

Concept for the foundation of a German Institute of Photography (DFI) in Düsseldorf

submitted by the

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Abstract

The Deutsches Fotoinstitut (DFI) in Düsseldorf will be a centre of excellence for issues relating to the presentation and communication, research, collection and preservation of analogue, digital and hybrid forms of photographic heritage.

On the one hand, the DFI considers itself a comprehensive archive of photographic culture, bringing its past, present and future together at one site. It secures and collects relevant photographic bequests and estates and processes them in an exemplary manner. In order to record the greatest possible diversity of photography's heritage, the DFI wishes to both take its differing forms of existence into account and to consider photography's most varied fields. The DFI acts as a partner for dialogue and mediator between artists and photographers on the one hand and research and industry on the other.

Furthermore, the DFI is both an advisory and service centre for questions concerning the preservation of photography and a think tank where fundamental research is undertaken. It establishes a comprehensive material collection for art technology research into all photographic media.

The DFI does not stand in competition with existing photography collections and institutions in Germany, but as a long-term partner for them.

The DFI cooperates regionally, nationally and internationally with cultural institutions, photo archives, universities, government agencies, federal research institutions and industry. It interacts with image makers as well as with both amateur and professional associations. The scientific and technological standards that the DFI develops for its internal use can serve as recommendations for photo collecting institutions and organisations in order to engage in constructive exchange.

Due to its open architecture, its on-site educational services and digital formats, the DFI is a lively place that is open both to an interested public of all ages and to experts. With a location in close proximity to the Düsseldorf Ehrenhof, the DFI is integrated into the cultural infrastructure of traditional art institutions and so is able to create sustainable synergies.

1. Introduction – Why a German Institute of Photography?

Almost two centuries after its invention it is impossible to imagine everyday life without photography. It governs our communication, media, and transfer of knowledge; it is both personal and cultural memory. It is utilised as much privately as it is in the public domain, in the sciences, the arts or business.

Germany played a central role in the history and development of photography. Work by world-renowned German photographers and artists can be found in museum collections around the world, it has shaped the media's visual language and written its history. Furthermore, the medium's technical development has also been closely associated with German companies such as Leica, Zeiss, Liesegang and Agfa, whose innovations have undoubtedly shaped photography's professional development and its rise as a mass medium.

There are highly specialised and competent institutions in the fields of art history, theory and the interdisciplinary academic discourse of the medium in Germany.

However, to date insufficient consideration has been devoted to the preservation, archiving and restoration of photography as a cultural asset. Offsetting this shortfall is all the more important in view of the fact that the transition from analogue to digital photography has brought with it new challenges and the necessary archiving and conservation measures are likely to become even more complex and demanding. Collections and archives, even in large public institutions, often do not have the technical or personnel resources to preserve photographic collections permanently. It is in this regard that the new institute can close the gaps revealed by the evolved network of individually acting, federally organised photography collections and archives.

In addition to the conservative categories of analogue and digital, cross-media hybrid forms and new technologies have emerged in contemporary photography, some of which are based entirely on the Internet or social media, thereby making the collection and archiving of these works difficult from a museological perspective. All of these developments require new processing methods and preservation techniques as well as innovative solutions. It is against this background that the Deutsches Fotoinstitut (DFI) is to be established as a nationwide centre of excellence for issues relating to the research and preservation of analogue, digital and hybrid forms of photographic heritage. Within this context, an institute working in the field of material-specific and art technological research can set new standards and become a flagship project of international importance.

The Deutsches Fotoinstitut unites the past, present and future of photography, it is a repository and mediator of knowledge, an initiator and catalyst.

Its archive secures outstanding bequests and estates that are artistically significant or that have a superordinate cultural, period-specific, documentary or social relevance.

In its capacity as a centre of excellence, it guarantees the conservation and digitalisation of photographic works according to the latest technical standards and cooperates with specialist service providers and restoration centres. It develops guidelines for the preservation of photography.

It acts as a networking and coordination centre for photographic collections and institutions and is responsible for cooperative solutions between the DFI, various institutions and artists or corresponding key figures in order to secure essential photographic materials.

The DFI does not stand in competition with existing photography collections and institutions in Germany, but as a long-term partner for them. As an extension of historically oriented collections and research facilities, it looks to the future of the medium from an interdisciplinary perspective.

It functions as a public venue for the examination of the medium both for experts and for an interested public, who can engage with the subject of photography from a variety of approaches.

2. Objectives of the German Institute of Photography

The DFI is a place where knowledge is produced and the understanding of the past, present and future of photography is both deepened and communicated. This is achieved by working scientifically and academically with technologies, material and theoretical issues, archival work, public bodies and digital presentations, education, institutional collaborations, publications and grants for research and artistic work.

The DFI's inventory - the photographic bequests and estates as well as the library, archives and material-specific studies - is accessible to an international community of researchers, students and to the interested public. The activities and resources of the DFI's various divisions are closely interwoven and mutually enrich each other, creating a space where research, critical debate, exchange of knowledge and education intertwine.

Through its events and projects, the DFI creates spaces for creative and philosophical formats with an explicitly experimental character and offers a common platform for academics, those working in the cultural sector and the public. The ideal outcome would be an open discussion of current issues in the field of photography and media in the light of their evolution to occur between representatives of art, science and business in exchange with a global public. It aims to extract relevant aspects of current research and outline socio-cultural perspectives for the future.

2.1 Presentation / Education

The presentation and communication of photography is a core objective of the DFI, with which the institute aims to reach a broad public. The research department works from the outset in close cooperation with the education department and the digital editing department at the DFI in order to ensure that the physical and digital presentation and communication is organic.

The DFI is a vibrant place that presents and loans the artists' works entrusted to it, creating dialogue and discussion. Various formats serve to address the DFI's diverse target audiences on a number of levels: citizens and school classes interested in photography as well as specialists and experts. The primary focus of the public presentation is the exhibition, whereby the definition of an exhibition remains intentionally open and not only includes the presentation of photographic images, but can also include archive materials, ephemera, technology, film or other media. The intention of the exhibition program is to make a broad spectrum of photography tangible.

By planning an open and permeable architecture, the opportunity is offered to show both the permanent collection from the institute's own inventory as well as temporary exhibitions of specifically produced concepts or loans from other institutions from both home and abroad. As long as the concept is significant to photographic discourse, there are no limitations in terms of content. The relevance will be determined by the curatorial and the academic research team of the institute. The DFI is committed to ensuring a balance in the visibility of artists and photographers taking as many different perspectives as possible into account.

Public seminars, symposia or conferences can also serve as a starting point for a presentation or exhibition, thus creating an interaction between theory and practice. Cooperation with schools, training centres and universities is a foregone conclusion.

The DFI pursues a future-oriented and sustainable approach to the dissemination of knowledge. The institute aims to develop participatory formats in close cooperation with artists and photographers, but also with business and research, in which photography can open up a space for intensive, reciprocally inspiring, critical and curious interactions between academia, art and society. The educational work takes place in the form of guided tours, workshops, seminars, symposia, publications, discussion and online formats as well as social media. Guided visits through the depot as well as the laboratories and workshops also contribute to making the manifold photographic themes and questions accessible. All of the educational programs on offer are designed to be multi-generational and inclusive.

The public reference library, which is an integral part of the DFI, is just as important for educational work and invites visitors to take a more in-depth look into photography. In this area, the DFI occupies a specialised niche and complements the range of services offered by the academic libraries of the universities both in the region and far beyond.

One can learn about the work of the DFI through its website, where as many images and as much information and findings as possible are made available to the public. Digital exhibition and communication formats are conceived hand in hand with the exhibitions on site and enable the presentations of the DFI to be experienced far beyond the location itself.

The DFI website also serves as an active platform for exchange and education. By publishing current reports and news from the field of photography, such as essays, commentaries and studies, and by providing tutorials and discussion forums, the website aims to become an important reference point for photography.

2.2 Research

The DFI is likewise a place of research, in the sense of a laboratory, and a place of production and interpretation of knowledge. Photography at the DFI is both a tool and a subject of this research. In this context, research into the effects of photography and its technological development on society, politics and the economy is just as much a responsibility of the DFI as is the initiating and future-oriented study of photography and art technology.

Research into art-technological issues and methods of preserving photographs is made possible at the DFI by establishing the necessary infrastructure. As a result, the DFI addresses an area of research that has so far been accorded little attention in Germany and can thus make a valuable contribution to international discourse.

Although at some universities and archives in Germany there exists broad research into the history of art and photography, the production and communication of knowledge in the field of photography as a work of art has, since the late 1970s, only been conducted as a subsection of the art and image disciplines. There is a demand for wide-ranging fundamental research that deals with photographic artworks, their intentions and techniques, their changing materialities and their specific manifestations. There is a highly specialised industry in Germany in the production of contemporary photography, whose knowledge is essential for its preservation.

Establishing an institutionalised network between these makers and a research institution will have an outstanding impact internationally. Through close mutual coordination, a photographic institute could thus retain and, if necessary, adopt production resources and knowledge in order to preserve outdated technologies in the long term. In order to do this, the DFI can work in collaboration with artists and photographers to compile a database of materials, technologies, processes and specialised service providers to preserve this knowledge long-term. An institute that is a national centre of excellence for photography and photo-based art that provides support and advice to other institutions with its expertise, could thereby act as an intersection between artists, academia, technology, galleries and collections.

The DFI functions as a think tank in the field of image and historical research into photography, in turn it provides an open, innovative and visionary environment for researchers from various disciplines to work together in long-term research groups and temporary formats such as symposia, conferences and workshops on questions concerning the past, present and future of photography. Through its scholarship programmes, the DFI guarantees the diversity and independence of research and artistic production and promotes innovative approaches and perspectives from both a theoretical and artistic point of view. The scholarships ensure that the discussions surrounding the issues of photography dealt with at the institute remain lively and bring new perspectives to the work of the DFI. The annual Artists-in-Residence and Researcher-in-Residence Programs offered by the DFI are aimed at international researchers and artists who are able to develop their own projects within the institute's infrastructure or to contribute to existing areas of research. In addition to supporting young talent, the programmes are especially intended to support researchers and artists in the middle of their careers. The DFI also provides an off-site studio for the artists.

The DFI cooperates with cultural institutions, universities, government agencies, federal research institutions and industry. Furthermore, it works in exchange with photographers as well as amateur and professional associations. The Institute initiates third-party funded projects establishing specific working groups within this framework.

The DFI is firmly committed to an interdisciplinary research approach between academia, art and society. However, opening up to private sector companies does not mean unilaterally adapting to the logic of the market. On the contrary: understanding the mechanisms of the art market is indispensable to prevent the drift of socio-cultural photographic assets and to sustainably strengthen, preserve and communicate contemporary art production to a broad public in a manner that is academically sound. This also includes dealing with the legal aspects of photography and the establishment of internationally recognised archiving, storage and certification methods.

The ideas and visions of artists and photographers can stimulate academic and technological developments, as their broad, explorative approach has the potential to open researchers' minds. Conversely, technological developments can also expand artistic methods and forms of expression, as has been particularly evident in the field of photography over the course of recent decades.

The DFI seeks to actively network national and international photography archives and collections, both virtually via shared databases and in direct and personal contact with institutions and individuals. It initiates the establishment of a national database of photographic heritage in Germany.

National coalitions such as the Consortium for Art-Historical Picture and Photographic Libraries (AKBF) or major international projects such as the Europeana and the Daguerreobase database are potential partners with whom a valuable, fruitful and long-term exchange can be established.

A valuable partner in the field of restoration/conservation, the Düsseldorf Restoration Centre, is located in the immediate vicinity. The restoration and conservation course of the Cologne Institute for Conservation Sciences (CICS) is also available regionally. Cooperations should also be sought at the national level for further restoration or conservation courses, but also for existing research institutions such as the Forschungsallianz Kulturerbe (Research Alliance for Cultural Heritage.) Furthermore, international collaborations with leading institutions in this field, such as the Image Permanence Institute in Rochester (USA), are being pursued.

2.3 Collection / Archive / Estate Management

The DFI sees itself as a comprehensive archive of photographic culture. In addition to research into the presentation of photography, a core responsibility of the DFI is the protection and preservation of photographic estates.

The DFI is geared towards analogue, digital and hybrid forms of the photographic. Exemplary works or closed bodies of work that are artistically significant or of overriding cultural, documentary or social relevance are housed, collected and archived.

In order to record the greatest possible diversity of photography's heritage, the DFI wishes to both take its differing forms of existence into account and to consider photography's most varied fields. This may include artistic, documentary and photojournalistic photography as well as scientific and amateur photography.

Work from all areas of the collection are to be exemplarily researched and art-technologically examined in order to derive new findings and recommendations for the restoration and sustainable preservation of photography. In addition to photographic bequests and estates, the DFI can add personal archives containing documents, correspondence, and ephemera etc. of individual photographers to the collection, provided that these contribute to the research of the work and offer information about the history or context of its creation. Furthermore, significant collections or archives of collectors are also to be included.

The collection's aim is to obtain larger volumes so that the entire dimension of a position or series of works can be traced. Consequently, documents, materials, positives, negatives, digital data etc., even if they are treated individually for conservation purposes, can be brought together in one single complex. These can be entire bequests or estates, complete collections worthy of protection, individual series of works, negative volumes or solely (or rather purely) digital data.

The DFI wishes to secure estates before they are dispersed and sold. Particularly in this area, the DFI sees it as its responsibility to network, support and strengthen the respective content of existing estates in the photography-based archives of the German federal states.

Decisions on the incorporation of bequests and estates are to be made by committee. The DFI will prepare the framework for decision-making and advise the committee in this process.

The acquisition of bequests and estates will be contractually agreed upon individually between the artists or their heirs and the DFI in order to guarantee the preservation and proper handling of the work. The DFI reserves the right to acquire far-reaching user licenses for the volumes entrusted to it. This too will be subject to individual arrangements.

As long as it has been contractually agreed upon with the photographers or their legal successors, the DFI can loan works from the archive for exhibition purposes thus making them accessible to the public outside of its own institution.

In addition to managing and safeguarding the archive's collections, the DFI in its role as a centre of excellence acts as a point of contact and partner for existing photographic estates and foundations of individual photographers.

2.4 Art Technology / Restoration / Conservation / New Production

The DFI sees art technological investigation, conservation and restoration of analogue, digital and hybrid forms of photographic heritage as an important emphasis of its work. The integration of specialised conservators and a technical infrastructure is not only intended to examine and treat objects from the Institute's own collection, but also to offer services to external collections, artists and photographers in order to contribute to the preservation of the photographic cultural heritage. In order to uphold professional ethical principles and rules of conduct, the conservation and art technology departments at the DFI are guided by the current ethical charters and guidelines, operating to the highest technical standards.

The knowledge gained through research at the DFI should be communicated to experts, those responsible for the collection and the general public in appropriate formats such as recommendations, further training courses and events.

DFI is the centre of excellence for the urgent care of photographs. To this end, it establishes a network of specialist service providers, cooperating with existing urgent care associations to develop methods to communicate initial measures and restore damaged photographs.

There is still a need for international development of uniform methods and findings on material ageing and production processes for contemporary and hybrid forms of photography. Things that are needed are, among other things, research in the areas of colour photography and production, restoration / conservation of current printing processes such as inkjet printing, conservation of complex analogue or digital works of art and conservation of digital data. The DFI also contributes to further knowledge and methods of preventative conservation of photographic materials.

The Art Technology / Restoration / Conservation / New Production department works with photo conservators, conservation scientists, natural scientists, computer scientists and partners from the imaging and photograph production industries to optimise and develop conservation and restoration methods. The department is also involved in social issues surrounding photography, which are then discussed with the humanities and legal disciplines at the DFI.

It is essential that the DFI has the necessary research infrastructure for preventive conservation in order to conduct material testing, material characterisation and technical studies of photographic material according to the latest standards. Thus the DFI can also offer services for analytical laboratory methods and scientific conservation methods.

In this respect, the DFI cooperates closely with restoration and conservation degree programmes and actively seeks interdisciplinary cooperation with other specialist areas. It works together with industry and specialist service providers on the development and practical implementation of the project, networking the specialist individuals responsible for the preservation of cultural assets. The restoration department also works on the fundamentals of communicating the specialist terminology for the designation and damage assessment of photographic materials.

The DFI will establish an extensive collection of materials and a reference collection as well as a special library for restoration and conservation to supplement the public media-specific library on photography.

The ephemeral materials in contemporary art are continuously raising questions of originality and authenticity. Unstable dyes and plastics are often used in modern colour photography. The rapid ageing of these materials can be slowed down by preventive measures such as cold storage and minimal presentation time, but not stopped altogether. In such cases, the work can be so severely distorted that it can no longer be presented publicly and is classified as unrestorable. Classical restoration theories, such as those used in the restoration of historical black and white photographs, are not applicable to these works. At this point the conservator's interest in preserving the inevitably ageing original as long as possible confronts the interest of the artist and photographer who wants to restore the original state by means of new production.

The DFI develops strategies in the preservation and handling of obsolete materials and techniques and implements methods to prevent the loss of information, thereby preserving the artists' and photographers' intentions. To achieve this, it works in an interdisciplinary exchange with the image-producing and image-processing industries, restoration and modern and contemporary art departments, theoreticians of photography and the humanities and develops recommendations for the preservation of modern and contemporary photography.

The long-term preservation of colour photographs includes the archiving and preservation of negatives and digital data under optimal conditions as well as the optimal archiving of the original artwork, test strips and laboratory results, the complete documentation of the different processing steps and materials used, the appropriate new production of heavily aged works, the optimisation and preservation of production possibilities and the safeguarding of

resources (paper, glue, machines, staff, knowledge etc.) in close consultation with the laboratories as well as the integration of new production possibilities. The DFI acts as a research centre dealing practically and theoretically with the consequences of this technological challenge, thereby continuously generating knowledge.

The question as to whether changes to colour originals should inevitably lead to a new production or what alternative measures can be taken is not straightforward and must be solved on an individual basis. The DFI can serve as an advisory body to discuss these issues and provide recommendations for action and models for all those involved - artists, museums, galleries, estate administrators.

This is possible in direct communication with living artists and photographers. In the case of bequests, the DFI can provide a point of contact where standards are developed to ensure that new productions are made in line with the original intentions of the artists.

2.5 Digitalisation / Digital Archiving

In addition to the physical preservation of photographic material, the digitisation of analogue material is a part of research and archiving. The DFI coordinates and provides technical and methodological advice on digitisation projects and on the application for relevant funding programmes, for example the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (Federal Ministry of Education and Research) (BMBF), the Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation) (DFG) and other foundations.

It is actively engaged in collaborations with research institutions and existing networks for long-term digital archiving (e.g. nestor) and the digital humanities (e.g. Digital Research Infrastructure for the Humanities and Cultural Sciences, DARIAH-DE). It formulates recommendations on how to handle digital image data for the public and for collections; it develops strategies to prevent the loss of digital photographs.

The standards developed by the DFI for internal use can also serve as recommendations for other institutions and be made available to them through constructive exchange.

The DFI has made it their mission to archive digital data in a visionary and sustainable manner, adapting to the ever more rapidly changing storage formats in order to make certain the data they contain will always be readable.

The quantity of continuously produced photographs is immense and existing archives quickly reach their limits. Hence the need for sustainable structures, criteria and systematics that will make it possible to work with the digitised material in the future. This, in particular, includes the cataloguing of images according to various criteria. In addition to the tagging of

images with keywords carried out by specialist staff, AI algorithms will also be used in order to support the long-term preservation and utilisation of photographic cultural assets.

The DFI also intends to make its digitally indexed holdings available and accessible on its website.

Die Masse der stetig erzeugten Fotografien ist enorm und bestehende Archive stoßen schnell an ihre Grenzen. Deswegen bedarf es hier nachhaltiger Strukturen, Kriterien und Systematiken, die das Arbeiten mit dem digitalisierten Material in Zukunft ermöglichen. Dazu zählt insbesondere die Katalogisierung von Bildern nach verschiedenen Kriterien. Neben der vom Fachpersonal vorgenommenen Verschlagwortung von Bildern sollen hierbei auch KI-Algorithmen zum Einsatz kommen, um die langfristige Erhaltung und Nutzbarmachung von fotografischem Kulturgut zu unterstützen.

Das DFI möchte die von ihm digital erschlossenen Bestände auch auf seiner Website erfahrbar und zugänglich machen.

3. Architecture and Facilities

The DFI is open to an interested public of all ages as well as to experts for purposes of research and investigation. Both its own collection and the research workshops, library and exhibition areas should be accessible and visible. Furthermore, this transparency should also be conveyed by the architecture.

In accordance with the diversity of materials, separate depots with different climatic conditions will have to be constructed. The aim is to partially open up the archive and its inventory by means of a display depot, making the work and activities visible and tangible. Worldwide, museums such as *Schaulager* in Basel, the *Brooklyn Museum* in New York, or the *Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen* in Rotterdam are already showing their collections outside of the curated exhibition spaces through open display depots; in Germany, the Kunsthalle Rostock has built an impressive new building with a display depot.

In the part of the building that is assigned to archive and research work, the display depot forms the central space. The spaces of the Art Technology / Conservation / Restoration / New Production department will also be located here, including workshops and laboratories for conducting research into materials and conservation technology. There is also a further need for analogue processing rooms (darkrooms), a room for processing digital photography (image processing and output options with colour management) and a photography studio for reproduction and documentation purposes and for workshops.

The digitisation section that includes the processing of negatives, glass plates, slides, archival documents as well as positives, also requires its own dedicated spaces. The public section of the DFI is characterised by exhibition spaces that allow different types of presentations and can be adapted to the needs and concepts of the individual exhibition formats. In this part of the building there are further public spaces for events such as symposia, lectures or conferences as well as the library and a café.

The architecture must provide enough space to work on site with visitors and groups of different sizes. In addition to rooms appropriately equipped for practical workshops and seminars, spaces for theoretical research and investigation are also necessary.

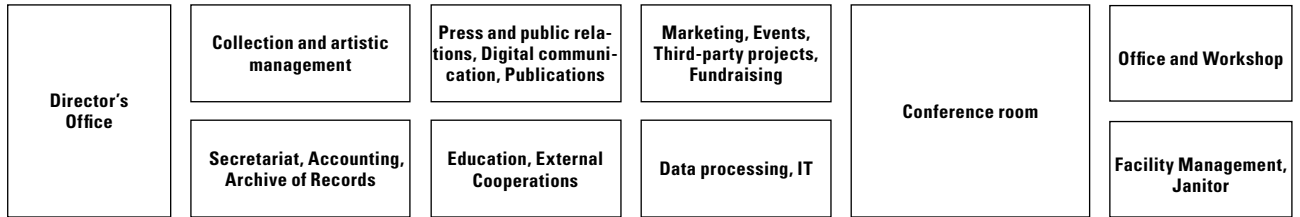
Office space for research, administration, education, technology and security will be planned in the part of the building not accessible to the public. Sufficient space for the collection of bequests and estates, for delivery, quarantine, screening, indexing, inventory and storage as well as special climatic and lighting conditions must all be taken into consideration.

The German Institute of Photography has made the preservation of endangered cultural assets its mission. With this in mind, the construction and operation of the facility should also pursue a sustainable strategy. The aim is to achieve the highest classification according to the Bewertungssystem Nachhaltiges Bauen für Bundesgebäude (Sustainable Building Certification System for Federal Buildings) (BNB).

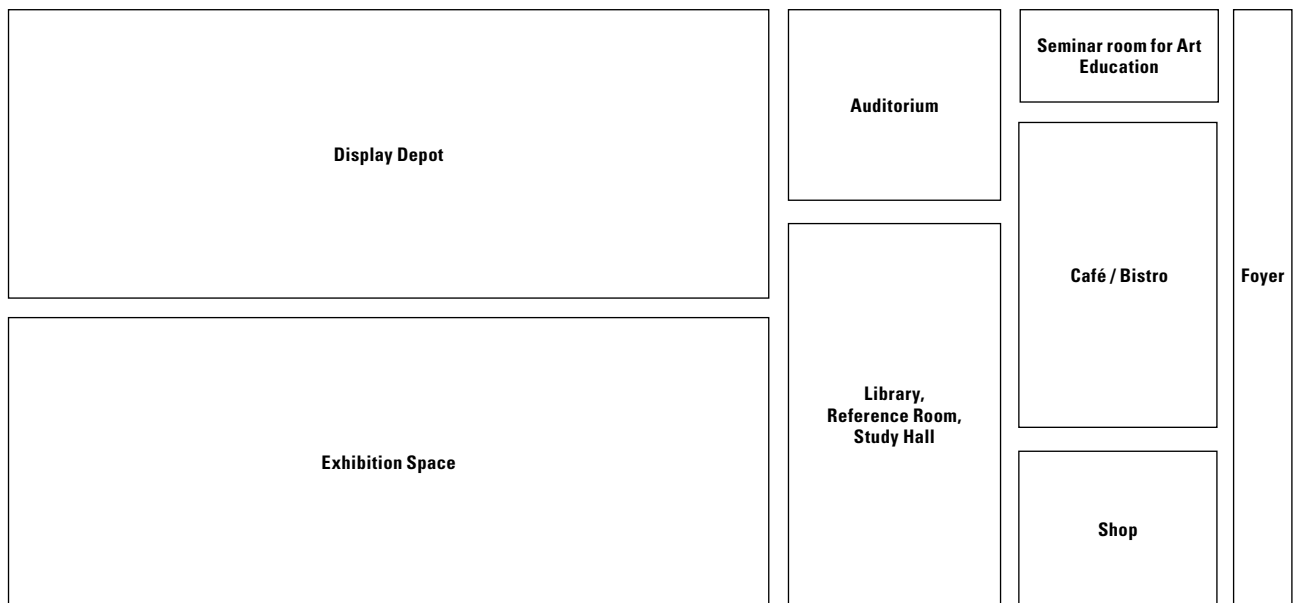
3.1 Space Allocation

Representation of the central rooms and areas

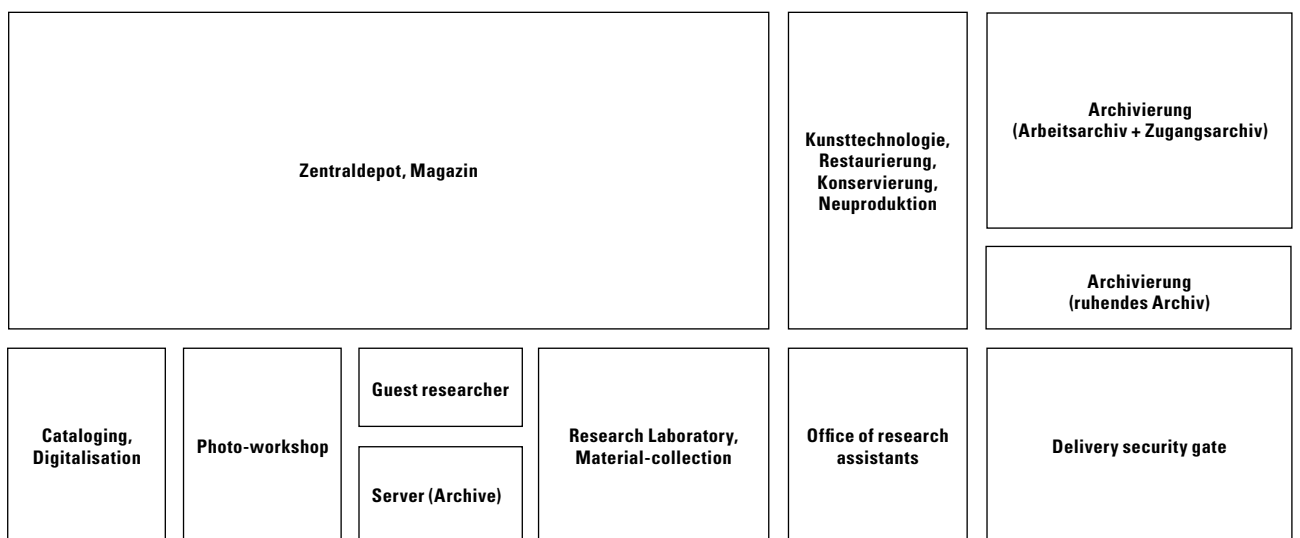
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, ADMINISTRATION



PRESENTATION, EDUCATION (PUBLIC AREA)



RESEARCH / ARCHIVE / DEPOT



4. Legal Structure

During the foundation and development phase, the legal structure must remain as open and flexible as possible. The foundation and final form has yet to be worked out in detail.

The trusteeship of the DFI must be run by a legal entity. It remains to be determined whether this legal entity should be constituted under public or private law. Alternative forms would be, under a public-law constitution, a public-law corporation or the form of a public-law foundation; under a private-law form, a private-law association, a foundation under private law. It is necessary to examine whether the legal entity acquires non-profit status.

5. Personnel

Based upon the content of the concept and its requirements, the following personnel structure is recommended:

1. Office of the Director

Director	
Commercial Director	
Assistant to the Director	
Assistant to the commercial Director	
Secretariat	5 Positions

2. Administration / Technical

Accounting and financial management	
Data processing and IT	
Exhibition and event technicians	
Facility Management	
Janitor	5 Positions

3. Public relations / Communication

Press and public relations	
Digital communication, Social Media Marketing	
Events	
External Cooperations and networking	
Third party projects and fundraising	6 Positions

4. Education

Head of art education	
Assistant in art education	
Website / social Media	
Publications	5 Positions

5. Archive / Depot

Archiving, Cataloguing, Digitisation	
Photographer, Laboratory technician	
Media technician (digital preparation)	
Data management, systems engineering and long-term archiving (digitisation)	10 Positions

6. Research / Presentation

Head of the collection	
Artistic / Exhibition management	
Research assistant theory and history of photography	
Research assistant in image studies	
Photo conservator	
Digital Media Conservator	
Preventative Conservator (Research/Advice)	
Conservation Scientist (Research/Services)	
Exhibition Management	
Laboratory Technician (Research/Services)	
librarian	
Study hall, reference room	19 Positions

Total: 50 Positions

6. Location

North Rhine-Westphalia has played a key role in the history of photography. Some of photography's pioneers and major figures such as Wilhelm Röntgen (1845-1923), August Sander (1876-1964), Hugo Schmölz (1879-1938) and Chargesheimer (1924-1971) came from the Rhineland. Groundbreaking teachers such as Albert Renger Patzsch, Otto Steinert and Bernd and Hilla Becher influenced the way photography was taught at the university level. Today, there are countless art photographers of all generations working in Düsseldorf, together with the Kunstakademie and the city's manifold museums, they have created an unparalleled, internationally acclaimed and lively photography scene.

For decades, Leverkusen was home to Agfa, the European market leader in photochemistry and camera technology, whose photographic collection is now housed in the neighbouring Museum Ludwig in Cologne. Thanks to photokina and the innovative work of the collector L. Fritz Grubers, who in 1951 declared photography to be the „language of the world“ and from then on brought important photographers to Cologne for his photographic shows, the Rhineland became an international venue for photography in the post-war years. A great number of initiatives followed. Since the 1970s galleries have also had a stimulating impact on the art market in the field of photography, with names such as Ann and Jürgen Wild (Cologne) and Rudolf Kicken and Wilhelm Schürmann (Aachen, Cologne, later Berlin). The Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur has also played an increasingly important role since the 1990s, focusing on documentary and conceptual photography, the preservation of extensive series of works, and cooperation with institutions and artists. The August Sander Archive and the archive of Bernd and Hilla Becher comprise programmatic slides.

Central research and scientific institutions such as the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Photographie e. V.* (German Photography Association) (DGPh) and the first professorship for the history of photography are located in Cologne. After Bernd Becher was appointed as the first professor of photography at a university in 1976 at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, the state capital developed into an important centre for photography, where influential artists live and work and whose work continues to have a significant influence on recent photographic history. A variety of service providers specialising in photography (e.g. image processing, print, laboratory, framing) are also located here and in turn enrich the established and currently available infrastructure.

Düsseldorf is centrally located along the Rhine-Ruhr route between Cologne (Museum Ludwig, the Photographische Sammlung/ SK Stiftung Kultur, Internationale Photoszene, photokina) and Essen (Folkwang University, Museum Folkwang). If one also includes the cities of Bonn, Bottrop and Dortmund and their important museums and institutions (LVR-LandesMuseum Bonn, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Josef Albers Museum, Quadrat Bottrop or FH Dortmund), Düsseldorf can assume an outstanding central position due to its geographical location.

Düsseldorf is characterised by an extensive tradition in the field of fine arts and photography and a well-established structure in its interaction with the neighbouring cities as well as within the international art scene, so that it enjoys a strong reputation as an international art metropole. Based on the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf and the institutions cooperating with it including the Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf and other museum institutions a network of national and international protagonists has been established in addition to a globally recognised art education that supports and strengthens continuous artistic exchange between various disciplines. With its abundance of galleries, studios and public art institutions, Düsseldorf can boast a many-voiced and professional cultural infrastructure in which the DFI would be integrated in the best sense.

A historically significant location has been found at Düsseldorf's Ehrenhof, which links the DFI with traditional cultural institutions within eyeshot, thereby facilitating sustainable synergies. A public building thrives on public transport, guaranteed by easy accessibility and integration into an existing cultural infrastructure. A location close to the Düsseldorf Ehrenhof with the institutions located there, therefore satisfies the desire for an accessible, highly frequented location.

Important exhibition venues in the immediate vicinity include the Kunstpalast, the Kunstsammlung NRW, the NRW-Forum and the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. The newly founded photo biennial Düsseldorf photo+ offers a further intersection with which the DFI and its interdisciplinary orientation can connect. Finally, the Kunstakademie, a renowned centre for education in artistic photography, is located in the immediate vicinity. Furthermore, the Düsseldorf Restoration Centre is one of the first partners to employ experts in the conservation of photography and time-based media and has the necessary technical infrastructure to examine and restore such materials.

7. Going Forward

In terms of organisation, the first step in establishing the DFI is to set up an expert advisory board responsible for consulting the aforementioned departments in the constitution. This body should include representatives of local, state and federal government, representatives of the Association for the Establishment of a German Photographic Institute, artists and photographers, representatives of potential cooperation partners and of associations and interest groups. In doing so, the recommendations of the BKM Commission, the principles of the resolution of the Bundestag and the concrete requirements of the site, as listed above, will be combined into an overall concept from which all further stages will be derived. The aim is to reach a comprehensive agreement with respect to the contents of the concept and a further in-depth analysis of requirements.

The various content, organisational areas and tasks of the DFI will be prepared and planned for in greater depth by individual specialised working groups. In this process, it is important to ensure an open working approach with flat hierarchies, where all parties and participants involved are given a voice. Concurrently with the establishment of the expert advisory board, a leading team will be appointed to prepare and guide the development of the Institute.

The work of the DFI begins with the development of an online service, with a platform for networking and discourse.

An international architectural competition will be held prior to the spatial planning.

8. Prospect

The DFI has preserved relevant works and bodies of work and has provided visitors and researchers with the opportunity to discover and research them in the original.

The DFI's work is exemplary and has inspired and promoted numerous projects in other institutions.

The DFI has created a network that supports collegial exchange between institutions and individuals involved in photography.

The DFI engages in public debates, initiates them and also moderates them. It continuously contributes to a higher education in the field of photographic images.

The DFI has ensured that the knowledge gained from its archival and institutional work has been communicated both through exhibitions, on its website and in publications.

The DFI has developed new methods and findings for the conservation and restoration of photographs.

The DFI has led to a more differentiated use of the term photography and a more critical view of photographs. It contributes continuously to the education of the media in relation to the complexity created by digitalisation and other new imaging processes.

The DFI remembers that photography is fun.