

Introduction

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The appearance of this *Mosaic* issue follows, by a year, the international interdisciplinary conference on The Photograph that was held at The University of Manitoba 11–13 March 2004. Coming out of that extraordinary event, *Mosaic* published a special issue on The Photograph in December, 2004: a large issue, over three hundred pages and in color, of which we are very proud. The present issue also centers on the Photograph, on some of the many questions and possibilities it has opened for *Mosaic* writers and readers around the world. Again, this is an issue we are proud to bring to you.

Moving on now, after the conference and two issues, I am of course heartened by all the activity prompted by our Call some two years ago for submissions on The Photograph. The topic proved to be interdisciplinarily rich, variegated, and, if this issue is any indicator, unsettling—at least of realist and referential conventions. I am thinking, for example, of the many submissions and presentations on trauma and trauma theory that I have read and/or listened to over the past many months, where what is in question, as Samuel Pane suggests in “*Trauma Obscura: Photographic Media in W. G. Sebald’s Austerlitz*,” is one’s response not only to an atrocity photograph, but also to the inherent incapacity of the signifying, (photo)graphic, medium to literally re-present. For Sebald, Pane writes, photographic images “simultaneously constitute and fail to constitute historical evidence,” and for this reason, “the narrator and eponymous character of *Austerlitz* are never satisfactorily informed through photographic viewing. Their incessant and futile re-examination of images thus assumes the form of a [traumatic] repetition compulsion.” Or, for another instance of what I mean by “unsettling,” consider Eloise Knowlton’s “Showings Forth: *Dubliners*, Photography, and the Rejection of Realism,” which locates the power of photography in its *figurality*, where the figural, in Jean-François Lyotard’s sense, cannot be tamed by signification: “Figurality in the photograph makes for an important unsettling of the modern project

of knowing, foregrounding instead the fleeting experience, the present moment of ephemeral apprehension, the phenomenal but not (yet) meaningful event. In short, just what modernism turns to after abandoning the realist project.”

This is another abundant issue of *Mosaic*, too full for an introduction that would allow me to address each of the following essays. I offer it to you as unsettling, thus, in Knowlton’s words, as “singular, heterogeneous, incommensurate.” And I offer many thanks to all, near and far, who participated in *Mosaic*’s initiatives on The Photograph.