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INSTITUT ROYAL DU PATRIMOINE ARTISTIQUE
Politique scientifique fédérale

KONINKLIJK INSTITUUT VOOR HET KUNSTPATRIMONIUM
Federaal wetenschapsbeleid

Exhibition *The German negatives (1917-1918). Belgium's Artistic Heritage through the Lens of the German Occupiers*

Press conference | 14 June 2017 | 11h
Brussels Park

Press contact: simon.laevers@kikirpa.be or 02 739 68 03



LES CLICHÉS ALLEMANDS
1917  1918
DE DUITSE NEGATIEVEN

Programme

Zuhair Demir, Federal Secretary of State for Science Policy,

Hilde De Clercq, Acting General Manager of the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA)

Olivier Alsteens, Chief Operations Officer of the Nationale Loterij

Brief presentation of the members of the team

Visit to the exhibition

Reception

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Press release

This summer the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA, Brussels) goes public with one of its most impressive collections in an open air exhibition at the Brussels Park: *The German Negatives (1917-1918). Belgium's Artistic Heritage Through the Lens of the German Occupiers*. The exhibition offers a selection of the most beautiful images the German occupier made in 1917 and 1918 in Belgium... An original way to commemorate the First World War.

During the last two years of World War I a group of about 30 German art historians, photographers and architects set out to record the country's most significant monuments with the new medium of photography. They ended up taking more than 10,000 outstanding photos of Belgian churches, beguinages, castles, town houses, memorials, interiors and artworks. Ten years after the end of the war all these original negatives on glass plates were bought by the Belgian State. These so-called 'German negatives' are kept, studied and valorized ever since by the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA) in Brussels.

In the past three years the collection was studied by a team of experts and all negatives were digitized in high resolution. The exhibition offers a selection of the most beautiful and most intriguing photos. Aesthetic and political objectives of the German photographic inventory campaign are held up to the light, as well as the interest of these very high quality photos for the study of Belgium's art and built heritage. Finally a number of photos are accompanied by their current-day equivalent: the photographers of the KIK-IRPA travelled across the country and took a photo from the same angle, a hundred years later.

The exhibition at the Brussels park can be visited free from admission from 15 June until 17 September 2017.

During the summer of 2017 a number of complementary exhibitions and events are organised in Flanders: at the Provincial domain of Raversyde, at STAM – Ghent city museum, at the museum Mayer van den Bergh in Antwerp, at the '14 -'18 Experience centre in Tildonk and in the autumn of 2017 in Hasselt. A similar series of exhibitions and events will take place in Wallonia in the summer of 2018.

The ErfgoedApp by FARO lets you discover the German negatives on a walk through Antwerp, Arlon, Bruges, Brussels, Ghent, Hasselt, Leuven, Liège, Mons, Namur or Wavre. In each of these cities photos were selected and linked to the exact location where they were taken a century ago. Everyone can follow in the footsteps of the German photographers and admire the monuments of these cities 'through the lens of the occupier'.

<http://www.heritageapp.be/>

Visit our blog at <https://picturingbelgium14-18.com/>

Or check on our online tool whether photos were taken in your city of choice. Available in Dutch http://balat.kikirpa.be/tools/14-18/cliches_nl.php or in French <http://balat.kikirpa.be/tools/14-18/indexfr.php>

The KIK-IRPA wishes to thank the National Lottery and its players for their critical support !



In collaboration with



With the support of



An exhibition in four movements

Photographers in the picture

Investigations in Belgium and Germany for the KIK-IRPA project could identify several of the German negatives' principal photographers: art historian, University of Marburg professor and founder of the prestigious *Bildarchiv Foto Marburg* Richard Hamann (1879-1961); Dr Franz Stuedtner (1870-1946) who founded the Institute for Scientific Projection in 1895 aiming to supply photographs for conferences and publications; and Paula Deetjen (1879-1949) who was a doctor's wife but lost her husband in 1915 at Verdun and was official photographer of the Folkwang Museum founded in 1902 in Hagen by her cousin Karl-Ernst Osthaus (1874-1921). Apart from these three, Hanns Holdt (1887-1944) also made several photographs for the collection.

The archives themselves revealed precious little information about the methods and techniques used, focusing on lists with equipment, advertising from photography materials companies and letters detailing difficulties with financing and problems with the transport of men and equipment. The technical instructions the photographers received were also quite limited: they were to prioritise quality over quantity and capture the details of major works of art and buildings. It is mainly the negatives themselves that tell us about the *modus operandi* of their creators: their quality in terms of the light available, cameras and accessories left in the field of view, assistants and instruments in the "lost" zones of the negatives, as well as the gazes of onlookers.

Between art and propaganda

The inventory the occupiers made of Belgium's artistic heritage was first and foremost a science project. The German occupier made good use of its presence in Belgium to collect as much photographs as possible. They were intended to further study Belgium's artistic in Germany, without the need for German researchers to travel. However, the Imperial German General Government (the *Kaiserliche Deutsche Generalgouvernement Belgien*) asked the German art historians, architects and photographers to do their work as much as possible with state propaganda in mind. This way, Germany would try to garner sympathy from the Belgian population and use certain monuments in the country to demonstrate the cultural and historic ties that existed between the occupied and their conquerors, while maintaining the image of 'good' overlords who really appreciated local artistic heritage and wanted to preserve it for the future.

But they also devoted much attention to the quality of their images, enlisting the help of Germany's greatest experts in art photography. In certain images these indeed excelled themselves, in terms of technique as well as aesthetics, as they delved deeper into their object than merely wanting to capture an 'objective' documentary image. Instead, they tried to create atmospheric records that do not always revolve around the building or artwork they focus on, but rather around the decor or the lives that play out around it. This way, their photographs of artworks become art in themselves.

A treasure trove of information

Despite their creators' sometimes quite subjective choices, the German negatives document well-nigh all of Belgium's artistic heritage, providing art historians with a vast treasure trove of information. And while for some time now colour photography has taken over from the black-and-white negatives in the collection of the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, the documentary value of the negatives is all the more poignant. Especially the German negatives whose technical quality, revealed in HD today, and detail have grown in importance for Belgian heritage enthusiasts.

But the German negatives also offer lots of information on other levels: some among them depict everyday scenes and, though they are but few, offer a decided richness because of the detail they show. Preserving life's moments during the Great War for posterity, they allow us to better understand life in Belgium under German occupation: the lives of ordinary people, but also those of soldiers, how people dressed and what uniforms they wore, how they travelled... Despite the subjectivity inherent to any photograph, the images still capture and let us understand the past in a more 'objective' way than we could through the graphic arts (drawings, paintings and engravings), because photographers are after all compelled to record details they have not even noticed at the time they captured their subject. The quality of the German negatives, too, has made the collection an essential source for history enthusiasts and researchers of any discipline.

A century later

Apart from their intrinsic (documentary, and at times aesthetic) value as well as their historic and sociological importance, the German negatives also have a boundless iconographic richness, while at the same time providing inspiration for modern-day heritage management. Over the past century, the monuments and works in the images have after all undergone structural changes, have been restored or modernised, even destroyed and demolished! So the inventory of 1917-1918 really allows us to document and study these heritage evolutions. As especially the latter was one of the objectives of the research project set up by the Belgian Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, some of the monuments and artworks captured in the occupiers' images were photographed again in the here and now, from the original German point of view using the techniques employed in the original negatives to achieve two images that would be as identical as possible. This resulted in poignant confrontations between the original photographs from 1917-1918 and their counterparts one hundred years later.

Photos for publication

All the photos of the exhibition (and the entire fund of 10 000 German negatives) can be downloaded from BALaT, the KIK-IRPA's database. Go to <http://balat.kikirpa.be> > Photo library and fill in the negative number in the search window of the same name.

The photos of the exhibition are also available on our website www.kikirpa.be > Press

Please include the photo credit '© KIK-IRPA, Brussels'

Ci-dessous une sélection des photos les plus frappantes.



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The Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA, Brussels)

The KIK-IRPA is a federal scientific institute responsible for the documentation, study and conservation-restoration of the cultural and artistic heritage of our country.

Art historians, photographers, chemists, archaeologists, engineers and conservator-restorers carry out interdisciplinary research on the materials and techniques used in works of art and cultural artefacts and on the materials and methods used in conservation-restoration.


The KIK-IRPA is a unique resource for scientific, photographic and technical documentation of the cultural heritage of the country.

In 2013, the KIK-IRPA launched BALaT: a user friendly and powerful search engine that allows to simultaneously search several databases on art history and the study and conservation of art works.

You want to perform a search on Rubens? Use BALaT and find photos of paintings by Rubens, or portraits of Rubens by other artists in the photo library of the KIK-IRPA, books on Rubens in the library of the KIK-IRPA, the link to the contribution in the *Dictionnaire des peintres belges*, museums with works by Rubens (repertory of institutions). Since 2016 all photos in BALaT are available in free access (with the exception of a few photos acquired under specific copyright conditions): 700 000 photos are directly available for download in high resolution (300 DPI, A4).

In order to grant everyone access to the rich Belgian heritage, part of our mission of public service, the KIK-IRPA joins the large institutions that set the tone (British Museum in London, Metropolitan Museum in New York, Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, etc.) by making available heritage photos in Open Access.

www.kikirpa.be | balat.kikirpa.be

 Koninklijk Instituut voor het Kunstpatrimonium – KIK (in Dutch)
Institut royal du Patrimoine artistique – IRPA (in French)



18.06 – 24.09.2017 The German negatives 1917-1918. The artistic heritage in West Flanders photographed by the occupiers

In the final two years of the First World War, Belgian cultural heritage was the subject of an exceptional project. A group of around thirty German art historians, photographers and architects traversed occupied Belgium to photograph the principal monuments on Belgian soil. Between the summer of 1917 and the autumn of 1918, they made over 10,000 beautiful shots of Belgian churches, beguinages, castles, mansions, memorials, interiors and works of art. In 1927, the Belgian State managed to purchase the entire collection of photographic glass plates. They are now owned by the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage. In Raversyde Scenic Parc, we display the most striking photographs of heritage in Bruges and the rest of West Flanders, most of which have never been shown to the public before. The topics are: changed cityscape, paintings and paper, sculptures, photography, picturesque bruges, churches, shops, traces of war, everyday life, Bruges, headquarters of the German naval corps, German soldiers in the cityscape, subtle traces of the occupation.

Practical information

- Location

Provinciedomein RAVERSYDE Nieuwpoortsesteenweg 636 8400 Oostende
059 70 22 85 – info@raversyde.be - www.raversyde.be

- Opening hours

ATLANTIKWALL & ANNO

School holidays, weekends and public holidays: **10.30-18u**

Week days: **10.30 – 17u**

Last admission for all museums one hour before closing time

SCENIC PARK

From sunrise to sunset

App

In Bruges you can download the app to take a walk through the city of Bruges from 100 years ago. Start of the walk at the Provincial Information Center Tolhuis Jan Van Eyckplein 2 8000

Communication Service of West Flanders

peter.verheecke@west-vlaanderen.be - 050 40 74 01 - 0496 59 61 07



Ghent, occupied city

Ghent may have been a long way from the front during the First World War, but that doesn't mean the conflict passed the city by. Quite the reverse, in fact. German troops arrived in the city on October 12th 1914, the beginning of an occupation that lasted over four years. Ghent came under military rule, making living conditions extremely harsh and depriving the city of almost all contact with the rest of the country. The people of Ghent faced mass unemployment and an ever more acute shortage of food. Daily life was dominated by constant demands, checks and strict censorship. The saddest milestones were the deportation of 12,000 workers and the execution of 52 citizens.

This summer STAM tells that story with an outdoor photographic exhibition in the gardens in front of the museum.

Photographs, taken by the occupier during the war and belonging to the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK/IRPA) are juxtaposed with textual and visual material from Ghent City Archive. Sometimes the photographs say more than we might think at first glance, but they can also give a distorted picture of the reality of everyday life.

You can browse the German Negatives (KIK/IRPA) and the Ghent War Album (Ghent City Archive) digitally in the entrance hall to STAM during STAM opening hours.

Ghent, occupied city
30.06.2017 till 17.09.2017

STAM - Ghent City Museum
Bijlokesite
Godshuizenlaan 2
B-9000 Gent
info@stamgent.be
T +32 (0)9 267 14 00

Photographic exhibition in the garden in front of STAM
Open to the public, admission free

STA·M
Stadsmuseum Gent

DE ZWARTE DOOS
STADSARCHEOLOGIE EN STADSARCHIEF



provincie
Oost-Vlaanderen



**Loterie
Nationale
Loterij**



The German Negatives (1917–18): Museum Mayer van den Bergh through the Occupier's lens

Museum Mayer van den Bergh is presenting some of these unique photographs in 2017, exactly a hundred years after the Germans began their photographic inventory of Belgian cultural heritage. The focus exhibition, which runs from 20 June to 17 September, tells the compelling story of the German occupier's encounter with the museum during the First World War.

The institution's founder, Henriette Mayer van den Bergh (1838–1920), spent the First World War in the Netherlands and the museum probably remained closed during the first years of the conflict: no one signed the visitor's book in that period, at any rate. Signatures first began to reappear in March 1917 and, in the months that followed, six pages were filled with the names of around eighty German visitors.

Research shows that several of them were members of the *Kunstschutz* ('Art Protection') commission. The objective of the *Kunstschutz* was to catalogue and photograph monuments and works of art in occupied Belgium – locations and items that would have to be removed to safety or protected in situ if they risked coming into the line of fire.

A total of 106 photographic records of eighty-one items in the collection were made at Museum Mayer van den Bergh as part of the *Kunstschutz* initiative. Wars rarely leave a positive legacy, but this focus exhibition offers a selection of some of the finest and most intriguing images that were created at that time. Twelve sculptures and a group of six statues of Calvary angels in the permanent collection are accompanied by photographs that enable visitors to discover the museum through the lens of the German occupier. And the exhibition doesn't end at the museum's doors: a city trail in the Antwerp Museum App guides visitors through the streets of the city to explore several gems from its rich history.

This unique project is an initiative of Museum Mayer van den Bergh in collaboration with the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA) and the historian Dr Dick Wursten. It is supported by the National Lottery.

PRACTICAL

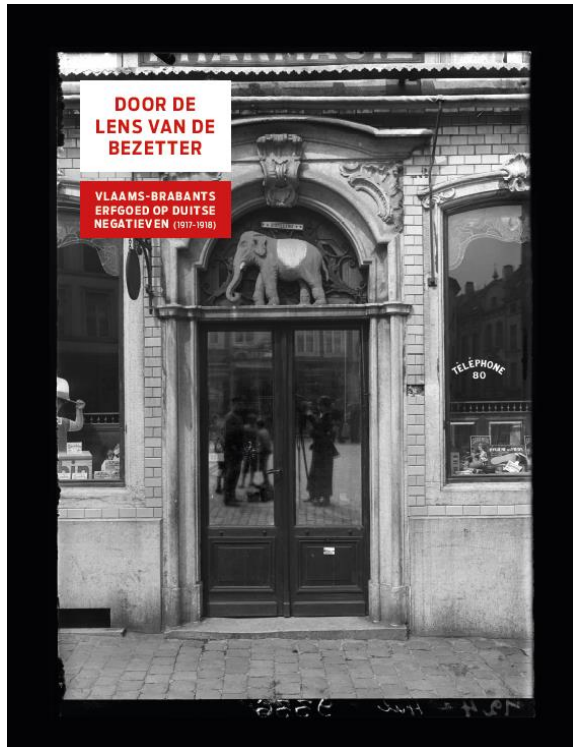
The German Negatives (1917–18): Museum Mayer van den Bergh through the Occupier's Lens
From 20 June to 17 September 2017 – Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Lange Gasthuisstraat 19, 2000 Antwerp | € 8 full price/€ 6 concessions
Lecture (in Dutch) and guided tours: more information: www.museummayervandenbergh.be
Press: Nadia De Vree – nadia.devree@stad.antwerpen.be – gsm +32 475 36 71 96



Through the lens of the occupier. Flemish Brabant's heritage on German negatives

29 June - 11 November 2017

Convent Garden Engelenburcht / Kruineikestraat 5, Tildonk



Exactly 100 years ago, 30 German art historians, photographers, and architects travelled throughout the country as part of an exceptional project. They took more than 10,000 photographs of our heritage: churches, beguinages, castles, works of art, middle class houses, interiors, and memorials. Their negatives – all of them glass plates – are a unique art treasure. A moment in time from the war years. A selection of exceptional photographs from Flemish Brabant can be admired this summer at an open-air exhibition in the convent garden of the Engelenburcht in Tildonk. Combine it with a visit to the Experience Centre '14-'18 for a fascinating look at the war years in Flemish Brabant.

This is an initiative of the Heritage Department of the Province of Flemish Brabant, Toerisme Vlaams-Brabant vzw, and the Royal Institute for Art Heritage, in partnership with Engelenburcht (Ons) and the National Lottery.



Province of Limburg | Press release: Provincial Centre for Cultural Heritage launches unique photo project: a collection of 88 striking heritage images, from glass negative to digital, reflects how heritage determines our identity.

Wednesday 14 June 2017

A collection of 44 images, identities and stories provides an impression of Limburg's architectural heritage during WWI. These unique buildings, located in the 44 Limburg municipalities, will be opened to the public on Open Monument Day 2017.

In addition, every Limburg citizen is challenged to participate in the accompanying photo competition, which will yield 44 contemporary images of the monumental heritage of the Limburg municipalities.

"The project perfectly ties in with the 'Limburg 1914-1918' project. Small Stories in a Great War', in which 44 helmets told an equal number of personal stories from the war", Provincial Executive for Culture, Heritage, and Tourism Igor Philtjens explains. "That project was a great success for the province, the municipalities, the heritage industry, and for the visitors. A success we hope to match with 'WWI in Shards'. It won't be for lack of enthusiasm!"

Old and current photos reflect how heritage determines our identity

German art historians in WWI were all too well aware of the influence of buildings and objects on the development of our identity, as well as on our sense of belonging and being part of a community. The presence of familiar and characteristic elements in our streetscape, even in simple images, is very important. Germans Julius Baum and Paula Deetjen also saw the power of the Limburg culture. In 1917 and 1918, they travelled through the province of Limburg to take photographs of a wide variety of distinctive cultural-historical buildings and art objects. In addition, numerous photographs taken by local photographers before, during and after WWI have also withstood the test of time.

The Provincial Centre for Cultural Heritage (PCCE) and the Limburg municipalities have made a selection of 44 images, carefully captured in glass and film negatives.

On Open Monument Day (10 September 2017) the Limburg municipalities will highlight the fragility of the 44 monumental buildings. In addition, the PCCE will launch the invitation to participate in a photo competition.

With this photo competition, the PCCE wants to encourage everyone to go in search of a contemporary hidden gem in Limburg, a building that influences their living environment and in part also determines their identity. From the collection of photographs, the PCCE will choose 44 current pictures of striking heritage.

Early in 2018, this challenging project will evolve into an impressive exhibition in which old and new are confronted with 88 powerful images, digital or captured in glass.

Practical information

Start project: Activities in 44 Limburg municipalities on Open Monument Day, 10 September 2017 from 13h00 to 18h00

Exhibition: early 2018

Follow the project at www.limburg1914-1918.be

Contact

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Province of Limburg

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