calls the “major and minor keys,” or day and night, resulting in greater tension.\textsuperscript{133}

Notably, Roh had included two works by Ernst in \textit{Nach-expressionismus}, in addition to his inclusion of Ernst’s work in \textit{Foto-Auge} and in his later book, \textit{German Painting in the Twentieth Century} (1968). As Felicity Gee has noted, Ernst provided a key connection between Roh’s Magic Realism and Surrealism. Ernst’s depictions of hyper realist spaces as filtered through a dreamlike and at times highly idiosyncratic aesthetic, expressed in various mediums including painting, frottage transfer, cut and paste, tracing and erasing, must have made an impact on Roh. Gee also notes that Ernst’s description of Surrealism (published in 1934) as a “frontier” between interior and exterior worlds resonates with Roh’s own definition of Magic Realism, which highlighted “the dynamic movement between the object world and imagination.”\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{132} Ernst quoted in Roh, “Surrealism,” in \textit{German Painting in the Twentieth Century} (London: Thames & Hudson, 1968), 139-140. This is the English language edition. The German version was published in 1968 by the same publisher. André Breton discusses a similar idea, first articulated in his 1921 preface to a book of Ernst’s works, in the Surrealist Manifesto: “The value of the image depends on the beauty of the spark it creates, and is thus a function of the voltage difference between the two conductors.” Breton quoted in Werner Spies, \textit{Max Ernst Collages: The Invention of the Surrealist Universe} (London: Thames & Hudson, 1991), 88.

\textsuperscript{133} Roh, “Mechanism and Expression,” 16.

\textsuperscript{134} Ernst quoted in Gee, originally taken from \textit{Was ist Surrealismus? [What is Surrealism?]} exhibition catalogue, Zurich, 1934; translated from German in Werner Spies, \textit{Max Ernst Life and
Roh’s cut-and-paste works (Figure 55-56; 58), appropriating engravings from scientific journals as their source material, most clearly materialize his engagement with Ernst. Their fantastical scenes and hybrid human-animal creatures refer directly to Ernst’s. In *Total Panic II* (Figure 55), a collage of found images (line-block prints and engravings mounted on paper), Roh has replaced an elephant tamer’s head with that of a bird. Two images have been added to the foreground, a snail and rodent, which add a fantastical element to a circus scene gone awry. *Klage* [Complaint] (Figure 56) demonstrates Roh’s use of scientific images and seamless integration of fragments within one picture. The fragments, showing the musculature underneath the skin, also refer to Roh’s interest in uncovering a world that is hidden beneath a veneer, a concept that links back to Magic Realism. Roh produced hundreds of collages using works from medical journals, refashioning the body into an assembly of composite parts. Frequently, like Ernst (Figure 57), Roh replaced figures’ heads with inanimate objects or animal parts (Figure 58), signifying an inversion of the natural order of things or a loss of intellectual control represented by the reordered worlds in the collages.

Roh created collages in which he engaged directly with the same tools used by Ernst, showing how Ernst’s striking description of fantasy, of inner and outer worlds, and his sense of juxtaposition inspired various elements of Roh’s creative practice, from *Nach-expressionismus* to his negative prints and other photographs and collages. The negative print, a technique that was learned from Moholy-Nagy and was perhaps the most significant photographic format for Roh, also allowed the scholar and artist to develop many of his ideas, and shows the connection


135 Ibid, 35; See also Roh, *German Art in the Twentieth Century*, 139-140 and Spies, *Max Ernst Collages*, 88-89.
between these two artists. In fact, the negative print straddles two worlds, complicating a stable notion of realism and evincing their maker’s ability to assert an argument in images. Roh’s fixation on fruitful recombination, already expressed in his own photography practice through the use of doubles, montage and the reordering of negative and contact prints, informed the structure of Foto-Auge, where he arranged a vast array of photo-based works for the viewer’s visual edification, defying a concept of photographs as direct “recordings” of the world.
CHAPTER 4 – FOTO-AUGE

Foto-Auge highlights Weimar debates regarding the prominence of the photograph in mass media and consequently, of the photograph’s inherent deceptiveness. Thinkers such as Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin, among others, wrote extensively about the relationship of the photograph to modern society, as evidenced by the ubiquity of images in printed publications and in film. Kracauer, a cultural critic and writer for the newspaper Frankfurter Zeitung, published his seminal essay, “Photography,” in 1927; in it he described an era characterized by image oversaturation. The author detailed the decline in perception that resulted from the predominance of photographic images in modern life. Photographs, Kracauer argued, inhibit historical context by presenting only singular moments, distracting viewers from reality: “They make a mirage rise over the desert of our everyday life, they conjure up seductive images in front of our eyes, so we forget to ask about our own state of affairs.” This thesis argues that Foto-Auge, by featuring a chaotic arrangement of different types of photographs with no easily discernable chapters or organizing schema, refers to the “age of distraction” that Kracauer described in such remarkable tones.


*Foto-Auge* addresses accusations about the photograph’s propensity to distract, distort and deceive viewers by accepting, even highlighting, these qualities, intentionally creating image juxtapositions that are often puzzling and anti-narrative. By embracing the deceptiveness of the photographic image, Franz Roh recalibrates László Moholy-Nagy’s philosophy about the medium’s restructuring of vision. If, in *PPF*, Moholy-Nagy aimed to show the photograph’s ability to depict the world more truthfully, Roh, in *Foto-Auge*, reveals that the “world” in question was never so clear to begin with. In spite of this major difference between *PPF* and *Foto-Auge*, the former’s productive sequencing of image, text, and blank space guides the latter.

Moholy-Nagy’s selection and arrangement of images, which he culled from numerous sources in popular media, not only illustrate the theories he outlines in the beginning of the book, but also reframe visual experience. Similarly, Roh’s compiling of various source materials indicates a productive reformulation of photographic vision.

I have identified several themes in *Foto-Auge* that provide a way of understanding the book’s logic and to contextualize it within broader photographic production of the Weimar period. These themes are dispersed throughout the book with no pattern to their arrangement. They are roughly even in terms of number (even if not all examples are given here), touching on: the representation of science; photography and doubling; montage and graphic design; and the illustration of violence towards bodies. The last section, the relation of photography and film, is at the core of *Foto-Auge*, which, despite its lack of narrative, builds to a dramatic conclusion about images’ role in society. My analysis of the book in relation to these themes demonstrates

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that, in *Foto-Auge*, Roh’s practice and theory coalesced into a powerful and idiosyncratic reading of photography’s illusory nature.

**SCIENTIFIC IMAGES**

As image-makers and theorists in this period sought to define photography and differentiate it from other media, they strategically created historical connections between different moments along the timeline of the medium’s development.¹³⁹ As such, they embraced the scientific and technical aspects of photography’s process and its history of commercial applications. Oliver Botar discusses the history of photography in relationship to scientific images, stating that, in photography’s nascent days as in 1920s Weimar Germany, there were few divisions between types of images - amateur and professional, technical and fine art photographs. It could be said that the “New Vision’s” embrace of technical photographs as fine art stems, in part, from a return to this early state, ushered in by Moholy-Nagy and other leading figures in photography. Botar identifies Moholy-Nagy as the first artist to argue for the use of technical equipment in the making of fine art photographs. As such, Moholy-Nagy, Roh, and others embraced technology because of its usefulness in amplifying human vision, as in x-ray photography and microphotography. Botar argues that the reverse also came to be true, and scientific photographs came to be appreciated for their aesthetic qualities.¹⁴⁰

By presenting images created for scientific or technological purposes in the same context as works created for fine art viewing, *Foto-Auge* participates in this discussion. These works in

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¹³⁹ Both Moholy-Nagy and Roh, in their efforts to promote photography of their day as equal or greater than the other fine arts, linked the early days of photography with contemporaneous work.

the book foreground photographers’ use of technology to help us see the world better, in some cases, even transforming what we see. As is typical in Foto-Auge, the book contrasts a work by Albert Renger-Patzsch that could have been displayed at Fifo with one by an unnamed photographer that showcases a technique used by science and industry. Renger-Patzsch, known for his images of quotidian subjects seen in new and surprising ways, often employed extreme close-up views. In a botanical photograph (Figure 59 details invisible to the human eye, such as the plant’s texture and anatomical design, appear clear and easily readable. Each element of the plant becomes part of a larger aesthetic system. The camera’s macro lens makes possible the conception of the flower as a work of art, or a pure form, as Michael Jennings has emphasized. Although Renger-Patzsch’s work was often considered, in his time and after, in opposition to Moholy-Nagy’s focus on human perception, his photographs’ capacity to structure vision by transforming the flower into form aligns it with Moholy-Nagy’s core idea of “production.”

Roh juxtaposed Renger-Patzsch’s image with a scientific example of microphotography that demonstrates the reverse visual mechanism – the shrinking down of pictures – and activates the binary structure that is fundamental in the organization of this book. Microphotography, invented shortly after the first photographs were created, is obtained through a microscopic lens attached to a camera that magnifies the image. The resulting pinhole-size image must be “read” through a microscope. In the image in Foto-Auge, individual prints mounted on glass slides


142 Although microphotographs had been used to conceal or shrink down images for storage, such as transferring sensitive information during the Prussian War, they also circulated in popular culture as images of monuments, portraits, landscapes and other subjects. See Boris Jardine, “A collection of John Benjamin Dancer microphotographs,” Explore Whipple Collections, Whipple Museum of the History of Science, University of Cambridge, 2006, accessed 15 November 2017, http://www.hps.cam.ac.uk/whipple/explore/microscopes/microphotographs/.
are scattered across the picture plane. Most of the miniaturized images on the prints’ surfaces are not distinguishable, and a mere few, on the top left, are even visible. Roh’s interest in microphotography is evidenced by his plan to devote a 60 fotos style book to this form in the Fotothek series.¹⁴³ The planned microphotographs project proves Roh’s sustained interest in the aesthetics of this medium, and it refutes suggestions in past scholarship that he was engaged with this technology only because it illustrated the breadth of modern photography. Roh’s approach testifies to the broader aestheticizing of scientific images during this period as a means of linking photography to its nineteenth-century origins. It also exemplifies his critical role in examining new media through the book format.¹⁴⁴

Roh’s juxtaposition of these two images highlights the use of technology not only in creating and preserving images, but also in affecting how the viewer sees. In both works, the subjects are transformed through mechanical processes. The varied sizes of microphotography slides and the inconsistent perceptibility of their pictorial surfaces recall microscopy—a process that gradually reveals the images contained on the slides. The sharp and bright transparency inherent in the slides and the glass plates in the foreground builds a binary opposition with the lush and soft textures and dark background of Renger-Patzsch’s work. The microphotograph’s chaotic compositional arrangement also contributes to a sense of imperceptibility. Renger-

¹⁴³ Roh, Moholy-Nagy: 60 Fotos. An advertisement in this publication lists the planned topics in the series, to be published by Klinkhardt & Biermann (Berlin): the monstrous, photomontage, police photos, El Lissitzky, sport photos, 100 years of nude photography. A separate list on this advertisement includes topics to be explored later: film and photography, technology and photography, microphotography, and press photos. The first Fototek book was devoted to Moholy-Nagy’s work, and the second, to Aenne Biermann’s work.

¹⁴⁴ French photographer Laure Albin-Guillot published her own book of microphotographs in 1929. According to Botar, Moholy’s promotion of “scientific” imagery including x-rays, microphotographs and aerial photographs led to an increase in amateur photographers working with these forms. See Botar, “László Moholy-Nagy’s New Vision and the Aestheticization of Scientific Photography in Weimar Germany,” 524.
Patzsch’s work, in contrast, registers pictorial lucidity. It is only upon examining Renger-Patzsch’s image in further detail, however, that its shapes begin to abstract, suggesting an inherent sense of transformation in the viewing process, aided by modern technology.

Günther Petschow’s *Cornfield* and *Tug Boat on the Elbe* (Figure 60) take the opposite visual perspective of Renger-Patzsch’s work, showing the world from a distance. Aerial photographs included in the book showcase the avant-garde interest in distorting perception through this genre. In both works, tonal effects and pattern create an unsettling impression of positive and negative space that flattens the images. The visual elements, such as roads, fields, boats and waterways, are reduced to abstract lines, dots, diamonds and blobs. The images’ capacity to communicate landscape details is diminished, as the specificity of elements diminishes, and effects like light and shadow, texture, and shape come into heightened focus. In *Cornfield*, the cultivated ground appears as a large rectangle next to a snaking line. The motif of the vertical line reappears in *Tug Boat’s* sea vessels and the general angle of the shoreline. The waterway’s shape is a reverse of the field on the adjacent page.

Similarly, three other aerial images in the book depict the landscape as a series of geometric shapes (Figure 61). Portraying a radically new view of topography, they suggest abstracted elements over actual objects. These arrangements of these works, one on the left side of the spread and two on the right, is not a typical image binary but they are grouped together because of their similarity. Not identified by artist but by source, they come from government and industry, and thus point out an important difference from the authored works assembled together in this book. The top left image, from the Leipzig Central Station, is captioned with a note about its purpose, informing the viewer that it was taken “vertically” for a map of the airways. Like those discussed above, these works abstract the landscape into a series of flat
blocks and strips of color. Significantly, Roh recuperated aerial abstraction in his selection of images for Moholy-Nagy’s *60 fotos*, choosing a photograph of a field from above that striates the landscape into shaded bands (Figure 62). As the caption in *60 fotos* notes, the work’s geometric lines and texture are highlighted through this specific choice of angle. Moholy-Nagy’s work to the right clarifies the function of the “vertical view” in both images – to better show the patterns and geometric angles that result from new perspectives.145

Another pair (Figure 63) solidifies *Foto-Auge*’s use of binary images of science and technology to show how they can both distort and clarify what viewers see. Moholy-Nagy’s well-known *Paris Drain* appears next to the advertising image and photomontage by Dutch graphic designer Paul Schuitma. *Paris Drain* epitomizes Roh and Moholy-Nagy’s conviction that the photograph can show life more truthfully than can human optical perception. In this image, a lack of focus in the foreground gives way to a pictorial clarity in the background, reversing the viewer’s expectations about closeness and perception in vision. In dispensing with normative methods of the depiction of space, *Paris Drain* illustrates the qualities of moving water – the sense of fluidity, variegated tones, and instability in perspective. What, at first, appears to signify a stable image, transforms with sustained looking.

The fluctuating sense of intelligibility in *Paris Drain* is heightened by its comparison with Shuitma’s graphic composition, which depicts a scale in lucid fashion (detail, Figure 64). The work appears to be a mailer or advertisement for the Van Berkel of Holland company’s weighing machines, and was perhaps originally folded down the center.146 The left half contains


146 A similar instrument to the image on the left is in the collection of the Liemers Museum in Zevenaar, Holland. “Scales of metal manufactured by van Berkel’s Patent, Me. In Rotterdam,”
a close-up of the scale’s face with two insets below showing other parts of the machine that are not visible. The full machine is pictured on the right, with particular features enlarged through graphic circles and lines. The surrounding text describes the machine’s usefulness and identifies its unique features. The design can be characterized as orderly and geometric, with lines of text providing structure.

In contrast to *Paris Drain*, the commercial image assists the viewer to see more clearly.\(^{147}\) The frontal scale depicted at right allows for readability of its basic shape and features, and is enlarged on the left - identified in the text as “actual size.”\(^{148}\) While the work itself demonstrates pictorial clarity for the viewer in its close-ups, which allow the viewer to better inspect the items before potential purchase, the text also emphasizes the scale’s superior ability to clarify an item’s weight: “The more clarity the safer your profit” and “The more clarity for the customer the bigger his trust will be.”\(^{149}\) Other inscriptions regard the instrument’s ability to communicate across geographic barriers as well as conform to different countries’ regulations for measurement.\(^{150}\) In this sense, the scale could be interpreted as a stand-in for the camera, a technology not limited in its usage by language or location but with the ability to communicate almost universally, because of its technical language. Roh thus conveys that photographs are


\(^{147}\) Although it appears that Shuitema’s work may show two different machines, they share some basic features. Closer inspection of the advertisement’s longer, descriptive text, which I was not able to translate, might determine which specific machines are pictured here.

\(^{148}\) [Wijzerplaat op ware grotte]. All translations from the Dutch by Alyssa Di Cara.

\(^{149}\) [Hoe groter de duidelijkheid des te veiliger Uw winst]; [Hoe overzichtelijker voor de klant des te groter zijn vertrouwen].

\(^{150}\) [Voldoet aan de strengste ijkvoorshriften van alle landen].
“effective” means of visual representation no matter who views them. The detail shots in the bottom right further this point about the photograph’s efficacy by combining images, text and graphics to better showcase the scale’s elements.

Roh underscores the idea that the camera is a tool for widespread communication in his introduction. He discusses how professionals and amateurs alike “mak(e) use of the international language of outer environment that fundamentally neither changes after centuries nor after countries, the effect extends over a vast area of space and time.”^151 Here Roh describes the visual environment as non-changing, inspiring a sentiment that harks back to his discussion of Magic Realism in which a familiar world of objects are made strange through pictorial representation. Moreover, he underscores the camera’s ability to represent the environment despite variance in time and locale.

In addition to the lack of clarity of *Paris Drain*, which is emphasized through its juxtaposition with Shuitema’s advertisement, diverging approaches to the image in three different publications also points to a lack of stability in its interpretation. As David Evans has pointed out, in addition to *Foto-Auge*, the work appeared in Moholy-Nagy’s second Bauhaus book, *The New Vision, From Material to Architecture* [Von Material zu Architektur] (1929) and in Roh’s *Moholy-Nagy: 60 fotos* (Figure 65), and was titled differently each time.^152 Moholy-Nagy’s publication of the image in his Bauhaus book is accompanied by a more straightforward description of a “broken canal” through which water flows, depositing a crust of dirt in front of

^151 Roh, “Mechanism and Expression,” 15.

it, thus emphasizing the textural effects.\textsuperscript{153} This caption also clarifies more clearly what is depicted, in case viewers cannot decipher the image. The work’s reappearance in \textit{60 fotos}, in an image binary similar to those in \textit{Foto-Auge}, highlights the image’s unintelligibility through the captions: “\textit{Unheimliche Kanalöffnung in Paris}” or “Weird opening of the Paris canal,” the book’s English translation (Figure 65).\textsuperscript{154} Roh’s use of \textit{unheimliche}, today translated as the “uncanny,” to describe the canal, recalls his use of the term in \textit{Nach-expressionismus}. An everyday street scene is transformed into something unfamiliar through the tricks of the camera. The image and caption beside the work in \textit{60-fotos} further describes this sense: “Fotografische Unmittelbarkeit des Augenblicks” [“Photographic immediacy of the instant”]. In this work, six children squint and shield their eyes from the sun as if struggling to see clearly. Their difficulty in seeing brings out the inscrutability in the image of the drain. This juxtaposition implies that, despite the “immediacy” of a photograph, or maybe because of it, the camera’s capacity to depict a clear, stable image is called into question. Likewise, the scientific images in \textit{Foto-Auge} propose the camera as a technology or instrument, capable of magnifying, enlarging, or clarifying what it depicts. In addition, however, they point to the instability of scientific depiction, also able to obscure and pan over, destabilizing an image.

\textbf{PHOTOGRAPHY AND ITS DOUBLE}

As discussed in chapter three, Roh’s engagement with two photographic genres that heighten the contradictions in the medium – the photogram and negative print – captures his

\textsuperscript{153} Moholy-Nagy, \textit{Von Material zu Architektur} (Mainz: Florian Kupferberg Verlag, 1968), 34-5. The work is depicted adjacent to an aerial photograph with similar textural effects as the \textit{Drain}.

\textsuperscript{154} The German “unheimliche” was translated, in the book, as “weird.” However, “uncanny” is a current, widely-used translation for this period’s \textit{unheimliche}. Like in \textit{Foto-Auge}, all text in this book is printed in German, French and English. Roh, \textit{Moholy-Nagy: 60 fotos}, 31.
belief in photography’s symbolic representation of a dualistic world. The dichotomies of light and shadow, antique and new, original and copy come into play in several works in Foto-Auge. Creating surreal effects, these works show that the “double” is both a formal device and a “copy” of reality in the Surrealist vein. Finally, these images prove Foto-Auge’s function as a bridge between cultures in Germany and France. As highlighted earlier, this bridge was built by Roh also in his practice and in the publication of his own work in Germany and France alike.

Eugène Atget’s Corsets, Boulevard de Strasbourg, which opens Foto-Auge’s photographic sequence, is one of the artist’s “city scenes” (Figure 66). Its hybrid qualities act as a vehicle for its documentation of urban transformation, a major theme in Weimar’s photographic culture. On the facing page is The Plunge, an anonymous press photograph taken from the New York Times that depicts a diver. The unusual pairing differs from a spread from Fifo’s catalogue, which depicts a similar storefront by Atget alongside Jan Kamman’s architectural image (the latter returning in Foto-Auge) (Figure 67). This latter pairing stresses similar subject matter, as urban scenes perceived across time and reflections. Foto-Auge’s image binary, in turn, suggests a formal, rather than thematic relationship, as they contain similar contrasts in tonal value, sense of movement or stasis, and the dematerialization of space.

These characteristics contribute to a reading of both works as in-transformation, resulting in a sense of defamiliarization that brings Roh’s interest in photography close to his earlier writings on Magic Realism. In the Atget, the dark background contrasts with the white mannequins that appear to hover within the window frame. Interrupting the scene’s stillness is a moving veil, which Atget captured with a slow shutter speed. Reflections of trees and sky on the
glass connect the outside and inside space of the shop. Corsets demonstrates a sense of “ontological estrangement” from the world of objects, as Felicity Gee has observed. For Roh, these forms in turn delineate what Jeffrey Ladd terms an “extremely mutable” form of realism made possible through the camera.

This point of connection between two very different works is further emphasized by the repetition of the mannequin in Atget’s photograph. Reversed tonal values in each work further suggest a complementary formalism between the two. Here Atget has a primarily dark storefront punctuated by glowing models, and the reportage photograph has a dark torso diving into sun-dappled water.

Corsets’ formal qualities and its transformation due to its changing reception are suggestive of Roh’s insistence in the camera’s affective and distortive capacity. Although Atget claimed that his photographs were merely documents of everyday Parisian life, the photographer’s work was discovered by Man Ray and his assistant, Berenice Abbott, in the early 1920s, and championed as Surrealist. Four of his works, including Corsets, were published in the Surrealist journal, La Révolution Surrealiste [The Surrealist Revolution]. Remarkably, at the same time when Atget’s photographs circulated to an audience interested in Surrealism, eleven of his works were included in Fizo, showing their popularity across different geographic centers.

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155 For a comparison of the work of Atget and Man Ray and discussion of this photograph, see John Fuller, “Atget and Man Ray in the Context of Surrealism,” Art Journal 36, no. 2 (Winter 1976-77): 135.

156 While Gee has discussed the significance of this image’s placement in the book in light of Roh’s connection to Surrealism, she does not discuss its arrangement next to a work typical of the New Vision. See Gee, “The Critical Roots of Cinematic Magic Realism,” 85.

and cultures. Roh brings Surrealist and New Vision photography back together in his book’s visual comparison.

The spread immediately following that with Corsets and The Plunge shows an Arvid Gutshow landscape and an Andreas Feininger negative print (Figure 68), further reflecting Roh’s interest in the double and its corresponding unsettling effects. In Gutshow’s Downs, there is an absence of a horizon line, created by the blurring together of the sand and the sky. Patchy stripes of dark trees against the light background further abstract the image and its graphic qualities seem to limit its capacity to communicate as a landscape. The work is not characterized by a sense of stasis, which would ordinarily showcase the topography of an area through clear depiction of its typical features, but by movement, with sharp diagonals that gesture to the right. Each of these effects contributes to a sense of instability, a quality also present in Feininger’s work to the right. In a tonal reverse of Downs, the shadows in Feininger’s Steam Tug on the Elbe’s blend together the sea, sky, and ship. What seems to be a ship resting atop the water in the foreground begins to lose its sense of perspective. Formal similarities between the works, including heightened tonal distinctions, distortion of perspective, and composition arranged in pronounced, band-like stripes, create scenes that hover in between reality and the unreal.

Jennings, in his comparison of the first four images in Foto-Auge discussed here, relates their disquieting qualities to a common social concern that he sees throughout the book. He refers specifically to societal changes throughout Germany that stem from mass commodification and increased urbanization. His discussion of a “pervasive loss of the real” seems apparently clear in these works.158 Jennings’ proposal of a unified narrative arc for the book, however, does not address the effects of the positive uses of technology outlined by Roh in its introduction and

spotlighted throughout the book. Most importantly, it does not relate this sense of “loss” to Roh’s own theoretical and aesthetic interests.\(^{159}\)

Jennings interprets the only work by Roh in *Foto-Auge, Under Water* (Figure 69), as a restatement of the theme of the lost city of Atlantis, which he has identified earlier in the book. In particular, his interpretation centers on the three-four images that depict the aquatic element as well as an overall disruption of the real caused by the negative print technique. Although Jennings does not discuss *Under Water* in depth, his reading places the image within this storyline for the purposes of coherence and neglects to discuss its significance as a work in itself.

*Under Water* continues the theme of the photographic double and confirms the affinities between the author’s own work and the major themes recurring in *Foto-Auge*. Such a nonlinear configuration, as discussed in more detail in chapter three, mimics the viewing conditions of the book more broadly and highlights Roh’s embrace of new photographic aesthetics and techniques, particularly the negative print, in service of a fragmented visual experience. The interplay of dark and light that unites the nine images in *Under Water* correlates with the compositional structure of the adjacent photograph, Umbo’s *Winter Landscape*. Snowy and shaded bands crisscross this image. While variance in the sizes of the figures and trees suggests perspectival depth, large white expanses create abstract effect and loss of perspective. The extreme diagonals and contrast in value create an image that is not easily readable. This image would have been of further interest to Roh because of the tonal extremes inherent in this landscape. Not only can the photographer manipulate these contrasts in the darkroom, but also the artist’s selection of a wintery site suggests that tonal extremes are already present in the world as it is seen. Umbo’s

\[^{159}\text{Ibid, 39-46.}\]
choice of this site and his use of a oblique camera angle represents what Roh describes as the artist’s mandate to select a “fruitful fragment of reality.”

In Foto-Auge, such oblique camera views, combined with the dominant use of tonal shading, abstract apparently everyday objects and scenes and turn them into formal games. Foto-Auge attributes to photography the ability to double values, where light and dark are used unexpectedly and interchangeably.

WRITING AND VISION: GRAPHIC MONTAGE

Foto-Auge’s numerous photomontages highlight Roh’s interest in the intersection of graphics and photography. Fragmented Dada montages, Constructivist-style designs, and images that include text illustrate the range of such examples in the book. Since many artists in this period worked simultaneously in commercial and fine art contexts, the examples of graphic montage in Foto-Auge includes images with explicitly commercial content, such as Jan Tschichold’s Cinema Poster (see Figure 18), as well as images that have been appropriated for commercial uses, including El Lissitzky’s Composition (Figure 71), which makes up one of the layers of the artist’s self-portrait that served as the cover image for Foto-Auge. Foto-Auge also showcases fine art examples, such as Dada and Surrealist montage. While many of these variations on montage had appeared in Fifo, for example Grosz’s Dada-Merika (Figure 4) and Belgian artist E.L.T. Mesens’ Portrait of a Poet [Bilnis eines Dichters] (Figure 70), their appearance in Foto-Auge further promotes the diverse applications of this medium as forms of international exchange.

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160 Roh, “Mechanism and Expression,” 16.
A pair of images by Florence Henri and El Lissitzky (Figure 71) illustrates the relationship between writing and photography, creating a link between German and French photographic cultures and showing Foto-Auge’s awareness of Surrealist debates. Henri’s Selbstbildnis [Self Portrait] uses a mirror to present the artist’s visage as a reflection, thus mimicking the camera’s function; Lissitzky’s image, in turn, lays bare the illustrator/designer’s tools. The narrow mirror panel neatly crops Henri into a bust, showing the framing capacity of the camera lens. Outside the mirror are the objects it reflects, a paneled table and two reflective balls, which are flush up against the mirror, but Henri herself is absent. Silver spheres punctuate the inverted T-shaped composition and draw the viewer’s gaze. Although the titling of the work as a self-portrait posits a psychic closeness to the artist, here Henri uses the mirror, and her physical absence, to distance herself from the viewer’s space.

Rosalind Krauss discusses Henri’s Self Portrait as an indication of the close relationship between photography in the 1920s and 1930s in Germany, with a more pronounced Constructivist tradition, and France, where a Surrealist language dominated. Krauss approaches photography in relation to the conception of Surrealism articulated by André Breton in the 1920s, drawing primarily from his debate regarding the role of writing versus that of vision. According to Krauss, Breton champions forms that renounce reflective and rational thought and allow for the purest expression of the unconscious. Although Breton never settles on either writing or vision as the ultimate Surrealist mode of creation, the explosion of visual art forms combining image and text in the 1920s-30s took up this debate in full force. The illustrated magazine is one place where this debate played out, represented by the many commercial

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photographs in *Foto-Auge*. Breton’s 1938 self portrait, titled *L’Écriture automatique* [Automatic Writing] was a photomontage, and montages appeared in his many publications, showing this form’s significance to the development of Surrealism.\(^{162}\) Krauss discusses photomontages as images that signify something else. Leaving the sphere of “real” space and time, she argues, the fragments of a montage create their own temporality and spatial relationship. George Grosz and John Heartfield’s *Dada-Merika*, which appears in *Foto-Auge* (see Figure 4), includes snippets of photographs and text atop a blank, white background. This type of montage, with its violently ripped fragments representing a disintegrating social fabric, typifies Dada montages, in which artists combined ephemera in order to make political statements.

While Henri’s *Self Portrait* is a commentary on photography and vision, Lissitzky’s *Komposition* [Composition], which is sequenced beside it, proclaims the significance of writing. Krauss considers both of these images together in her argument about the connections between German and French avant-gardes, yet, she missed their side-by-side display in *Foto-Auge*, which anticipates this relationship. In Lissitzky’s work, the photographer captured his own disembodied hand that holds a protractor. This image has commonly been associated with the Constructivist connection between the mind and the drawing apparatus; the placement of the hand on graph paper and next to an arc indicates that hand’s instrumental function. Lissitzky’s self-portrait, which appears on the cover, conflates the mind, the gaze and the artist’s tools through montage. Krauss points to the popular image of the hand in Bauhaus photography to illustrate one aspect of the debate about the status of vision as writing. She asserts that, in this time period, the photograph usurps the place of writing as a new form of communication. As she notes, the palm

\(^{162}\) See discussion about the important role of illustrated magazines, which highlighted the relationship between text and image, in the development of Surrealism in Krauss, “The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism,” 100-101.
of the hand represents “a manifestation of the natural impulse to make and leave traces.”\textsuperscript{163} In its explicit definition of the space of the image through the vertical frame, Henri’s \textit{Self Portrait} shows reality as a representation: “(Surrealist) photographs are not interpretations of reality, decoding it, as in Heartfield’s photomontages. They are presentations of that very reality as configured, coded or written.”\textsuperscript{164} The act of framing shows the interruption of real space and the space of the photograph, or the visual.

\section*{VIOLENCE TOWARDS THE BODY}

Several photographic representations of the body in \textit{Foto-Auge} depict a type of corporeality that appears highly unnatural and often under attack. As I have already discussed in chapter three, Roh made the body into an abstraction in his negative prints, where he divided it into shapes that become subsumed by the entire geometric composition. \textit{Foto-Auge’s} various depictions of the figure show how the camera’s transformative power is manifested in distortions to the body, and these images, I argue, further affirm the book’s connection to Surrealism.

The book’s opening spread (see Figure 66), with Atget’s mannequins alongside an image of a diver, points to the themes of a city in transformation, bodily estrangement, and the connections between them. Headless mannequins lining the case, its glass veneer and reflections, the rendering of ephemeral moments in front of the window, and the absence of human interaction suggest a commodity culture that brings the themes of this book in contact with contemporary critiques of the role of the mass subject in a rapidly modernizing urban life. In

\footnote{\textsuperscript{163} Krauss, “When Words Fail,” \textit{October} 22 (Autumn 1982): 98.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{164} By invoking Krauss’ ideas in relation to these works, I do not attempt to negate the rationalist, creative impulses and political circumstances that motivated Lissitzky and other artists. Ibid, 112.}
particular, Kurt Tucholsky and John Heartfield’s *Deutschland Deutschland über alles!* [Germany above all!] (DDUA), published the same year as *Foto-Auge*, skewers the Weimar political and social climate through biting prose and images.\(^{165}\) In one chapter, The Display Window, two texts and an accompanying image typify the hypocritical modern German society attacked in the book – with the commercial display window and the body as loci for these debates (Figure 72). The image depicts a man gazing into a shop display at three female busts and an array of products beneath them. The image is made eerie by the mannequins’ lifelike quality and the man’s consumptive gaze, which eyes the wares for sale and the manufactured female flesh. This visual critique of the seductions proffered by Berlin’s urban commercialism, where “lusts of the flesh mount on high, and the devil throws his temptations in the straight path of man,” as Tucholsky wrote, is complemented by an unidentified, perhaps fictitious, hairdresser’s text describing temptation’s ever-present nature in Berlin, despite attempts to find more conservative mannequins.\(^ {166}\) DDUA thus suggests that although major institutions such as the church and state police decry society’s increasing acceptance and presentation of the taboo, commodity culture has brought suggestive images of the body into everyday view, developing into a synchronous relationship between commercialism, display and the female body.

Kracauer famously described the fetishizing of the female body in the “Tiller Girls” dance troupe’s performances, where women’s limbs appeared in repetitive, seemingly endless,

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\(^{166}\) The hairdresser’s quote in *DDUA*: “If you want to see dirt, you can find it anywhere,” *DDUA*, 117.
succession. 167 Such spectacles, where women who “danced as one,” were also documented by photographs, one of which Moholy-Nagy included in PPF (Figure 73). He placed it on the same page as a photograph of a military parade, 168 showing how bodies were being rationalized in such apparently separate spheres. Both images crop the body to showcase repetitions of parts, rather than the identity of the subjects. The representation of the Tiller girls’ legs in spectacular array suggests an assembly line, but an exotic one arranged for material consumption. Cropping and repetition, evident in DDUA and in the opening image spread of Foto-Auge, further the association of the body as an image.

Several other photographs in DDUA reiterate the theme of bodily repetition as a critique of the subsuming of the individual by modern life and consumer culture. The second section in DDUA, entitled “The Country of Orderlies,” depicts a row of young members of a German youth organization (Figure 74). The row begins on the left and continues as far as the eye can make out to the upper right of the image. At right, a superior commands the group, his back to the viewer. The young men appear nearly identical in matching uniforms, alert faces turned to their captain and similar body types and heights, creating an unbroken line. The text below the photograph critiques this uniformity as inhuman: “If Mars-people could see them… then surely the Mars-people would call their Earth-expert to the telescope. And he could say, with absolute certainty: ‘There may be life on earth. But human beings – no, there are no human beings.’” 169 Other


169 DDUA, 6.
spreads in *DDUA* depict prisoners lined in near-matching garb, at times faced by a prison officer, but always in observable uniformity and “penance” for their actions. The authors ask what type of psychic effects will the prisoners face due to their forced subservience, stating: “These girls and women don’t belong to themselves; they belong to someone not in the picture: the prison administrator. He is possessed by the same organizing madness as the staff-officers in the field.”

Here the authors relate the dehumanizing experiences of service to the Republic, made apparent through the visible uniformity and repetition of bodies in photographs.

*Foto-Auge’s* images of the body establish the figure as a platform for contemporary debates regarding the individual in society and illustrate how photographs can suggest new perceptive models. Matthew Biro, in his discussion of the cyborg as a central figure and conceptual model of the Dada artists, considers the cyborg to be an embodiment of new modes of perception and comprehension, representative of technology’s impact on the various organs of human sensation. Through his discussion of various images of military bodies, from soldiers’ portraits and postcards during the war to images in magazines after the war and the Dadaists’ appropriation of these images, Biro shows how these artists critique the overly rationalized subject who represents the military and national ideal.

170 Ibid, 19.

171 Heartfield’s double-page spread that appeared in *AIZ, Twenty Years Later!* (1934), which depicts lines of child soldiers on the same page as a row of skeletons, depicts the logical end to this process. The issue commemorated twenty years since the beginning of WWI. “John Heartfield: Twenty Years Later!,” Tate Modern, accessed April 29, 2017, http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/heartfield-twenty-years-later-x13482.

A spread in *Foto-Auge* comments upon the transformation and dehumanization wrought on the body through military and medical interventions (Figure 75). Here, Roh juxtaposed an image depicting a medical apparatus therapeutically applied to a body with a montage depicting a body-as-machine. The first image, which depicts the medical procedure of diathermy, was obtained at a medical supply shop in Stuttgart, although it is unclear when or by whom it was obtained. In the procedure, electric currents are applied to the body for healing purposes. In this photograph a woman lies supine, with dark mats applied to several parts of her body. The mats are attached to metal cords that hook up to a machine, while other medical instruments appear in the background. The head of this woman is cropped out of the photograph, which shows a view from her chin down to just below her knees. The lack of identifying facial features and the focus on the major spots where the machine sits on the body contribute to create a depersonalized effect.

While the diathermy photograph presents the body as an immobile, dummy figure, the adjacent image, George Grosz’s *Der Monteur Heartfield*, depicts a body constructed in distinct parts. Grosz’s portrait of John Heartfield is a watercolor onto which the artist has pasted small

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173 Indicated on *Foto-Auge*’s title page, 2. It is possible that the image was obtained for *Fifo*, given the origins in Stuttgart, and was then given to Roh and Tschichold.

174 Although several studies on Weimar culture have addressed the use of electric currents for patients with designations of “hysteria” or mental illness, often in relationship to other Weimar images, I have not come across any scholarship that looks at this image’s inclusion in *Foto-Auge*. Brigid Doherty discusses this topic and George Grosz’s “Monteur” image. Brigid Doherty, “See: ‘We Are All Neurasthenics!’ or, The Trauma of Dada Montage,” *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1997): 82-132.

photographic elements, including a mechanized heart. Small fragments adorn the subject’s arms, and the image in the background, which appears to be a window, came from sections of two postcards. The work is actually a hybrid portrait: the figure’s dress recalls the blue suit that Heartfield often wore, while the head is Grosz’s. His head, in profile, grimaces, while his slit for an eye appears to look at the viewer. Extreme foreshortening creates a tiny, cramped space reminiscent of a jail cell. The figure’s tubular forms and rigid stance suggest a machine-ification of the body, creating an association with the electrified one on the page beside it.¹⁷⁶

These images explore the infliction of bodily and psychic trauma on the individual as well as the role of photographic technologies in presenting and mimicking that trauma. In the late 1800’s, decades prior to the association of electric shock treatments with curing ailing World War I soldiers and veterans, Sigmund Freud had advocated for electric shock use in treating hystericis. In the same way that diathermy fixes the body in a state of motionlessness, the camera apparatus “freezes” the figure, preserving it in a permanent state of stillness. Remarkably, the diathermy image bears a resemblance to several of Roh and Moholy-Nagy’s negative prints (see Figures 37-38) that distort and depersonalize physical features through the application of dark, geometric shadows onto the body. Many of Roh’s female nude photographs also crop the body from the neck to below the knees, obscuring the face, as seen in Under Water (see Figure 40), in which limbs and body parts float on indiscriminate backgrounds.

The diathermy image was not merely a medical illustration and accompaniment to Grosz’s depiction of Heartfield, but it was also aimed to show the relationship between the

¹⁷⁶ Grosz’s work is not aligned flush with the diathermy photograph but slightly below it, allowing the monteur’s gaze to create a diagonal line down the woman’s body. While this may be a playful joke on the part of the designer, it also strengthens the graphic association between the images.
body’s mechanization and the “shock effects” of montage, further proving Roh’s crucial role in Foto-Auge’s image selection and themes. Their narrative association, heightened by the figure’s gaze across the spread and toward the medical body, activates both images in a dynamic page layout. Max Ernst’s *The Preparation of Bone Glue* (Figure 76) 1921, a collage that takes an engraving depicting diathermy as its base, resembles the photograph in *Foto-Auge*, pointing to the significance of collage to the image binary that structured the layout of *Foto-Auge*. *Bone Glue* had circulated on the cover of the journal *Dada au grand air* in the summer of 1921, published by members of the Zurich and Cologne Dada groups. Dada collage’s presence in the journal was also demonstrated in Grosz’s collage (see Figure 4) and a work by Höch (see Figure 11), both published in *Foto-Auge*. The montage aesthetic that alters human perception in a “reshuffling of the orders of the real”, to use Patrizia McBride’s description of Roh’s idea of montage, is elicited by both the process of diathermy and the arrangement of painted and photographic surfaces, converging into the disorienting effect of humanoid and machine components in one figure.

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178 Spies first identified the resemblance between Ernst’s collage and the photograph in *Foto-Auge*, but did not discuss their relationship. Spies, *Max Ernst Collages*, 88.

179 Ibid. In fact, *Bone Glue* was Ernst’s first collage made entirely from found images, and has been discussed as a “manifesto of collage.”


181 See Introduction for a more detailed discussion of McBride and the montage aesthetic in *Foto-Auge*. 
Max Ernst’s painted collages, three of which appear in *Foto-Auge*, use montage to portray dehumanized cyborg bodies, and bear a strong connection to Surrealism (Figures 2, 77). As Breton would retroactively say, the painted collages’ 1921 genesis, along with the work of Man Ray, affirm that the genre had already been in evidence since then.\(^{182}\) Breton had acquired one of the works, *Song of the Flesh, Shitting Dog*, for his collection when the work was exhibited in the 1920s.\(^{183}\) Together with *Massacre of the Innocents* (see Figure 2), these works avow the fantastic world posited by Ernst and its cyborg-like subjects. In *Massacre of the Innocents*, alien-like, silhouetted bodies struggle to escape from a crumbling or chaotic urban landscape made up of aerial fragments of the city of Soisson.\(^{184}\) In a reading of *Foto-Auge* as a harbinger of the failed Weimar experiment, Jennings has interpreted *Massacre* as an image of the apocalypse.\(^{185}\) Another work by Ernst in *Foto-Auge*, *Puberty Approaches* (Figure 77) 1921, shows a nude female body at the center of the page, yet she is missing a head and a bloody portion of a limb appears to hang from her arm. Rather than adding to the image through collage, Ernst’s process of obfuscation of pictorial elements by overpainting emphasizes the gradual removal of reality in the process of making these works. Reality begins to “lose its definition” and its hold on the viewer.\(^{186}\)

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\(^{183}\) This occurred perhaps at Ernst’s first solo exhibition, arranged by Trista Tzara and André Breton, in spring 1921 at Paris’ Au Sans Pareil gallery. Ibid, 63-78.

\(^{184}\) Kavky has noted that Ernst spent time in Soisson in World War I. Kavky, “Max Ernst’s Post-World War I Studies in Hysteria,” 46.


\(^{186}\) For English translations of Ernst’s works’ inscriptions and discussions of them, see: Gee, “The Critical Roots of Cinematic Magic Realism,” 90-1.
Ernst’s nightmarish collages reveal the psychological implications of modern life. Roh included other works in the book to illustrate the deployment of photographs as “weapons,” a usage that comes from Heartfield and DDUA’s practice of montage as visual assault, through violence to the body. A well-known montage by Heartfield that appeared in the leftist magazine AIZ in February 1930 illustrates the perceptual obliteration that results from exposure to mainstream Socialist and Social Democratic newspapers. In Wer Bürgerblätter liest wird blind und taub [Whoever Reads Bourgeois Papers Becomes Blind and Deaf!] (Figure 78), Heartfield compares the act of mindlessly perusing newspapers, a hallmark of modern urban life, to thoughtless allegiance to a conservative nation-state. The figure’s head is smothered in newspapers and his body harnessed in a representation of sensory deprivation – a warning, as Sabine Kriebel says, “to tempt political blindness.”

Various images in Foto-Auge similarly allude to this blunting of perceptual faculties. A work by a photographer known as S. Friedland, The For-Sale Press (Figure 79), uses the language of montage and double exposure to associate blindness with excessive consumption of

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188 Ibid, 64.

189 Ibid.
printed media. In the image, nine overlapping newspaper pages are superimposed over a young girl’s face that represents the naïve citizen. Very little of her facial features are visible, and she is reduced to dark contours that mark her mouth, cheeks and nose, eyes and hairline. Her eyes are represented as dark, oval sockets, conveying the impression of blindness. The barrage of titles and jumble of information resulting in blindness recalls Kracauer’s discussion of photographs and film capacity to put a “mirage” over the populace as well as Heartfield’s straightjacketing of the recklessly loyal citizen-reader.

Even with little such intervention from the photographer, Foto-Auge depicted the diseased or injured body. The book’s second-to-last image spread (Figure 80) uses documentary photography from government archives to depict physical violence. The close-up view at left, taken from the Stuttgart police archive puts the focus on the victim and the event that occurred prior to the photograph being taken, and makes a connection to crime photography, which was also an interest of the Surrealists. On the other side of the spread, an overhead view of a fallen horse recalls the New Vision style despite that it was probably taken during WWI, before the inception of New Vision. Corporeal violence links the two photographs. The image on the left, a much more graphic and straightforward illustration, according to the caption, was taken in times of supposed peace in Stuttgart and it thus brings bodily destruction into the viewer’s present, allowing for the contemplation of current events.

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190 The English title appears in the book as The Press, not as the direct German translation, The For-Sale Press, the title that highlights the commodification of the news. Roh and Tschichold, Foto-Auge, 62.

191 Gee identifies the crime images as further evidence for the connection between Foto-Auge and Surrealism. Among other themes (many of which are outlined in this essay), she also mentions meteorological photography. Gee, “The Critical Roots of Cinematic Magic Realism,” 85.
As “witnesses” to events – a war or a murder – the works are distinguished from the book’s other photographs. Yet, they are carefully defined as two different types of photographs: a “photograph as document,” which might be associated with local newspaper reportage, and a “war photo” from a national archive. That the Stuttgart police photograph was taken in “peaceful times” belies its visual power. In comparison, the image to the right, while not benign, does not depict a bloody human body, recalls a year-long international, bloody conflict. This type of irony, in which the viewer’s expectations based on the captions are reversed in the visual evidence, speaks of Roh’s fascination with contradiction and recalls Heartfield’s visual and verbal strategies.

MONTAGE AND CINEMA

Roh’s treatment of montage as a spatiotemporal organizing principle, and his thinking across multiple forms of media, positions him alongside some of the most prominent theorists of his time. His collaborator Tschichold, in discussing how cinematic elements can be seen on the page, writes that lines and other graphic elements, text, images, and blank space, orchestrate a composition from multiple fragments. In “Mechanism and Expression,” Roh defines photomontage as an “object-fantasticality in which from simple fragments of reality a more complex unit is piled up.” His description could apply to individual works or to Foto-Auge as a whole, since it is a multivariate image assemblage that can be read according to a cinematic montage. Roh emphasizes the three-dimensional quality of photomontage, which, he notes, is


produced by cutting, pasting and mounting.\textsuperscript{194} He historicizes montage by stating its origins in Futurism and Dada and distinguishing it from Cubism, a movement that simply presented objects within a fragmented, distorted world. Montage, in comparison, is made up of “graftings of reality,” which, he argues, bring the work into the viewer’s own physical realm and induce perceptual experience.\textsuperscript{195}

Several scholars with whom Roh had contact have addressed the mutability between mediums in this period, particularly between books, montage, and cinema.\textsuperscript{196} Johannes Molzahn’s concept of \textit{buchkinema} [book-cinema] argues that film’s simultaneity and immediacy as a “visual-kinetic-pictorial succession on the screen” are also represented in the modern book format.\textsuperscript{197} His 1928 article, “Nicht mehr sehen! Lesen!” [“Stop Reading! Look!”], published in \textit{Das Kunstblatt}, describes a future in which seeing supplants other forms of perception and communication. Molzahn’s article depicts vertically-arranged two-page spreads from his book, \textit{Max Bauten}, as visual evidence for book-cinema. Both Moholy-Nagy and Roh reiterate Molzahn’s idea by declaring in their texts for \textit{Foto-Auge} and \textit{PPF}, that in the future, the inability to use a camera will be deemed a kind of illiteracy.\textsuperscript{198}

\textit{Foto-Auge}’s narrative sequence takes up Molzahn’s concept of book-cinema by defining its viewer’s motion as a tactile, back-and-forth sensation. With no structural elements to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[194] Many practitioners, such as Höch and Moholy-Nagy, had their montages photographed and exhibited those reproductions. Roh and Tschichold, \textit{Foto-Auge}, 5-6.
\item[195] Ibid.
\item[196] See chapter one for a discussion of the interest in hybrid media in this period.
\item[198] Roh, “Mechanism and Expression,” 14; Moholy-Nagy, \textit{PPF}.
\end{footnotes}
divide the book into chapters, the reader must rely on minimal captions and information from the introductory text to give shape to the book. To identify images based on format or theme, for example typo-photo, the reader must sift through seventy-six images and invent them herself.

Current scholars have addressed the flux of images and sounds that characterized early-twentieth-century life, described as an “age of distraction,” in relationship to hybrid visual technologies. Quentin Bajac identifies montage as the conceptual origin of many of the visual tools of this era, including collage, superimposition, and fragmentary views, drawing a connection between montage’s appearance on the page and in cinema with the distracted condition. The diversification of montage forms reflects its popularity as a practice. The appearance of these forms in printed media affirms the connection between the pages of the book and cinema.

The book’s film references and cinematic arrangement, through which it actively produces perception, manage this sense of overstimulation that threatens to overwhelm viewers. In this regard, films such as Dziga Vertov’s *Chelovek s kinoapparatom* [Man with a Movie Camera] (1929) and Walter Ruttmann’s *Berlin, Symphonie der Grosstadt* [Berlin, Symphony of a Metropolis] (1927), among others, which used visual technologies to give viewers a real-time sensation of modern life, provide additional context to *Foto-Auge*. Known as “city symphonies,” these films use montage, rapid succession of non-sequential images and limited

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201 Other examples of the city symphony include Alberto Cavalcanti’s *Nothing but Time* [Rien que les heures] (1926) and Paul Strand’s *Manhatta* (1921). Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927), a narrative film, engages with this topic through futuristic, utopian visions of the city.
plots to engulf viewers in the city’s perceptual dimensions. In fact, Vertov’s concept of the *kino-eye* [cinema-eye] was the likely impetus for *Foto-Auge*’s title. First used in 1919, the term was employed by Vertov throughout the 1920s and crystalized as a concept in *Chelovek s kinoapparatom*. Roh included stills from the film for *Foto-Auge* (Figure 81). Vertov describes *kino-eye* as a tool for enhanced perception, stating that the camera organizes the world in a more perfect way: “The Cine-Eye is the art of organizing the necessary movements of objects in space and time into a rhythmic artistic whole.”202 His idea of the arrangement of discrete spatiotemporal elements into a coherent whole recalls Moholy-Nagy’s description of *Dynamic of the Metropolis* in *PPF*, as well as Tschichold’s discussion of the interaction between graphic elements on a page that produces something beyond the book space.

*Foto-Auge* highlights the centrality of vision through its cover image (Figure 1), Lissitzky’s *Constructor*, a work that conflates the artist’s tools with human ocular equipment. As suggested by Vertov, Moholy-Nagy, and Tschichold, the eye was frequently substituted for the camera itself.203 The eye occupies the center of this image, suggesting its function as a means of organization for all the various elements – text, graphics, color and value. Significantly, the first shot in *Chelovek s kinoapparatom* also demonstrates the primacy of vision, conflating the photographer with the camera. The beginning of the film lingers on a head-on shot of a movie camera. The close-up cuts off the tripod legs to show the head of the camera, placing the lens


dead center, similar to Lissitzky’s composition. Seconds later, a miniscule photographer gradually appears as if to stand on top of the camera, preparing his own device and symbolizing how film technology aids vision. In the film, viewers are consistently reminded of eye and lens’ complementarity, made aware of their own watching, and of the constructive “watching” of the filmmaker on the other end. Images of lenses and eyes recur in short blips.

*Foto-Auge* is filled with images in which the eye is central, including Henri’s *Self-Portrait* (see Figure 71), portraits by Brett Weston (see Figure 3) and Grete Vester, a montage by Höch and a close-up of a hippopotamus by Benesch-Müller (see Figure 11). A Max Burchartz portrait that appears in *Foto-Auge, Lotte (Auge)* [Lotte (Eye)], emphasizes the eye’s importance in its very title. Another image in *Foto-Auge*, a 1922 cover image of the photography magazine *Zivot*, shows an isolated camera lens, while the cover for *Fifo*’s catalogue also centralizes the camera lens.  

*Foto-Auge*’s emphasis on images of eyes and lenses in the context of a photography book suggests a different kind of equivalence between photography and film, two technologies that aid human vision. Vertov’s complex of stills, which is published as *Foto-Auge*’s final image binary (figure 81), embodies the period’s hybridization of media practices. In this work, photographs isolated from the film create a montage, thereby rearranging Roh’s “graftings of reality.” While the montage demonstrates the variety of shots available to the photographer or filmmaker, from close-up to aerial view, the bottom still animates the entire composition through its

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204 See Frizot for more examples of the frequency, centrality and preeminence of the eye in Weimar photography. Specifically, Frizot discusses in more detail Burchartz’s *Lotte [Eye]* and its frontal position and enlargement at the entrance to *Fifo*. Ibid, 4-5.

205 Roh, “Mechanism and Expression,” 18.
depiction of urban sights and sounds. As a result, the montage demands an active vision, a hybrid of photography’s stasis and cinema’s dynamism.

While the images’ format in Foto-Auge recalls the experience of Vertov’s film and champions a theory of hybrid media practices, they also demonstrate these format’s subversion of rational vision. Endless reproduction as a condition of both the photographic process and of modern life is cemented this final spread, which placed Vertov’s montage beside an advertisement by Max Burchartz. The top still depicts a grimacing woman in bed, suggesting a kind of blindness, while the image on the bottom of a large boulevard reminds the viewer that, in Foto-Auge and in Chelovek s kinoapparatom, this is a modern, urban experience. As the organizing means for the film and the symbolic representation of the camera, the cinematic eye also poses a threat to the naked eye. The urban view establishes the conditions of modern life, suggesting that this frenzy is a recurring process, as it envelops the montage into the city. Similarly, the wheels in Burchartz’s image appear to be infinite. Their diagonal arrangement and the use of perspective make it seem as if they will roll right off the page, bringing a sense of temporality to the image binary.

Like the sense of movement in Foto-Auge’s concluding spread, the concluding section of PPF, entitled Dynamic of the Metropolis, also relies on heightened motion, again showing their relatedness. As Moholy-Nagy writes, this film-on-a-page represents a “dynamic of the optical … some heightened to the point of brutality.” He identified it as a “sketch for a film”

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206 Its two-page layout with competing designs on left and right pages provides a similar experience to films from the era including Abel Glance’s 1927 film, Napoléon, which famously used a simultaneous projection of three film reels on one screen in its finale, a reference that Moholy-Nagy makes, in addition to Berlin, Symphony of a Metropolis Moholy-Nagy, Introduction to “Dynamic of the Metropolis,” PPF, 123.
and “typo-photo” – an integration of image and text (see Figure 73). Dynamic uses visual cues to overtly enter the viewer’s time and space, becoming a hybrid photographic medium. Bold lines, arrows and repetitions of text, structure the reader’s vision amid an otherwise frenzied arrangement in which different visual elements compete for the viewer’s attention. Vertical lines recall the film-strip, and words like TEMP-O and FORTISSIMO-o-O suggest rhythm and sound. A black box with the text “Screen black for 5 seconds” also prompts the viewer to consider film’s intermittent scene presentation. The layout liberates the reader from a standard forward progression, providing an experience that switches between left and right, forward and back.

In Dynamic, the text on the final page instructs: “The whole thing to be read through again quickly.” The suggestion of repetition and speed recalls the circular, continuous motion of the film reel. Printed sideways and to the left of text designating the film’s end, this phrase could perhaps function in perpetuity; each time the viewer reaches the final page, he or she is instructed to go back to the beginning in an eternal return or continuous loop. It is also unclear whether this text refers to just Dynamic or the book as a whole, an ambiguity that allows for a treatment of the entire tome as a part of the film – heightening the sense of mechanization in the experience of modern urban life – the “perceptual estrangement of mechanical reproduction” that cannot be escaped.

A montage in Foto-Auge simulates the experience of the frenzy of public life, in which the visual experience of walls plastered with advertisements, rows of shop windows and

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208 Ibid, 123.

209 Ibid, 137.

210 Stetler, “László Moholy-Nagy’s Painting, Photography Film,” 105.
imposing skyscrapers collides with aural and kinetic stimulants.\textsuperscript{211} For example, Grosz and Heartfield’s \textit{Dada-merica} [Dada-merika], pictured next to \textit{Doll’s Head} [Puppenkopf] by Burchartz (see Figure 4), suggest artificiality and the shock experience.\textsuperscript{212} The photomontage includes photographic and textual bits from newspapers, magazines and photographs assembled in a chaotic, abstract composition on a white background. A tape measure and other numbers suggest the carefully planned dimensions of urban life and architecture. Small circular photographs resemble pocket change - a grab-bag of urban fragments. An image of a man screaming and an exploding pressure gauge also contribute to the work’s violent sights and sounds, as viewers can picture their vibrations and hear their cries.

In a 1917 poem, Grosz describes the metropolis’ shock sensations:

\begin{quote}
I am like a child in a thousand amusement parks  
And in narrow bands, film/Twists round red and yellow,  
And tables change color and form/And wander off walking—  
Among them spins without stopping  
My table is an oval slab of marble,  
Circles become eggs--  
And notes like shrapnel throw little holes into my brain  
\hspace{\textwidth}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Waiter!! A glass of seltzer please—  
I am a machine whose pressure gauge has gone to pieces!  
And all the cylinders run in a circle—  
See: \textit{we are all neurasthenics}\textsuperscript{213}
\end{quote}

While the poem describes a soldier who has returned to Berlin after the war and thus alludes to bodily and psychological harm, the city’s sensations only compound this trauma. A man is

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{211} See Walter Benjamin’s discussion of the “shock experience,” footnote 1, and Doherty, “See,” 117.

\textsuperscript{212} “Dada montage aimed to be mimetic of traumatic shock in such a way that the materialization of shock experiences would be effected in the bodies of both the maker and the beholder of the dada object.” Doherty, “See,” 128. See also Note 1.

\textsuperscript{213} For the original German, see Doherty, “See,” 93-4.
\end{footnotes}
transformed into a child, aligning with Burchartz’s image of the sleeping doll that faces Grosz’s *Dada-Merika* in *Foto-Auge*. Its closed eyes recall the grimacing woman in Vertov’s film stills and the blinded girl in Friedland’s *The For-Sale Press* (Figure 79). Objects around Grosz’s character in the poem change shape and begin to move while he turns into a machine – an exploded pressure gauge. The poem’s last line links the act of vision with neurasthenia, described at the time as a form of mental illness. By asserting that, “We are all neurasthenics!,” Grosz establishes that the state of disorder that characterizes the city, a condition that affects all urban citizens, is akin to neurological dysfunction.214

Such conditions described the effects of the urban carnival, whose unceasing activity is reflected in *Foto-Auge*’s beginning and end, and their resemblance to the narrative frenzy in *Chelovek s kinoapparatom*. Grosz’s phrase, “And all the cylinders run in a circle,” describes the wheels’ repetitive and circular motion that one sees in Burchartz’s advertisement. Further, the progressive sense of ocular agitation in Vertov’s film, seen in images of eyes opening and closing (Figure 82), is present in the book. *Foto-Auge*’s cover depicts El Lissitzky’s self portrait with his eye dead center, and Vertov’s film begins with a central image of a camera lens. *Foto-Auge*’s final image depicts the last shot from *Chelovek s kinoapparatom*, a scene that shows the eye conflated with the lens. In a symbolic gesture in both book and movie, human vision appears to capitulate to technology. This bookending of *Foto-Auge*, which begins and closes with an apparatus of vision, demonstrates the heightened effects such technological tools added to human capabilities, while engulfing the viewer in the distraction of the city. Throughout the film, the eye is not always open, but flutters in agitation; it struggles to keep the film’s pace. By the end,

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214 Doherty writes that the poem was probably composed in mid-1917 after Grosz himself returned to Berlin from a stay at a mental hospital. Grosz has described his condition as “shattered nerves.” Grosz quoted in Doherty, “See,” 93.
the eye is foreclosed upon by the lens technology. *Foto-Auge*’s final image (see Figure 81) similarly suggests this struggle by showing several characterizations of vision – an eye that is lucid, with a view below that is made possible by the camera; at the top lies a human in bed, eyes covered and grimacing.

Franz Roh’s engagement in the dynamic relationship between human and technology, which posits the eye at its center, is confirmed by an image binary he published in his later book, *Aenne Biermann: 60 fotos*, which includes side-by-side images of an open eye and closed eye (Figure 83). As in *Foto-Auge*, in this pair vision is represented by the ability to see as well as by the lack of sight. *Under Water*, the single work by Roh that appears in *Foto-Auge*, also bridges photographic and filmic mediums and further demonstrates the hybridity of these forms. It acts as a template for what I suggest is the book’s montage effect. The themes that I have elicited from *Foto-Auge*, which take shape according to binary relationships over the course of the book, show that the experience of reading a book is a complex interaction in space and time. To comment upon the context of media saturation, Roh transformed *Foto-Auge* into a hybrid media object, in the process demonstrating the immense, sometimes crippling, power of images to reveal or distort what viewers see.
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Fig. 1 cover image: El Lissitsky, *Constructor (Self-Portait)* in Franz Roh and Jan Tschichold, *foto-auge: 76 fotos der zeit / Oeil et photo: 76 photographies de notre temps / Photo-Eye: 76 photos of the period* (1929) 11 5/8” x 8 1/16”

Joyce F. Menschel Photography Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Photo: Irini Zervas
Fig. 2. Max Ernst, top: *Song of the Flesh, Shitting Dog*
bottom: Max Ernst, *Massacre of the Innocents*
painting and collage
in *Foto-Auge* (1929), plates 32-33
Fig. 4. Left: Max Burchartz, *Doll’s Head*. Right: George Grosz, *Dada-Merika*. in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 7-8.
Fig. 5. Left: Rudolf Kramer, *Größe Flasche* [Large Bottle]. Right: Walter Finsler, *Stoff* [Fabric]. in *Film und Foto* exhibition catalogue (1929), p. 26-27
Fig. 7. Left: Piet Zwart, Werbeblatt [Promotional Sheet].
Right: Jan Tschichold, Filmlakat [Movie Poster]
in *Film und Foto* exhibition catalogue (1929), p. 38-39
Fig. 8. Hans Finsler, Left: *Woven Material*. Right: *Incandescent Lamp.* in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 13-14
Fig. 9. Man Ray. Both: *Photogram.*
in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 28-29
Fig. 10. Left: Hannah Höch, *die Kokette* [The Coquette]. Right: Man Ray, *Fotogramm* [Photogram].
in *Film und Foto* exhibition catalogue (1929), p. 30-31
Fig. 11. Left: Hannah Höch, *From Above*. Right: Benesch-Müller, *Bathing Beach*. in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 60-61
Fig. 13. Cover, László Moholy-Nagy, *Malerei Fotografie Film* (1927)
Joyce F. Menschel Photography Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fig. 14. László Moholy-Nagy. Left: Balkons [Balcony]. Right: Im Sand [In the Sand]. in Painting Photography Film (1967), pl. 61
Fig. 15. Left: Image from Sportspiegel, *English aeroplane squadron*. Right: Image from Zeitbilder, *Repair work on the largest clock in the world (Jersey City, U.S.A.)* in Painting Photography Film (1967), pl. 57
Fig. 16. Left: Hannah Höch, ‘The multi-millionaire’. Right: Paul Citroen/Bauhaus: ‘The City’. In *Painting Photography Film* (1967), pl. 106-107
Fig. 17. László Moholy-Nagy, Left: *Circus and Variety Poster*. Right: *Propaganda Poster*. in *Painting Photography Film* (1967), pl. 108-109
Fig. 18. Left: Vordemberge Gildewart, *Composition*. Right: Jan Tschichold, *Cinema poster (original in dark brown and grey)* in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 24-25
Fig. 21. Gross, from Zeitbilder, Zeppelin III flying over the ocean.
in Painting Photography Film (1967), pl. 48-49
Fig. 22. Bottom left: Alex Strasser. Top right: Carl Hubacher. Others: unidentified.
Fig. 23. Top left: Sasha Stone. Others: unidentified.  
Fig. 24. Albert Renger Patzsch, *Heterotrichum macrodum.*
in *Die Welt ist Schön* (Kurt Wolff Verlag A. G. München, 1928), pl. 2
Prints and Photographs Collection, The New York Public Library
Fig. 25. Albert Renger Patzsch, *Kauper, von unten gesehen. Hochofenwerk. Herrenwyk.* (Smokestacks seen from below, Blast Furnace Plant, Herrenwyk).
in *Die Welt ist Schön* (Kurt Wolff Verlag A. G. München, 1928), pl. 92
Prints and Photographs Collection, The New York Public Library
Fig. 26. George Grosz, “Daum” Marries her Pedantic Automaton “George” in May 1920, John Heartfield is very glad of it (Meta-mech. Constr. After Prof. R. Hausmann) (1920)

Image source: Wikimedia commons

Fig. 27. Top: Wassily Kandinsky, *Reiter*. Bottom: Carlo Carrà, *Reiter*. in Franz Roh, *Post-Expressionism* (1925)
Figure 29. Georg Schrimpf, Top: Wilde Pferde [Wild Horses]. Bottom: Schlafendes Mädchen [Sleeping Girl].
in Franz Roh, Post-Expressionism (1925)
Fig. 30. Giorgio de Chirico, Left: Selbstbildnis [Self-Portrait]. Right: Römische Landschaft [Roman Landscape]. in Franz Roh, Post-Expressionism (1925)
Fig. 31. Franz Roh, *Untitled* (1922-1928)
gelatin silver print
6 7/16” x 8 13/16”
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Image source: Metropolitan Museum of Art Collections,
http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/285441
Fig. 32. Franz Roh, *Lightbulb* (Photogram) (1928-33)
gelatin silver print
7 3/16” x 9 7/16”
The Museum of Modern Art
Image source: “Object:Photo,” Museum of Modern Art,
https://www.moma.org/interactives/objectphoto/objects/83887.html#recto

Fig. 33. Franz Roh, [Photogram; Knife, Fork, Spoon, and Keys] (1920s)
gelatin silver print
7” x 9 7/16”
The Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection
Image source: http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/265290
Fig. 34. Cover, László Moholy-Nagy, Fotogramm.
in László Moholy-Nagy and Franz Roh, Moholy Nagy: 60 Fotos, Fototek 1 (1930)
Joyce F. Menschel Photography Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fig. 35. László Moholy-Nagy. Left caption: *Positive*. Right caption: *Negative. Inversion and enhancement of the former picture.*
in *Moholy-Nagy: 60 Fotos* (1930), pl. 11-12
Fig. 36. László Moholy-Nagy, Left: Untitled. Right: Fotogramm.
in Moholy Nagy: 60 Fotos (1930), pl. 41-42
Fig. 37. Franz Roh, *Untitled* (c. 1920s-33) in *formes nues* (1935), pl. 73.
Fig. 38. László Moholy-Nagy, *White Nude* (c. 1932) in *formes nues* (1935), pl. 59
Fig. 39. Franz Roh, *Untitled* (c. 1920s-30s) in Franz Roh, *Retrospektive Fotografie* (Düsseldorf: Edition Marzona, 1981), pl. 73
Fig. 40. Franz Roh, *Under Water*. Negative date: 1928-9. Print date: 1929
Nine gelatin silver prints, paper and pencil
Image: 4 13/16” x 1 ½”
The Thomas Walther Collection, Museum of Modern Art
Image source: “Object:Photo,”
https://www.moma.org/interactives/objectphoto/objects/84056.html
Fig. 41. Aenne Biermann. Left: *Fireworks*. Right: *White poplar* (negative) in Aenne Biermann: 60 Fotos (1930), pl. 49-50
Fig. 42. Franz Roh, *Untitled* (ca. 1930)
Gelatin silver print
5 1/8” x 9 3/8”
Ubu Gallery, New York
Image source: “Franz Roh: Photography and Collage from the 1930s,” Ubu Gallery,
http://www.ubugallery.com/exhibitions/franz-roh-photography-collage/#
Fig. 43. Franz Roh, *Untitled* (1928-1933)
Gelatin silver print
4” x 9 3/16”
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
Fig. 44. Franz Roh, *Untitled* (1922-1928)
Gelatin silver print
6 11/16” x 9 3/16”
Art Gallery New South Wales
Image source: Art Gallery of New South Wales,
Fig. 45. Franz Roh, *Untitled* (c. 1920s-1930s)
Fig. 46. Franz Roh, *Untitled*. (c. 1920s-30s)
in Franz Roh, Retrospektive Fotografie (1981), p. 95
Fig. 47. Franz Roh, *Frau sich Spiegeln* [Woman Mirrored] (1928-1934)
Gelatin silver print
5 5/64” x 7”
Image courtesy of Jörg Maass Kunsthandel, Berlin
Fig. 48. Franz Roh. Title unknown (c. 1920s-30s) in Franz Roh, Retrospektive Fotografie (1981), p. 97
Fig. 49. Franz Roh, *Doppelfoto Frau auf einer Wiese* (1928-1934)
gelatin silver print (image enlargement from a contact negative)
3” x 8 ½”
Image courtesy of Jörg Maass Kunsthandel, Berlin

Fig. 50. Franz Roh, *Doppelfoto Frau sitzend* (1928-1934)
gelatin silver print (image enlargement from a contact negative)
3” x 8 5/8”
Image courtesy of Jörg Maass Kunsthandel, Berlin.
Fig. 51. Franz Roh, *Untitled* (c. 1920s-1930s)
Fig. 52. Franz Roh, [Contact print-strip from two 37 mm negatives: children seen from above] (1927-1933)
Gelatin silver print
Sheet: 2 3/8” x 3 7/16”
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles
Fig. 53. Franz Roh, [Contact print-strip from four Leica negatives: ship and water views from ship] (1927-1933)
Gelatin silver print
1 9/16” x 6 1/8”
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Fig. 54. Franz Roh, [Contact print-strip from two 37 mm positives: street workers seen from above in negative] (1927-1933)
Gelatin silver print
Sheet: 1” x 2 15/16”
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles
Fig. 55. Franz Roh, *Total Panic II* (1937)
Lineblock prints and engravings on paper mounted onto paper
Image: 11 $31/32$” x 9 $61/64$”
The Tate Modern, London
Fig. 56. Franz Roh, *Complaint* (ca. 1930)
Collage
6 ¼” x 5 ¾” (image) 8 x 6 ¾ in. (original mount)
Ubu Gallery, New York
Image source: Ubu Gallery – Franz Roh,
http://www.ubugallery.com/gallery/artists/franz-roh/#
Fig. 57. Max Ernst, *Collage taken from A Week of Kindness. First Visible Poem 4* (1933)
Musée d’Orsay, Paris
Fig. 58. Franz Roh, *Zu lang in Meer geblieben* [Remained in the Sea Too Long] (ca. 1930)
Collage
13 3/8” x 7 ¾” (image) 14 3/4” x 11 3/8” (original mount)
Ubu Gallery, New York
Fig. 59. Left: Albert Renger-Patzsch, *Heterotrichum*. Right: Techno-Photographic Archive (Prof. Dr. Lehmann), *Microphotograph in Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 50-51
Fig. 60. Günther Petschow, *Cornfield* and *Tug Boat on the Elbe.*

_in Foto-Auge_ (1929), pl. 9-10
Fig. 61. Left: Leipzig Central Station: (taken vertically for airways’ map). Right upper: Werbelin near Berlin. Right lower: Aero-Cartographic Institute at Breslau: Massow in upper Silesia. in Foto-Auge (1929), pl. 15-17
Fig. 62. László Moholy-Nagy. Left: *Geometry and Texture of the Landscape*. Right: *Vertical View*. 
in *Moholy-Nagy: 60 Fotos*, pl. 55-56
Joyce F. Menschel Photography Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fig. 64. detail, Paul Schuitema, *Prospectus (photomontage)*. in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 39
Fig. 65. László Moholy-Nagy. Left: *Weird Opening of the Paris Canal.*
Right: *Photographic immediacy of the instant.*
in *Moholy-Nagy: 60 Fotos* (1930), pl. 31-32
Joyce F. Menschel Photography Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fig. 67. Left: Jan Kamman, *Architektur*. Right: Eugène Atget, *Rue de petit Domal*. in *Film und Foto* exhibition catalogue (1929), p. 34-35
Avery Library, Columbia University, New York
Fig. 68. Left: Arvid Gutshow, *Dunes*. Right: Andreas Feininger, *Steam Tug on the Elbe*. in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 3-4
Fig. 70. Left: Maurice Tabard, *Hand and Woman*. Right: E.L.T. Mesens, *Portrait of a Poet* in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 44-45
Fig. 71. Left: Florence Henri, *Portrait of Herself*. Right: El Lissitsky, *Composition*. in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 5-6
Spoken by the landlady.

Oh, ma, the season can’t continue things—
It can’t be that wrong place. It stops this
way—or the moon’s distressed beauty!
And every rose a memory! Here’s the idea
of the Dead by Deliberation: each my husband—
May her's in peace—bring me though,
God save us from today's—this—thi—
thing is right; this, from my dear apparel,
On Wings of Song, it's ended. And this here
is Seme, including the Peart's palaces, and
this was from Auntie Fields, and here's the
Wombchurst and this time was a bit. My son,
Man, was it in his bowling club when they
bet who could hold a glove of beer up to his
head the longest and he won, and that gave
him the Constancy's Reward, it says. And
this here’s Henry Portio’s as Camilla lady,
and shame for the Stevenson from my
wedding; and they’re a young girl, thank God,
I wish it be best! And that’s Wombchurst,
and that's Lorne to Suffer Without
Complaining—they're not coming from just anybody.
And no, that’s a way to it, I can't let my tenants
remove the place.
Fig. 73. László Moholy-Nagy, from Dynamic of the Metropolis, Painting Photography Film (1967) [original: 1925]
Under this picture, we read:

The club “Aryan youth Fatherland” takes as its objective to provide without consideration of political or social differences further physical and intellectual training, supplementing that provided in the schools, for German youth. Our effort is to harden their youth for the future struggle to form a new generation of able men to serve the community.

It is all clear in the picture: intellectual training, preparation for life, encouraging ability. The German people can achieve these goals by standing against it.

And what exactly is the new generation up there doing? We read that too. They are preparing to march on the Potsdam Observatory. To observe. If More-people could see them—those eyes staring into the distances, that general overviewing the battle-line—then surely the More-people would call their earth-humans to the telescope. And he could say, with absolute certainty: “There may be life on earth. But human beings—no, there are no human beings.”

The Harmfulness of Civilian Dress

Erich Linderer, born Ludendorff: “after all, there must be more important things on earth than one shrapnel general. But it may be proper to reflect a little on this one. He’s no longer successful. Why isn’t he successful any longer? Actually all the prerequisites for popularity in Germany seem to be given. The man brought nothing but disaster to his country—but he brought it with pomp and circumstance; he was a general; he had power; and there was the possibility that he would have power again some day; he got fat enough to display that degree of toughness that seems to be required of those who want their picture on the beer-mugs of fame in this country. Nevertheless, it’s not working. I want to let him in on the secret of his unsuccess.

Especially in the spring, a young man’s fancy sometimes turns to the household-help.” He feels attracted to the kitchen maid, or to the nice waitress in her cap, in her bosom in her lissome little dress, or maybe as a nurse, looking decisionally wrapped in surgical white. But the affair does not always run smoothly enough for marriage, passionate declaration, and fulfillment, to take place during working hours. So the suppressed lover requests a rendezvous. The passionately concerned belittled bitches and agents, but already the door is flung open, inner Madame or innkeeper or head physician. In a flash, the/behind is gone. That evening the appetizer “dressed” as for Sunday, freshly washed and in street clothes or evening dress. A heart disappointment takes hold of the lover. Can this be that? The sweet little barmaid?

Fig. 74. From Deutschland Deutschland über alles! (1929), p. 6-7
Fig. 75. Left: *Medical Photo: Diathermy*. Right: George Grosz, *The Monteur Heartfield (1920)* in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 48-49
Fig. 76. Max Ernst, *The Preparation of Bone Glue* [Die Leimbereitung aus Knochen, La preparation de la colle d’os] (1921)
Cut printed engravings on paper
2 ¾” x 4 3/8”
Fig. 77. Left: Archives of the Reich, *Cone and Crater*. Right: Max Ernst, *Photo and Painting*. in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 42-43
Fig. 80. Left: Central Police at Stuttgart: *Murder in Times of Peace (photograph as document)*
Right: Archives of the Reich: *Murder in War (War Photo)*
in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 74-75
Fig. 81. Left: Max Burchartz, *Prospectus (Photomontage, original in black and green)*
Right: Dziga Vertov, *Photomontage of Film* [stills from *Man with the Movie Camera*]
in *Foto-Auge* (1929), pl. 75-76
Fig. 83. Aenne Biermann [untitled].
in *Aenne Biermann: 60 Fotos* (1930), pl. 47-48