

## Context

In spring 2016, The ICP will open its 250 Bowery location and commences its program, aimed to make a series of timely and intelligent propositions about image culture. In so doing, it re-animates the founding ethos of ICP as a physical and intellectual site for open access to new knowledge and a hub for diverse and relevant discussion about the impact of photographic culture on our lives. 250 Bowery and its program of live events, exhibitions and online publishing will provide a public platform for the creative ventures of local and international research cultures, innovative artists, and independent groups and societies that will collectively make an ongoing record of the substantive ideas that shape image-making culture today. 250 Bowery is committed to becoming a cultural space where the exchange of ideas, skills and innovative proposals is at its center.

Each calendar year, 250 Bowery and its team of in-house curators, archivists, and educators, and artists-and curators-in-residence will shape 250 Bowery's program on a broad theme. Programming will be approached in an editorial manner; with the primary technological, philosophical and social issues that shape our image world curated into their appropriate public program form, defined by the parameters of in-depth research (for exhibitions and on-line projects), repeated interrogation (of lecture series, continuing education and group meetings) and the immediacy of responses to the unfolding stories of contemporary image-making that live events, and on-line and social media discussion provide. Each year will concentrate on a board issue affecting the scope of image-making:

### *Privacy (spring – end 2016)*

This program draws together diverse points of view on the philosophical, aesthetic, behavioral, technological and political concept of privacy within the realm of image-making and media cultures. Taking the idea of privacy as a constellation of psychic and material experiences, the topics that will permeate the 250 Bowery program of exhibitions and events include surveillance and sousveillance [hidden and portable surveillance], self-censorship and consequence-free behavior in networked cultures, biometrics, strategies for anonymity, the evolution of social codes of intimacy, the contradictory impulses to share and to conceal, and clandestine imaging systems. The exhibitions will map two important cultural trajectories of privacy in visual culture; the historically rooted idea of 'voyeurism' and the now dominant social phenomena of 'exhibitionism'. The indicative live event program will include a 'Privacy and technology' lecture series curated by the Processing Foundation, 'How to be Anonymous' weekend workshops with Lucas Wrench and Machine Project, events curated by Zach Blas and CV Dazzle and Cypherpunk reading group meetings curated by OR Books.

### *Photography as a prompt for social change (through 2017)*

The idea of 'concerned photography' was the founding idea of the ICP almost fifty years ago. The ICP has mapped the history of documentary photography and photojournalism in its exhibition program, archive and ICP School curricula. By devoting a year of the 250 Bowery program to the idea of the role of images in social change, it allows ICP, with its partners and curator-in-residence, to redefine the issues at stake and the visual strategies that underpin socially engaged photography today. The exhibition and event program will engage broadly; pinpointing individually authored and collective projects that take on, create awareness of, and change the course of the social movements internationally. It will also interrogate recent social, political and ecological events that images played a crucial role in defining. Its two-month displays will highlight image-based activism, and unpack the media strategies of social and political bodies. The program's on-line project will create a vital archive that links the scope of socially engaged photography currently taking place across the globe.

### *Photography as creative industry (through 2018)*

The arrival of the Web 2.0 era marked a radical reshaping of all the creative industries, including commissioned editorial and advertising photography. Established hierarchies have been disrupted, production and dissemination modes have been dramatically altered, and new industry standards requiring new skill sets have been called for with the arrival of new and fully operational imaging and post-production technologies. What it means to have a 'career' in photography in light of pro-am practices and the consumption rate of images online has upended the conventions of photographic commissioning and publishing as-well-as the traditional routes into being a 'professional photographer'. 250 Bowery aims to create a context for the appraisal of photographic industry. The first main exhibition will focus on the 21<sup>st</sup>

century fashion and celebrity image-making, now indelibly intertwined, and along with the live event program consider the realities of this multi billion dollar photographic industry. The second exhibition will focus on the dissemination of photography and the state of editorial photography, including assessing the current scope of magazine publishing, and the impact of ecommerce.

### **This application**

This application is for support of the start-up of ICP's of a cohesive program of on-line contributions to appraising and corraling contemporary image-making culture. The ethos of the project is one where online programming is of equal (and connected) significance as its ambitious program of debates, workshops, beta-testing, publishing, commissions and exhibitions that will be conducted at 250 Bowery and the public engagement of ICP's Research Center. This project seeks to extend the reach and usefulness of ICP; engaging existing users in new and participatory ways and extending its relationships with users who are creating and researching photography on-line. The overarching aim of this project is to create a digital architecture that can be developed and sustained over a number of years in order to deeply assess the scope and diversity of observations and practices that pivot around 250 Bowery's annual programming themes [see above].

This project seeks to be a hub for multiple voices who are creating and researching the scope of image-making. Our aim is to create an Open Source, iterative forum and archive that moves its users from viewers to becoming participants and contributors, both in the project itself and the 250 Bowery program. As a result of this central ambition, there are a number of modalities that we can expect to be implemented in this first/launch phase:

*Data capture*- Data searches operated by the project into the key terms and image categories that underpin a programming theme, creating a key-worded archive of the visual material that constitutes the thematic research area.

*Authored data grouping* – individuals and groups invited to crowd source their reading of the project's theme.

*Algorithmic surveys* – Working with 250 Bowery technology partners, applying their data research methodologies to exploring the 250 Bowery program theme.

*On-line resources* – reading lists, a PDF library developed during the life of a program theme.

*Documentation and summaries* – films, transcripts and summaries/reports from 250 Bowery and its partners' workshops, lectures, debates focused on program theme

*Historical precedents* – ICP research center images and texts that pinpoint the historical precedents for the contemporary behavior of photographic images, creating a context for our current image environment.

*Commissioned writing and interviews* – Commissioned texts and interviews with key figures (drawing widely from technologists, creatives, and thinkers) in the creation and appraisal of the program theme.

*Threaded debates* - Participants propose specific areas to explore through discussion and debate and lead threaded debates.

*Calendar* – A calendar to which all registered users of the site/project can input global events that shape the current program theme, creating an archive of the global scope of the program theme.

*The core team developing and implementing this project*

Charlotte Cotton, Director of Programs, 250 Bowery. Responsible for developing concept, liaising with ICP stakeholders and program partners, and oversight of the project's course once live.

David Reinfurt, O\_R\_G. Responsible for developing concept, design and architecture of project and its long-term development

Warren Nichols, ICP head of IT. Oversight of the data management and archiving of the project and ensuring its compatibility with ICP IT systems.

Project editor [to be appointed in January 2016]. Responsible for establishing and maintaining the iterative life and communication of the project.

*Breakdown of tasks for during the research period afforded through a successful NEH grant application*

- Develop content and architecture plan for first phase of project
- Implement/launch project in May 2015
- Create website architecture and data management system
- Devise content plan for launch version of project
- Devise dissemination plan (to include day-to-day through to final summarization and dissemination)
- Articulate long-term development of project beyond 2016 and the first program theme
- Confirm contributions and commitments from ICP's Research Center, curatorial team, ICP School
- Invite and confirm involvement of project partners
- Plan website launch (within communication and marketing of 250 Bowery opening in spring 2015).

*Methodology [and compatibility of goals with methods]*

NEEDS TO BE WRITTEN – ANY TAKERS??

*Open Source*

DITTO

*Dissemination plan*

This project is conceived of as Open Source and iterative in nature and its methodology will be publicly accessible (and inviting participation from users) from its launch in May 2015. It is yet to be determined whether the project will become the front face of ICP's own website or be a microsite with a fully integrated bank-end system. This will be defined in the research period. Much of the live event programming at 250 Bowery, along with its social media, PR and marketing plan will be strongly linked to

this project, including events harvested from the project's findings and contributions to 250 Bowery committing to summarize and document its live events within the project. The project will provide disseminating elements such as PDF version reading lists, essays and other texts found on the website/microsite and also Mp3 file archives of interviews and 250 Bowery event recordings. Our aim is to generate a summarizing publication each spring about what we learnt, researched and debated in the previous year within this extended community of ICP.

### *Evaluation of start-up*

The ICP is committed to this project being ongoing and its first assessment will take place in fall 2016. The evaluation will consider which of the first phase elements will continue beyond the first program theme and what new approaches will be used in future years. Our success criteria are twofold: the capacity of its participatory and data capture methodologies to create an extensive and unique archive of a critical issue for image-making culture, and the extent to which its users become participants and partners in the future of the project. Fall 2016 is also when the process of compiling the summary publication for the first phase will begin.

### **Environmental survey**

#### *Words Without Pictures*

Words without Pictures was founded by Charlotte Cotton and David Reinfurt in 2007. This open source project took the form of a website (designed by Reinfurt), live discussions and a summary 500-page digital and printed textbook that focused on the emergent issues for photographic practice. It was launched at the start of Cotton's role as head of the photography department at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art as the primary way for LACMA to participate in local and international discourses about photography. The concept was to have a text-based website (a counter-argument to the image-centric appraisal of photography on-line) with a commissioned essay and threaded debates started by three reviewers each month. The constituency for this website was practitioners and educators. Within three months of launch, Wordswithoutpictures.org became a site for very thoughtful perspectives from its readers and a go-to site for photographic educators seeking new writing to use in seminars. David Reinfurt's architecture for the project included archiving each sentence using the most used terms (such as 'contemporary' and 'analog') used by contributors to the site and pictureswithoutwords.org, which visualized the language being used.

#### *Eitherand.org*

Eitherand.org is an open source website designed by Alex Rich and Wolfram Weidner, founded by Charlotte Cotton (then Creative Director of the National Media Museum, UK) in 2012. Either/And was devised as a framework within which to debate and share perspectives, using issues and questions posed by the National Media Museum and the site's editors at Ph: a collective of more than thirty early-career UK researchers working with photography. The project took the form of a series of commissioned essays, interviews, image sequences and films, published on the site to serve as the catalyst for online and live public discussion. Either/And began its first cycle by examining the place of photography in contemporary culture structured around eight key themes, developed by Cotton and Ph to reflect digital humanities research areas and the most current assessment of the present and history of photography.

#### *The Serving Library*

The Serving Library is a cooperatively-built archive that assembles itself by publishing. It consists of a public website, a small physical library space and a publishing program. Each PDF generated by The Serving Library is a "bulletin" containing an article or essay that constitutes part of some overarching

theme or themes, available for anyone to download for free. Contributions to the latest theme are added from time to time over a six month period, and at the end of the season they are collected together into a single document, printed and published in both Europe and the USA, each in an edition of 1,500, as [Bulletins of The Serving Library](#). The PDFs remain available on the website, while a new theme is developed over the next half year. COULD SAY SOMETHING ABOUT REACH/BEHAVIOR OF THE PROJECT? This project that proposes a library for the future was created by David Reinfurt, Stuart Bailey and Angie Kieffer.

NEEDS ANOTHER DAVID REINFURT PROJECT??

Guardian Witness, and Street Photography Now Project

The call to creative action defined by on-line modalities is a key component to our project – serving existing ICP constituents and extending engagement to new users, and creating a way for photographers and thinkers to have an ongoing relationship with the ICP. Guardian Witness (<https://witness.theguardian.com/about>) is a purposeful framework for collective development of user-generated initiatives that offers a more in-depth and participatory role for the newspaper’s readers/followers. Curated by Sophie Howarth, the *Street Photography Now Project* (<https://streetphotographynowproject.wordpress.com>) served as a project that linked the publication of Howarth’s book about this established photographic genre with The Photographers’ Gallery in London (which was constructing its current site in 2010) and created a photography assignment each week for a committed and large group of photographers.