

Biennale

Press Release

5 March 2021, Mannheim/Ludwigshafen/Heidelberg (Germany)
Chennai (India)

Walking from a photographic standpoint is the focus of the digital symposium "About Walking" on 25 and 26 March 2021, jointly hosted by the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* and the Chennai Photo Biennale, India. International photographers and researchers will highlight political and social aspects of walking from a transcultural perspective. During the symposium, a live-tour of Chennai and a virtual walk will open up new trajectories of walking, which has gained new attention during the coronavirus pandemic.

"About Walking", online symposium on 25/26 March 2021, from 9.30-13.30 CET (14.00-18.00 IST) each day. Participation via Zoom is free of charge. The symposium will be held in English.

Further information about the **programme** and **participation** at www.biennalefotografie.de.

+++++ The symposium "About Walking" is a cooperation between the Chennai Photo Biennale and the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie*, funded by the Friedrich Stiftung. +++++

Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, walking has taken on a new social relevance. Whereas for some walking takes on mostly positive connotations and can be perceived as a relief in times of drastic mobility restrictions, for others walking became necessary and existential. Such as for migrant workers in India, who can only reach their homes, often hundreds of kilometres away, on foot. These and other aspects and perspectives will be the topics of the international symposium. Like walking, photography is also a means of perceiving our environment (more) consciously. During the 19th century, pedestrians in urban spaces became a central theme for many photographers. The camera as a tool of the flâneur and street photography are inseparably linked to the streets of big cities and their conquest on foot. Today, photography takes on many different forms of individual and artistic appropriation of the Foreign and the Familiar. Beyond that, it also serves as an instrument for activism or is used to draw attention to political movement(s).

With this symposium, the Biennale builds on existing relationships with the Chennai Photo Biennale, which began in 2020 with joint digital live tours and whose curators this year include two former curators of the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie*, Kerstin Meincke and Boaz Levin (www.chennaiphotobiennale.com).

Invited speakers include photographers **Michal Iwanowski**, **Andreas Langfeld**, **Paroma Mukherjee** and **Katja Stuke**, urban planner **Vidya Mohankumar**, environmental activist and founder of Vedutum, **Siddharth Agarwal**, and the visual storytelling agency **Storytrails Chennai**. The Indian artist and curator **Ram Rahman** and **Alexander Hagmann**, founder and editor of 'dieMotive - Zeitschrift zur Kultur der Fotografie', will moderate.

About the speakers

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Polish-born photographer **Michal Iwanowski** (*1977) is based in Cardiff, Wales. Walking is central to both his series 'Go Home, Polish' (2018) and 'Clear of People' (2012-2017). As part of each project, he has walked thousands of kilometres on foot, examining the question of 'home' in the former or tracing the steps of his grandfather in the latter.

Photographer **Andreas Langfeld** (*1984) lives and works in Düsseldorf. For his project 'Samstagnacht' (Saturday Night, 2020-ongoing) he photographs urban spaces that show traces of limitations of normality due to the Covid19-pandemic. The shots, taken at night, clear of people and with flash, seem artificial and just as unreal as the time they document.

Paroma Mukherjee is a photographer, writer and photo editor, at present with the Hindustan Times as Head – National Photography Desk, based in New Delhi. She was previously the Photo Editor at Time Out Delhi, Blouin ArtInfo Monthly Editions and began her career at The Indian Express as a photojournalist in 2005.

Katja Stuke (*1968) lives and works in Düsseldorf/Germany. She is a photographer and artist, curator and exhibition organizer, designer, art book editor and visiting lecturer on photography and photobooks. She often works together with Oliver Sieber. Since 2005, they have worked regularly abroad, including artist residencies in Osaka, Tokyo, Paris, Chicago, Chongqing or Sarajevo. In 2017 they won the LUMA Foundation Book Award at the Rencontres d'Arles.

Vidhya Mohankumar is an architect and urban designer with over 15 years of work experience in India, Ireland and the United States. Her work is focused on creating cities that are people-oriented and centred around transit as part of a sustainable development agenda that she is passionate about. In 2011, Vidhya founded Urban Design Collective (UDC), a collaborative platform for architects, urban designers and planners to create livable cities through participatory planning.

Siddharth Agarwal, founder of Veditum India Foundation, is trained as an aerospace engineer from IIT Kharagpur. However, he currently spends most of his time collecting stories while walking across India - in an attempt to document and bring stories of marginalized people and the environment into the culture at large. In the past 5 years, he has walked over 6000kms across India, mostly along rivers.

Storytrails is an award-winning organisation that attempts to showcase India through her stories. Storytrails is a pioneer in designing highly acclaimed, story-based walking tours, audio tours and local experiences across India. Storytrails is a winner of the 'Creative Entrepreneurship Award' from the British Council, and the 'Travellers' Choice' and has seen glowing reviews in Lonely Planet, Frommer's, Conde Nast, and Nat Geo traveller and many more.

Ram Rahman (*1955) is a photographer, curator, designer, activist, and co-founder of SAHMAT, a Delhi-based collective of artists and scholars dedicated to promoting cultural pluralism and secularism in India. Rahman is known for his street photographs of India and his portraits of artists and intellectuals. His work has been exhibited widely and he has curated numerous award winning exhibitions, such as "The Sahmat Collective: Art and Activism in India since 1989".

Alexander Hagmann (*1981) is the founder and publisher of 'dieMotive – Zeitschrift zur Kultur der Fotografie', as well as producer of the dieMotive podcast and developer of the card game FOTO-

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GRAFENRATEN. In addition, he works as a freelance photographer and designer and publishes short interviews with photographers and artists at regular intervals. Hagmann sees himself as a communicator for photography. He lives and works in Hamburg.

About the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie

Since 2005, the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* takes place every two years in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg. For each edition, an internationally renowned guest curator is invited to develop six thematic exhibitions on a total of around 4,500 square meters in the most important exhibition houses throughout the three cities. A multifaceted analogue and digital educational programme for a large regional and international audience accompanies the exhibitions. In addition, the Biennale has established itself as an international get-together for photography experts. To realize the Biennale, cultural organisers and promoters in the Rhine-Neckar region work closely with artists and partners from all corners of the globe. The Biennale engages the three cities and their cultural institutions in a dialogue and has already become a model in Germany and beyond.

The next edition of the Biennale, curated by Iris Sikking, will take place in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg from 19 March to 22 May 2022.

About the Chennai Photo Biennale

The *Chennai Photo Biennale* is founded and organised by the CPB Foundation and Goethe-Institut Chennai, and is dedicated to promoting the photographic art form across demographics. The CPB Foundation's primary focus area is photography education and discourse that takes place through year-round photo education programs. This activity culminates in a city-wide public-art photography festival at the end of every two years that becomes a platform to showcase and an opportunity to network with international, national and local artists and curators.

The next edition of the *Chennai Photo Biennale* titled "Maps of Disquiet" will take place in December 2021 and will be curated by Arko Datto, Bhooma Padmanabhan, Boaz Levin and Kerstin Meincke.

Further information and current photo material on the symposium are available for download via the press area at www.biennalefotografie.de

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The symposium "About Walking" is a collaboration of



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