

STUDIO FOR PROPOSITIONAL CINEMA
The Camera of Disaster

3 April – 25 September 2022



Studio for Propositional Cinema's exhibition *The Camera of Disaster* responds to photography's present status as a medium on the brink of extinction, proposing techniques to preserve it while reimagining its future. The exhibition is framed by *The Lensgrinders*, a new dystopian narrative work comprising text and photographs, that tells the story of a group of dissidents who attempt to reinvent photography to free it from authoritarian control. Nested within the narrative is "Manual: The Camera of Disaster," a survival kit—loosely structured on William Henry Fox Talbot's 1844 book *The Pencil of Nature*—containing knowledge and tools necessary to detangle the photographic process from the annihilative logic of industrialism and the algorithmisation of desire.

The Camera of Disaster aims to reclaim the means of production in order to imagine a form of image-making that could be preserved within futures where photography is made illegal, or the technology is lost within disaster scenarios such as breakdowns of electricity grids or loss of industrial production capabilities. Beyond a call to preserve photography itself, the work highlights photography within a network of other communicational and expressive forms that are being systematically ceded to corporations and governments that can then, at will, control their use. By insisting on the continued possibilities of what photography could still become, we can attempt to resuscitate it and give it, and the world it depicts, another future.

Comprised of large-scale photographic and textual elements, this installation builds on Studio for Propositional Cinema's practice of exhibition-making in which the exhibition format itself is utilised as a temporal narrative form. *The Camera of Disaster* offers a quasi-cinematic experience that the spectators unravel as they traverse the exhibition, its dialogue, and its images: a dismantled disaster film with a cautiously hopeful ending.

The exhibition is accompanied by a new box catalogue with contributions by David Company, Joanna Demers, Paulina Pobocho, and Jeff Wall. It will be launched at Museum Abteiberg's 40th anniversary celebration on 23 June 2022.

Studio for Propositional Cinema was inaugurated in Düsseldorf, Germany in 2013. Recent exhibitions and exhibition projects include Swallow Project Space, Vilnius, Lithuania (2021), Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples, Italy (2019), Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland (2018), Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover, Germany (2017), Swiss Institute, New York, USA (2017), Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria (2016), Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany (2016), and mumok, Vienna (2015). Their recent collection of writings, *Myths and Manifestos*, was published by Kunstverein München and Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König in 2021.

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