

MITTEILUNGEN DES KUNSTHISTORISCHEN INSTITUTES IN FLORENZ



LXII. BAND — 2020
HEFT I

Photography and the Art Market around 1900



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Photography and the Art Market around 1900

edited by Costanza Caraffa and Julia Bärnighausen

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BUREAUCRATIC HYBRIDS PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE GALLERIA SANGIORGI IN ROME AT THE KUNSTHISTORISCHES INSTITUT IN FLORENZ

Julia Bärnighausen

Introduction: Curiosity, Coincidence, and Giving in to Photographs

About four years ago, a research project at the Photothek of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, curiosity, and coincidence sparked the re-evaluation of a photographic fonds that up until then had not been recognized as such. The Photothek has been part of the Kunsthistorisches Institut since its foundation in 1897 and today comprises more than 620,000 photographs of art objects ranging from the early Middle Ages to the nineteenth century.¹ Researchers commonly used these photographs to document and

compare artworks, communicate information, and (re-)evaluate attributions or authorships.² To grow its extensive image collection the institute initiated its own photographic campaigns, bought photographs from specialized agencies, swapped them with other institutions, and accepted private or public donations.³ These image practices and exchange networks were at the heart of the collaborative project *Photo-Objects* (2015–2018),⁴ which aimed to find out how the use of photographs shaped and was shaped by the disciplines of art history, archaeology, and ethnology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The premise

¹ On the history of the Photothek, see Hans W. Hubert, *Das Kunsthistorische Institut in Florenz: Von der Gründung bis zum hundertjährigen Jubiläum (1897–1997)*, Florence 1997, pp. 125–135.

² Costanza Caraffa, “From ‘Photo Libraries’ to ‘Photo Archives’: On the Epistemological Potential of Art Historical Photo Collections”, in: *Photo Archives and the Photographic Memory of Art History*, conference proceedings London/Florence 2009, ed. by *eadem*, Berlin/Munich 2011, pp. 11–44. See also the website of the Photothek: <https://www.khi.fi.it/de/photothek/index.php> (accessed on 29 April 2020).

³ Ute Dercks, “‘And Because the Use of the Photographic Device is Impossible without a Proper Card Catalog...’: The Typological-Stylistic Arrangement and the Subject Cross-Reference Index of the KHI’s Photothek (1897–1930s)”, in: *Visual Resources*, XXX (2014), 3, pp. 181–200.

⁴ *Photo-Objects: Photographs as (Research) Objects in Archaeology, Ethnology and Art History*, 2015–2018, collaboration project of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut, funded by the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung.

of the project was that photographs are not just visual images (a persistent narrative in the history of art and the history of photography), but also material objects, whose handling leaves behind numerous traces.⁵

While browsing the holdings of the Photothek in search of such material traces of photographic practices, I was struck by a few rather neglected-looking boxes entitled “Varia” (“various”) and “Dubletten” (“duplicates”). They were, however, neither completely forgotten nor did their contents always live up to these categories, as we shall see later. These boxes were not stored with the main holdings on the piano nobile of Palazzo Grifoni, the headquarters of the Photothek, but on the ground floor, in the shelves beside my desk. They had literally been in front of me the whole time. Just like the main holdings, they were classified according to four major genres: painting, sculpture, architecture, and the applied arts.⁶ Since our project focused on the latter, I turned to these boxes first. Sensing, more than completely understanding at this point, the object value of these photographs (and out of sheer curiosity), I opened the boxes. ‘Hidden’ in plain sight and mixed up with many other images of various origin were what appeared to be numerous photographs from the Galleria Sangiorgi auction house in Rome (active 1892–1970) depicting antiques and artworks: mirrors, tables, vases, sculptures, and so on (Fig. 1). Especially striking was their material and visual abundance: the photographs had been stamped, retouched, colored, written and drawn on, folded, cut, ripped apart, and glued back together. Very often, the images would also reveal the contexts in which they were taken: photogra-

phers, cameras, and props were visible next to and around the artworks. Returning to the piano nobile of Palazzo Grifoni I soon realized that many more Sangiorgi photographs were part of the Photothek’s main holdings. Amidst the masses of images they had simply not been on our radar. From this point on, the Sangiorgi photographs underwent dramatic changes: some were incorporated into a section reserved for the most ‘valuable’ photographs,⁷ a selection was digitized,⁸ and a few were presented in the 2018 exhibition *Unboxing Photographs* at the Staatliche Museen in Berlin.⁹

The Sangiorgi photographs raised a series of questions, which the article attempts to tackle: what do the material inscriptions of these photographs tell us about their use at the Galleria Sangiorgi and in nineteenth- and early-twentieth century art trade? How did the photographs end up at the Photothek of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, and what does our treatment of them say about how we view photo archives? Finally, how does thinking about the Sangiorgi photographs contribute to an essentially transdisciplinary field like art market studies, which is currently in the process of consolidation?

Taking a closer look at the photographs of the Galleria Sangiorgi at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, the paper intends to stress their epistemological potential. It does so by adopting the premise of photographs as material objects and combining it with some of the terminology used by German *Wissensgeschichte* (history of knowledge). This field of research analyzes the experimental and dynamic processes, actions, and practices connected to the production of knowledge on a transdisciplinary level.¹⁰ It

⁵ *Foto-Objekte: Forschen in archäologischen, ethnologischen und kunsthistorischen Archiven*, ed. by Julia Bärnighausen et al., Berlin 2020 (in press).

⁶ Dercks (note 3), p. 190; Julia Bärnighausen, “Vom Sammeln der Dinge in Bildern”, in: *Foto-Objekte* (note 5), pp. 98–115: 98.

⁷ The section is called *Cimelia Photographica*. See Costanza Caraffa, “‘Cimelia Photographica’: Zum Umgang mit historischen Fotografien im Archiv”, in: *Rundbrief Fotografie*, n.s. XIX (2012), 2, pp. 8–13.

⁸ Digital Photo Library, <http://photothek.khi.fi.it/gallery/pic-gesamt/sangiorgi> (accessed on 18 February 2020).

⁹ *Unboxing Photographs: Arbeiten im Fotoarchiv*, curated by Julia Bärnighausen et al., Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstbibliothek, 16 February–27 May 2018, <https://www.smb.museum/ausstellungen/detail/unboxing-photographs.html> (accessed on 17 February 2020).

¹⁰ Anke te Heesen, “Objekte der Wissenschaft: Eine wissenschafts-

is intrinsically linked to the idea that objects (be they scientific specimens, artworks, or photographs) are handled and organized within certain administrative routines – with *Bürokratie* (bureaucracy) being one of the watchwords here: the term mostly relates to the systematic keeping of records and other administration practices.¹¹ In the case of the Galleria Sangiorgi these practices are present in the material inscriptions that have accumulated on the photographs over time and are shaped by institutional, political, and economic¹² circumstances as well as by personal standpoints. The paper will argue that the Sangiorgi photographs are bureaucratic hybrids woven into an intermedia network of administrative practices while undergoing constant changes. This combination of systematic routines and dynamic transformations is not a conundrum: although bureaucratic practices are generally perceived to be quite rigorous, they do leave room for spontaneity and flexibility, as others have shown.¹³

The transformation of these photographs does not stop once they enter an archive or a museum setting: they are usually inventoried according to certain criteria and shelved in a more or less prominent spot. They may be subject to further studies or lie dormant in boxes until a new approach leads to their re-evaluation, as was the case with the Sangiorgi photographs. This re-evaluation was influenced by my

own reading of critical studies that question the concept of objectivity¹⁴ and explore curiosity and serendipity as epistemic tools,¹⁵ thereby conditioning me to approach the Photothek as an experimental and dynamic space. Thus, the ‘rediscovery’ of the Sangiorgi photographs, my ‘giving in’ to their material richness, turned out not be a coincidence at all but a case of serendipity – an unexpected finding on the basis of an unsystematic but nonetheless purposeful search.¹⁶ All of this goes to show that no archive is ever neutral or stable. The rather personal diary-type account, which I purposefully placed at the beginning of the paper, is part of the histories of these photographs. This analysis offers the chance to think critically about the status of photographs and photo archives and about what we consider to be important in a society that seems to be struggling to deal with its rich material culture.

In a short epilogue, the paper intends to point out how the Sangiorgi photographs generate both inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives and, in doing so, are part of the consolidation of a relatively new research field: art market studies. Roughly defined as the analysis of historic and contemporary art markets, this research strand combines art history, archival studies, provenance research, corporate history, and economics (to name just a few).¹⁷ The increasing institutionalization of art market studies and its academic

historische Perspektive auf das Museum”, in: *Museumsanalyse: Methoden und Konturen eines neuen Forschungsfeldes*, ed. by Joachim Baur, Bielefeld 2009, pp. 213–230, esp. p. 215.

¹¹ Friedrich Balke/Bernhard Siegert/Joseph Vogl, “Editorial”, in: *Medien der Bürokratie*, ed. by eidem, Paderborn 2016, pp. 5–12: 5.

¹² Monika Dommann/Daniel Speich Chassé/Mischa Suter, “Einleitung: Wissensgeschichte ökonomischer Praktiken”, in: *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, XXXVII (2014), pp. 107–111; Estelle Blaschke, *Banking on Images: The Bettmann Archive and Corbis*, Leipzig 2016; *Sammlungsökonomien*, ed. by Nils Güttler/Ina Heumann, Berlin 2016; Judith Blume, *Wissen und Konsum: Eine Geschichte des Sammelbildalbums 1860–1952*, Göttingen 2019.

¹³ Balke/Siegert/Vogl (note II), p. 5. Dynamic transformations and routines in photo archives have also been discussed by photo historians and archivists such as Elizabeth Edwards, “Photographs: Material Form and the Dynamic Archive”, in: *Photo Archives* (note 2), pp. 45–56; Joan M.

Schwartz/Terry Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory”, in: *Archival Science*, II (2002), pp. 1–19; eidem, “Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance”, *ibidem*, pp. 171–185.

¹⁴ Most prominently: Lorraine Daston/Peter Galison, *Objectivity*, New York 2007.

¹⁵ Lorraine Daston, “Curiosity in Early Modern Science”, in: *Word and Image*, XI (1995), pp. 391–404; Rolf Lindner, “Serendipity und andere Merkwürdigkeiten”, in: *Vokus*, XXII (2012), I, pp. 5–11; Elizabeth Edwards, “Looking at Photographs: Between Contemplation, Curiosity, and Gaze”, in: *Distance and Desire: Encounters with the African Archive*, ed. by Tamar Garb, Göttingen 2013, pp. 48–54.

¹⁶ Julia Bärnighausen *et al.*, “Browsen: Vom Suchen und Finden im Fotoarchiv”, in: *Foto-Objekte* (note 5), pp. 23–35, esp. pp. 23, 33.

¹⁷ See also the introduction to this volume, pp. 5–7.

2 Postcard of the Palazzo Borghese in Rome with the Sangiorgi sign pointing to the entrance in Via di Ripetta, ca. 1900. Private collection



recognition,¹⁸ both of which are centered around (photo) archives, offer the unique opportunity to transfer to the present the research question of the *Photo-Objects* project: how are photographs and photo archives able to shape the coming into being of disciplines and vice versa?

Taking Inventory – The Galleria Sangiorgi in Rome and Beyond

A short parenthesis on the history of the Galleria Sangiorgi and its archives is necessary to set the stage for their closer examination and will help

to review their current archival situation and status. The Galleria Sangiorgi was founded by the Italian entrepreneur Giuseppe Sangiorgi (1850–1928) in 1892 and occupied the ground floor of Palazzo Borghese in Rome (Fig. 2).¹⁹ Thanks to its wide range of artworks, “moderate prices”,²⁰ and bold advertisements (Fig. 3) it soon became an acclaimed auction house with a permanent collection cultivating an extensive network of museum professionals, dealers, and collectors.²¹ In his workshop, Sangiorgi employed trained artists to reproduce artworks on demand.²² After the death of Giuseppe Sangiorgi in

¹⁸ With archives that become university institutes, e.g. in Cologne: “Zentralarchiv für deutsche und internationale Kunstmarktforschung geht an die Uni Köln”, <https://portal.uni-koeln.de/universitaet/aktuell/presseinformationen/detail/zentralarchiv-fuer-deutsche-und-internationale-kunstmarktforschung-geht-an-die-uni-koeln> (accessed on 5 May 2020).

¹⁹ On the gallery’s history see esp. Claudio Maria Mancini, “Giuseppe Sangiorgi, antiquario e filantropo”, in: *L’Urbe*, LIX (1999), pp. 109–122; Debora Loiacono, *Collezionismo e mercato artistico a Roma tra ’800 e ’900: la Galleria Sangiorgi*, master thesis Bologna 2007/08; *eadem*, “Gli arredi ‘in stile’ della Galleria Sangiorgi di Roma e qualche appunto su Umberto Giunti alias Falsario in Calcinaccio”, in: *Valori Tattili*, 0 (2011), pp. 104–116; Francesca Candi, “Fotografie di archeologia dal fondo Sangiorgi”, in: *I colori del bianco e nero: fotografie storiche nella Fototeca Zeri 1870–1920*, ed. by Andrea Bacchi et al., Bologna 2014, pp. 99–106; Francesca Di Castro, “Il gusto di un’epoca e la Galleria Sangiorgi”, in: *Sirena dei Romanisti*, LXXVI (2015), pp. 203–216. For auto-

biographical sources see Giuseppe Sangiorgi, *A viso aperto*, Milan 1924, and *Lettere famigliari di Giuseppe Sangiorgi*, ed. by Giorgio Sangiorgi, Milan 1939.

²⁰ Isabel Cohen, “The Sangiorgi Gallery”, in: *American Art News*, XII (1914), 37, p. 2.

²¹ *Galerie Sangiorgi – Rome: catalogue des objets d’art ancien pour l’année 1910*, Rome 1910, p. VI (see also three more catalogues with the same title from the years 1911 to 1913). The catalogues list Sangiorgi’s most prestigious clients, thereby providing credentials and reaffirming certain attributes that were essential to the persona of a successful art dealer, such as their up-to-dateness and their networking capabilities at international level. On the figure of the art dealer and the history of the profession see also Hans Peter Thurn, *Der Kunsthändler: Wandlungen eines Berufes*, Munich 1994.

²² *Galerie Sangiorgi* (note 21), p. VI; Jørgen Birkedal Hartmann, “Le memorie romane di Ludovico Pollak”, in: *L’Urbe*, n.s., LIV (1994), pp. 253–262: 259.

1928, the gallery was taken over by his son Giorgio (1886–1965) and then continued by his grandson Sergio (1929–2015),²³ who closed the business in 1970.²⁴

The irresistible materiality of the Sangiorgi photographs combined with the long history of the auction house prompted further research into the topic.²⁵ While searching the Florentine holdings it turned out that the Photothek of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz owns at least 500 Sangiorgi photographs (mostly silver gelatin prints, albumen prints, and aristotypes) in the applied arts section alone and likely many more in the other, much larger sections of the archive. Other material has survived at the Federico Zeri Foundation in Bologna, which holds the largest collection of circa 3700 Sangiorgi photographs as well as a number of drawings.²⁶ Next to roughly 500 prints, the Fondo Sangiorgi, which is part of the Mancini documents at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome, also includes a linen-bound photo album, certificates, photographs of employees, and a handwritten notebook.²⁷ Smaller series of Sangiorgi photographs can be found in other institutions such as the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione in Rome.²⁸

Apart from photographs and drawings, documents and catalogues from the Galleria Sangiorgi are



3 Postcard of the Forum Romanum with an advertisement for the Galleria Sangiorgi in the background, ca. 1900. Private collection

²³ The dates of Sergio Sangiorgi's birth and death are not always consistent in secondary sources. Those given here have been confirmed by his widow Anna Maria Cima Sangiorgi (email correspondence, 31 January 2020 and 2 February 2020). She also thinks that Sergio probably started to cooperate with his father in running the company, traveling to clients, and buying objects to sell in the gallery after World War II, around 1949 (email correspondence, 15 April 2020).

²⁴ For a more detailed history of the business, see Francesca Mambelli's paper in this publication, pp. 15–19, and Julia Bärnighausen, s.v. Galleria Sangiorgi, in: *Art Market Dictionary*, ed. by Johannes Nathan (forthcoming).

²⁵ While this paper is the first comprehensive and contextualized summary of my PhD research at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (working title: *Photo-Itineraries: Photographic Practices in the Art Trade Around 1900*), I have presented a part of the case studies discussed here in earlier publications. See Julia Bärnighausen *et al.*, "Photographs on the Move: Formats, Forma-

tions, and Transformations in Four Photo Archives", in: *Photo-Objects: On the Materiality of Photographs and Photo Archives in the Humanities and Sciences*, conference proceedings Florence 2017, ed. by *cadem et al.*, Berlin 2019, <http://mprl-series.mpg.de/studies/I2/3/index.html#13> (accessed on 5 February 2020); *eadem* (note 6); *eadem*, "Spiegelbilder", in: *Foto-Objekte* (note 5), pp. 230–235.

²⁶ Some of these are accessible online at <http://catalogo.fondazionezeri.unibo.it/cerca/opera> (accessed on 31 January 2020). On these materials, see Francesca Mambelli's article in this volume, pp. II–4I.

²⁷ ACS, Archivio Luigi Mancini, Fondo Galleria Sangiorgi, box 46–50, 6I.

²⁸ ICCD, Ser. E, Roma – Collezione Sangiorgi. The archive owns both prints and glass negatives. Apart from that, the archives of Palazzo Davanzati in Florence as well as the Biblioteca Comunale Carlo Venturini in Massa Lombarda, birthplace of Giuseppe Sangiorgi, hold more relevant materials.

preserved in various institutions all over the world.²⁹ Both the National Archives in London³⁰ and the National Archives of the United States in Washington³¹ hold special intelligence files on the looting of art during World War II, which mention Giorgio Sangiorgi's name in the context of the Göring collection and deserve a more detailed analysis than is possible within the scope of this paper.³² According to Sergio Sangiorgi's widow, at the closing of the gallery he gave away a large part of the furniture due to the difficulty of finding a suitable space for its storage, but kept what he considered to be the "most important" objects; over the years "a few objects of minor interest" have been sold.³³ Sergio Sangiorgi also re-organized and discarded parts of the correspondence and the left-over photo archive in the years following the closing. Further documents were lost during later relocations. The remaining archive, which is now owned by Anna Maria Cima Sangiorgi, consists of invoices, letters, notes, auction catalogues, brochures from the workshop, and a scrapbook of advertisements. A few drawings of artworks are in the possession of her son.

While the family archives do not seem to contain any photographs of artworks from the Galleria Sangiorgi, it is likely that more may be discovered in other institutions, such as museums and collections. With some exceptions,³⁴ searching for an art dealer's (image) archive can be a challenging task. This is especially true for larger institutions, where photographs are often incorporated into thematic collections that do not necessarily indicate a connection to art dealing: most commonly bequests, correspondence, and acquisitions files.³⁵ In addition, for conservational reasons most archives separate visual materials from written documents. If any Sangiorgi photographs have survived in museums, they may have been deposited in different parts of their archives where they would typically be classified according to each museum's specific standards. Research therefore requires those looking for dealers' images to become familiar with institutional histories and to ask specific questions. Furthermore, photographs have often been mounted on cardboard, thus permanently disguising inscriptions on the versos. It is truly fortunate that,

²⁹ Esp.: London, Victoria and Albert Museum Archives, Blythe House, V&A Registry: Sangiorgi Galerie, MA/1/G62; Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Zentralarchiv, bequest Wilhelm von Bode, Galleria Sangiorgi (Rome), 1896–1925, SMB-ZA, IV/NL Bode 6179; Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, The Heim Gallery Records (1965–1991), accession no. 910004, Series I.B. Clients and suppliers, 1965–1990, box 59, folder 32: Sangiorgi, Sergio, 1967–1968.

³⁰ London, National Archives, Kew: British Committee on the Preservation and Restitution of Works of Art, Archives and Other Material in Enemy Hands (Macmillan Committee): Minutes, Correspondence and Papers, 1943–1947, T 209/27/2: *Headquarters Allied Commission, APO 394, Subcommittee for Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives, 20909/25/MFFA, 5. Jan. 1946: Works of Art Exported to Germany by Fascists: II. Works of art sold and exported to Germany despite opposition of Superintendencies and Consiglio Superiore, through political and personal pressure of Mussolini: 8. Lot of July 1942 for Goering*, p. 4.

³¹ Washington, D.C., The National Archives of the United States: USS Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Art Looting Investigation Unit (ALIU), 1945–1946, record group 239: Records of the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas, 1942–1946, series: Consolidated Interrogation Reports (CIR), see unit 2: *Index 1945* (p. xi), and *The Goering Collection 1945 (Table of Contents and Sangiorgi, Giorgio*, pp. 105f); *ibidem*, series: Detailed Interrogation Reports

(DIR), see unit 9: *Walter Andreas Hofer 1945–1946, Attachment 2: List of Dealers from whom Hofer made purchases*, pp. 3f.

³² The files will be discussed in more detail in my doctoral thesis (note 25). Apparently, Walter A. Hofer mainly acquired sculptures and fragments for Hermann Göring, who knew Giorgio Sangiorgi; see the first documents quoted in notes 30 and 31.

³³ This and the following information on the immediate history of the collections and the documents after the close of the gallery is based on email correspondence with Anna Maria Cima Sangiorgi, 14 February 2019 and 31 January 2020.

³⁴ On dealers' archives see esp. Nancy Yeide/Konstantin Akinsha/Amy Walsh, *The AAM Guide to Provenance Research*, Washington, D.C., 2001, and the page "Art Dealers' Archives", on the website of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, <https://www.nga.gov/research/library/imagecollections/dealer-archives.html> (accessed on 31 February 2020); see also the Zentralarchiv für deutsche und internationale Kunstmarktforschung in Cologne, the Antique Dealers' Archives in Leeds, and the Getty's research initiatives in Los Angeles, as mentioned in the introduction to this volume, p. 6.

³⁵ On 'hidden' archival collections see for example Elizabeth Edwards, "Thoughts on the 'Non-Collections' of the Archival Ecosystem", in: *Photo-Objects* (note 25), <https://www.mprl-series.mpg.de/studies/12/4/index.html> (accessed on 16 May 2020).

especially in Bologna, many Sangiorgi photographs have remained on the original supports that were created in the auction house or are not mounted at all. In the case of the Florentine Sangiorgi photographs, many of those glued on the more contemporary supports of the Kunsthistorisches Institut were only fixed at the corners,³⁶ allowing (with the utmost care and attention) a glance of the back of the prints with their typical and easily recognizable notes and handwritings.

Bureaucratic Hybrids

What is indeed most striking about the Sangiorgi photographs is the abundance of material traces and inscriptions such as stamps, labels, and extensive handwritten notes including information on the artworks and their archival classification, instructions for artists in the workshop, memos on transactions, names, addresses, and prices. This combination of different practices, their “hybrid materiality”,³⁷ points to a variety of purposes within the commercial, archival, and artistic spheres of the business. Photographs have always been inherently hybrid objects, permitting cross-overs with various techniques, media, and practices that were already in place before the introduction of photography and not necessarily limited to image production: professionals in all fields, be it the sciences or humanities, in museums or on excavation sites, have combined photography with a variety of practices such as sketching, drawing, and painting, but also categorizing, indexing, classifying, listing, and clipping.³⁸ The Sangiorgi photographs are no exception to this rule: they are bureaucratic hybrids combining documentation, indexing, and communication practices with minute protocol-type formats, artistic

reproduction techniques, and scrapbooking. As suggested earlier, beyond the often negative connotation of ‘bureaucracy’ as an overload of unnecessary administration, in the case of the Galleria Sangiorgi the word can be useful on a heuristic level to describe the manifold organizational purposes that photographs as hybrid working tools acquired in a commercial business like an auction house. The following close readings aim to shed light on some of the routines in place at the Galleria Sangiorgi around 1900. They are summarized and presented in a rather typological manner: each of the analyzed photographs represents a larger group of similar images in the holdings in Rome, Bologna, and Florence and points to recurring groups, patterns, and processes that enable a broader understanding of the gallery’s administrative practices with images.

Photographs as Documents?

The albumen print of a mirror (Fig. 4) was among the first photographs that caught our attention: not only does it depict an object that was for sale at the Galleria Sangiorgi (and likely reproduced in the studio as we shall see), but the mirror glass also reflects the camera and its surroundings, freezing in time the moment in which the picture was taken. The cracked stone floor, the bright light, and the plants mirrored in the glass suggest a terrace or garden setting. Judging from similar examples from the Sangiorgi archive, photographs were often (although not always) taken in the open air to make use of the daylight, which was common practice around 1900. While the preferred setting at the Galleria Sangiorgi seems to have been their “garden of marbles”,³⁹ at least one photograph was taken right on the Piazza Borghese:

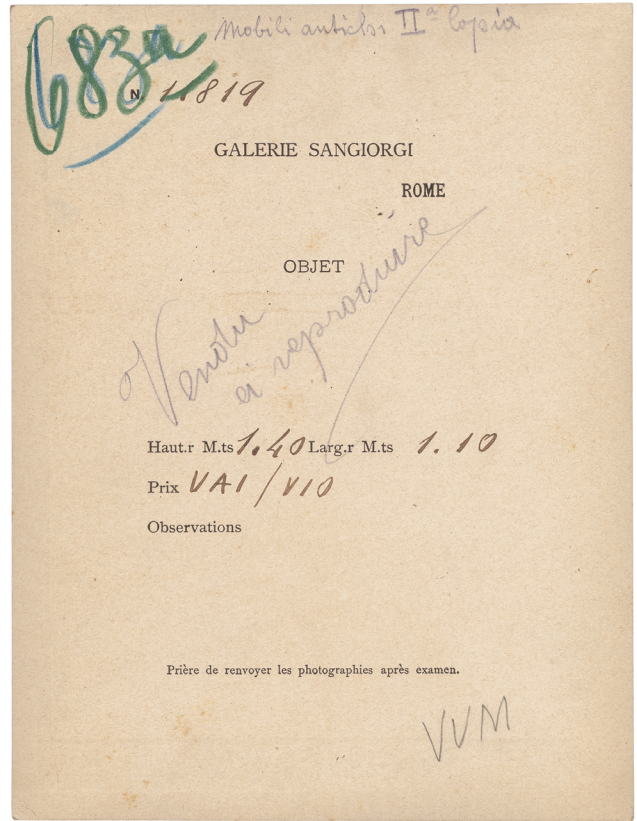
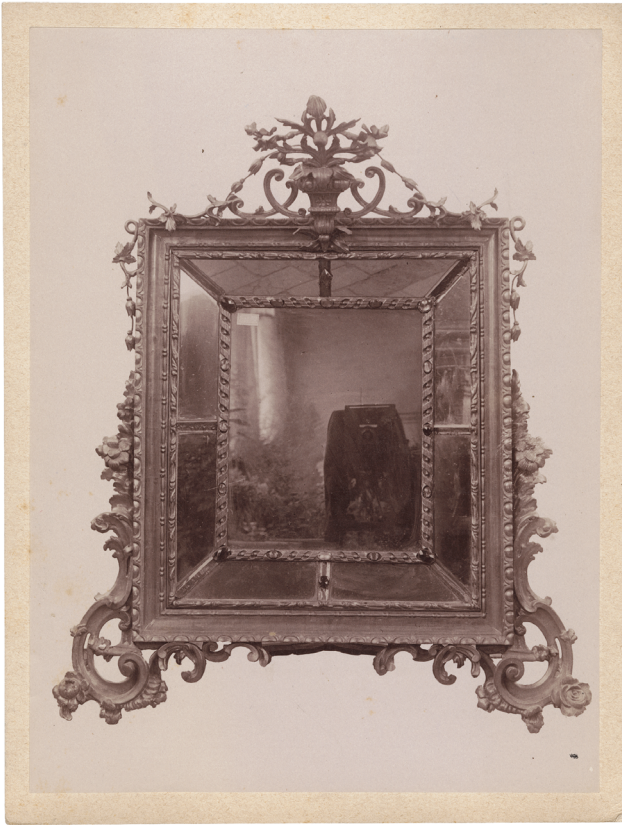
³⁶ This was mostly done with the more resilient silver gelatin prints.

³⁷ Stefanie Klamm, “Hybrid Materiality”, in: *Hybrid Photography: Inter-medial Practices in Sciences and Humanities*, ed. by Sara Hillnhütter/Stefanie Klamm/Friedrich Tietjen (in press).

³⁸ *Photography and Other Media in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Nicoletta

Leonardi/Simone Natale, University Park, Pa., 2018; Stefanie Klamm, *Bilder des Vergangenen: Visualisierung in der Archäologie im 19. Jahrhundert. Fotografie – Zeichnung – Abguss*, Berlin 2017.

³⁹ For a floor plan of the Galleria Sangiorgi depicting the “jardin-marbres”, see Virginia Napoleone, “Bardini e Roma, collaborazioni anti-



it depicts another mirror reflecting the palazzo and the headquarters of the Galleria Sangiorgi, in front of which a camera, a horse, and a carriage are visible (Fig. 5a). Others show large stone-floored rooms that might have belonged to a depository or even the workshop.⁴⁰ For the firm's photographic production Sangiorgi seems to have used both commercial agencies and his own employees, possibly artists from the workshop.⁴¹ At the Galleria Sangiorgi, pictures were

taken according to contemporary standards of object photography that can be observed in the image collections of museums as well as in other dealers' archives: they mostly show straight-up frontal shots of entire objects or a series of similar objects arranged in a row (such as chairs), on a shelf, or in a cabinet (such as ceramics, majolica, glass vessels).⁴² If reflections could not be avoided, mirrors were sometimes turned to the side. Irritating backgrounds were often covered with

quarie per una clientela d'oltreoceano", in: *Dall'asta al museo: 1916–1956–2016. Elia Volpi e Palazzo Davanzati nel collezionismo pubblico e privato del Novecento*, ed. by Brunella Teodori/Jennifer Celani, Florence 2017, pp. 69–81: 73–75. Other photographs in Bologna and Florence confirm the preference for this setting.

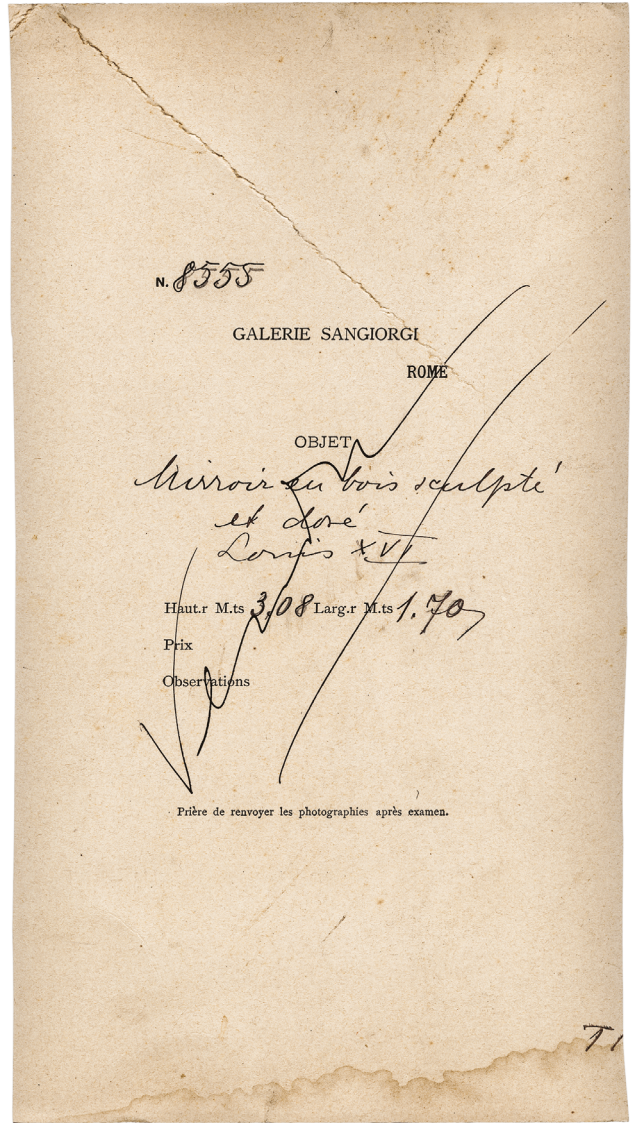
⁴⁰ *Ibidem*: The "magasins" on the floor plan, preceding a room reserved for dispatching, may have served as a photo studio as well as a storage space. Francesca Mambelli believes that some photographs in the Bolognese collection show the inside of the workshop located in the adjacent palazzo (see her paper in this publication, p. 19).

⁴¹ With the help of the Bolognese prints, Francesca Mambelli was able to identify some of the professional photographers employed by Sangiorgi (see *ibidem*, p. 33). A notebook in Rome (ACS, Archivio Luigi Mancini, Fondo Galleria Sangiorgi, box 46) lists the employees of the Galleria Sangiorgi, including birth dates, addresses, the periods they worked for the gallery, and little doodles. The professions mentioned here are "uscieri" (usher), "imballatore" (packer), "fattore" (messenger) and "facchino" (carrier). Known agents are listed but their function is not specified, nor is that of artists or photographers.

⁴² Julia Bärnighausen/Stefanie Klamm, "Bilder für die Produktion:



4a, b *Mirror* (recto and verso),
ca. 1900, albumen print,
18.1 × 14.1 cm. Florence,
Kunsthistorisches Institut
in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut,
Photothek, inv. 612102



5a, b *Mirror in Louis XVI style*
(recto and verso), ca. 1900,
albumen print, 27.2 × 15.1 cm.
Florence, Kunsthistorisches Institut
in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut,
Photothek, inv. 614519

large cloths before the shot. In addition to the manual arrangement of artworks, both negatives and prints were usually optimized *ex post* with the help of conventional retouching techniques, in order to decontextualize the artworks from their surroundings and make them stand out. In the case of the mirror photographed on the Piazza Borghese (Fig. 5a), for example, it is safe to assume that on the negative (which unfortunately does not seem to exist anymore) the area surrounding the mirror was covered with a mask to achieve a relatively even white surface.⁴³ In addition, the upper body of a person standing on the right side of the camera must have been scratched out with a sharp device so that only a closer examination reveals the blurry contours of their legs.⁴⁴ Sangiorgi photographs such as this one not only depict artworks that were bought, copied, and sold at the auction house, but in a self-referential twist they also seem to display their own genesis, which makes them so visually fascinating. I have written elsewhere about the affective and suggestive potential of these mirror photographs, which fluctuate between the revealing and concealing of information and provoke renewed discussions about the myth of photographic transparency – the feeling of being able to see right through the image into the world of nineteenth-century art dealing just as it was.⁴⁵ The mirror photographs provide an opportunity to think about the status of photographs as documents: while the use of this term in relation to photographs seems to have emerged between the

1880s and the 1920s, the idea that photographs are exact images of what appeared in front of the camera is as old as the medium itself and part of its founding narrative.⁴⁶ This topos has long been criticized and was systematically deconstructed in the last few decades.⁴⁷ If we take seriously the objectness of the Sangiorgi photographs as working tools, we will realize how much they were actually staged and manipulated, both through retouching and the use of props. The photographs are documents in the sense that they testify to the artworks that were bought, copied, and sold at the auction house, even long after the gallery had been closed. Thus, their main purpose in the bureaucratic workflow of the auction house was to record the merchandise. At the same time, we have to be clear about the fact that these ‘documentary’ images are not self-explanatory, ‘truthful’ records but rather overlaid with many different practices and meanings.

Visual Index Cards

In order to consult the photographs regularly, the staff of the Galleria Sangiorgi needed to be able to handle them without destroying them in the process. Both the mirror photographs described above are mounted on cardboard, which has been discolored and stained over time by light, dust, and humidity. A large number of photographs show similar mountings, which follow certain patterns such as recurring sizes⁴⁸ and pre-printed forms on the verso with blank spaces to be filled in (Figs. 4b, 5b).

Fotografien und Kunstgewerbe”, in: *Foto-Objekte* (note 5), pp. 82–98, esp. pp. 90–95.

⁴³ For similar examples see esp. Geraldine A. Johnson, “Photographing Sculpture, Sculpting Photography”, in: *Photography and Sculpture: The Art Object in Reproduction*, conference proceedings Williamstown, Mass./ Los Angeles 2014, ed. by Sarah Hamill/Megan R. Luke, Los Angeles 2017, pp. 276–290.

⁴⁴ My warmest thanks go to Dagmar Keultjes for her professional assessment of the photograph and the identification of scratch marks in the upper body area. The legs are probably blurry because of the relatively long exposure time.

⁴⁵ See Bärnighausen, “Spiegelbilder” (note 25).

⁴⁶ Renate Wöhrer, “Einleitung”, in: *Wie Bilder Dokumente wurden: Zur Genealogie dokumentarischer Darstellungspraktiken*, ed. by *eadem*, Berlin 2015, pp. 8–24: 8f.

⁴⁷ For a comprehensive account of this development with a focus on the material approach, see for example Costanza Caraffa, “Photographic Itineraries in Time and Space: Photographs as Material Objects”, in: *The Handbook of Photography Studies*, ed. by Gil Pasternak, London *et al.* 2020, pp. 79–96.

⁴⁸ Mostly ranging between the standardized formats Imperial (25 × 17.5 cm), Boudoir (21.5 × 13.4 cm), and Cabinet (16.6 × 10.8 cm);

Most of the inscriptions are in French, which was a common business language at the time, but many are also in Italian, while English and German are less frequent.⁴⁹ The pre-printed forms are usually headed by the name of the auction house, “Galerie Sangiorgi”, and close with the request “Prière de renvoyer les photographies après examen” (“Please return the photographs after examination”). Aside from that, several other handwritten notes have been left on the versos of the photographs: the most common are three-digit numbers in colored pencil on the upper left, often accompanied by lower-case letters,⁵⁰ and combinations of three to four capital letters on the lower right.⁵¹ The blank spaces are almost always filled in with object numbers, measurements, short descriptions of the artworks, and alphabetic price codes giving an estimation of a minimum and a maximum price. The ciphering was based on code words in which every letter represented a digit from 1 to 9, while the last letter stood for 0. One of the code words was EUCALIPTUS,⁵² another may have been VENTI MARZO.⁵³ Notes like “venduto” (“sold”) are scribbled across the versos, while another especially interesting type of annotation is usually placed discretely in the margin: inscriptions such as “mobili antichi II^a copia” (as in Fig. 4b) may point to the reproduction of an artwork in the studio (in this case

a second copy from an original mirror frame). They also refer to a classification system that arranged the images (and the artworks depicted in them) according to types of objects as well as (art) historical periods. Judging from the Roman, Bolognese, and Florentine holdings some of these categories are “animali”, “acquasantiere”, “cornici”, “imperatorii”, “mobili dorati”, “mobili gotici”, “mobili Rinascimento”, “statue moderne”, “maioliche”, “terracotta”, etc.⁵⁴ Combining both images and written content in a photo-object that was easy to handle, these types of photographs functioned like visual index cards.⁵⁵ While index cards were around long before photography was ever introduced into business practices, they were exceptionally popular in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, sometimes including photographs in addition to written information.⁵⁶

Photographs as Viewing Copies and Commodities

One might question, however, whether these photo-objects are to be understood as visual index cards or rather as mounted images with annotations. In most collections and businesses of the time, mounts ensured both the handling of the photographic prints and their preservation as working tools.⁵⁷ It seems most likely that these particular photographs were

cf. *Thesaurus fotografischer Formate*, <http://www.fotoerbe-sachsen.de/thesauri/thesaurus-fotografischer-formate/> (accessed on 8 February 2020).

⁴⁹ Sangiorgi also used the French language in his publicity, for which he coined the slogan “Ne quittez pas Rome sans visiter la Galerie Sangiorgi” (Loiacono 2011 [note 19], p. 106). Judging from the documents mentioned earlier (note 29), Sangiorgi employed multilingual agents.

⁵⁰ They might be negative numbers or, as Francesca Mambelli supposes in her paper on p. 12, inventory numbers.

⁵¹ They may refer to the final price agreed upon after negotiations or to the hammer price (as Mambelli, *ibidem*, supposes), but also to the price of the workshop copy or even to an invoice number.

⁵² According to Loiacono 2007/08 (note 19), p. 117, who received this information from Sergio Sangiorgi.

⁵³ As deciphered by Francesca Mambelli; see above, p. 11.

⁵⁴ Since these categories (and others) are present in all three archives,

it is likely that most go back to the Galleria Sangiorgi and not to a later classification.

⁵⁵ I owe the idea of photographs as visual index cards to Anke te Heesen.

⁵⁶ On the history of index cards and related image techniques see esp. Markus Krajewski, *Paper Machines: About Cards & Catalogs, 1548–1929*, Cambridge, Mass., et al. 2011; *Zettelkästen: Maschinen der Phantasie*, exh. cat., ed. by Heike Gfrereis/Ellen Strittmatter, Marbach am Neckar 2013; *Câble, copie, code: photographie et technologies de l'information*, ed. by Estelle Blaschke/Davide Nerini (= *Transbordeur*, 3 [2019]); Kelley Wilder, “The Two Cultures of Word and Image: On Materiality and the Photographic Catalog”, in: *Photo-Objects* (note 25), pp. 263–273, <https://www.mprl-series.mpg.de/studies/12/16/index.html> (accessed on 17 February 2020).

⁵⁷ Caraffa (note 2); Elizabeth Edwards, “Photographs, Mounts, and the Tactile Archive”, in: *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, XIX (2014), pp. 1–9.



hybrids that partook of both practices, since they served different purposes as needed. As Mambelli points out, each of Sangiorgi's agents may have had his own photo collection ready at hand,⁵⁸ which could explain not only the different provenance of the Bolognese, Roman, and Florentine holdings but also the diversity of inscriptions and functions. Furthermore, it is probable that, especially in times of low material supply, some of the photographs may have been reused. However, the similarities between the photographs of all three archives suggest at least a common protocol. One of its principles seems to have been the safekeeping of archival and documentary material, as the printed request on the versos of some photographs indicates. Museum files also suggest that agents not only showed photographs of artworks to potential buyers but also left them with their clients for evaluation: when Vittorio Scolari visited the Victoria and Albert Museum on behalf of Sangiorgi in June 1904 he presented "eight photographs of busts, stone doorway, altar piece, arm-chair, &c."⁵⁹ The

minute papers of the museum, from which this quote is taken, are fascinating bureaucratic objects themselves and list each action step taken in the form of a real-time protocol. After stating that "none of the objects represented in the photographs were considered good enough for the Museum", a short answer was drawn up below, with instructions to "write to Mr. V. Scolari. Italia International Exhibition, Earls Court S.W.". The draft letter also states that the photographs were to be sent back. Stamps and notes below confirm that the request was fulfilled on 13 July 1904 and that the photographs reached Scolari two days later. It seems that the museum no longer had use for the photographs, especially since it owned large image collections itself.⁶⁰ However, even when transactions were carried out successfully, Scolari actively asked for his photographs to be returned.⁶¹ In addition to presenting and lending photographs through agents, Sangiorgi produced and sold them on demand, as stated in the collection catalogues and in some advertisements that have recently come to

⁵⁸ See her article above, pp. 21f.

⁵⁹ London, Victoria and Albert Museum Archives, Blythe House, V&A Registry: Sangiorgi Galerie, T11261/04, minute paper, 983.

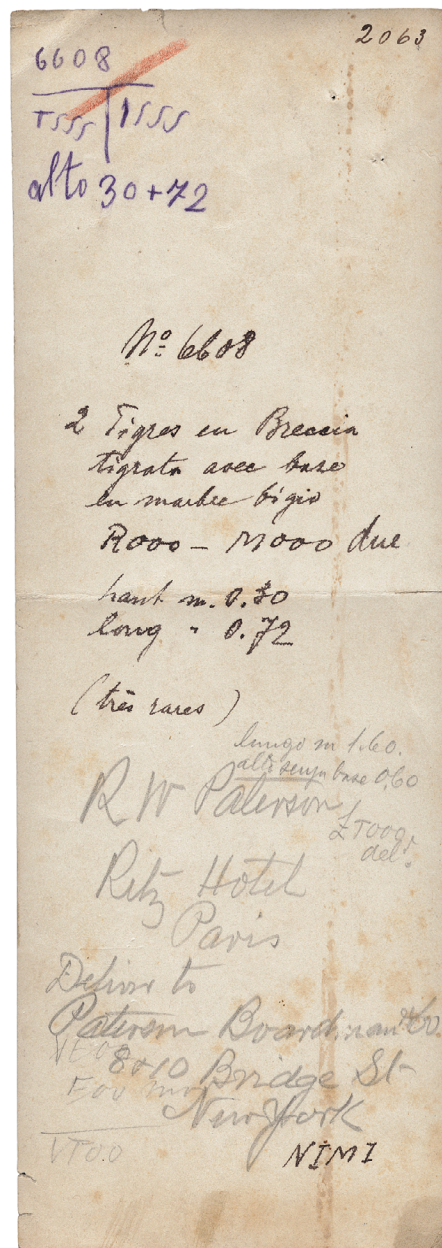
⁶⁰ Anthony Hamber, *A Higher Branch of the Art: Photographing the Fine Arts in England, 1839–1880*, Amsterdam et al. 1996.

⁶¹ This is proved by a letter of 12 July 1904 from Scolari to the Victoria and Albert Museum: in this letter he accepts the museum's price quote for an embroidery and requests that the photographs be returned (London, Victoria and Albert Museum Archives, Blythe House, V&A Registry: Sangiorgi Galerie, T11455/04).

light.⁶² Thus, not only did photographs bear valuable information, both visual and material, they were also valuable commodities themselves – on a documentary, scholarly, and monetary level.⁶³

Protocols and Routing Slips

The use of photographs as memoranda and routing slips seems to have been a more internal practice that each of Sangiorgi's agents customized according to their own specific working routines. A particularly intriguing example from the Photothek is an unmounted silver gelatin print of two sculpted tigers in *tigrata* marble (Fig. 6a). The coloring of the tiger on the right is produced by the spreading of yellow stains over the image, on which silverfish have left their paths of destruction. On the verso (Fig. 6b), around the upper left, measurements are given in Italian, and the objects are estimated to be about 8000 to 6000 according to the EUCALIPTUS price code (“TSSS / ISSS”). Although not explicitly written down, it is likely that the Italian currency of lire was used for this estimation. A more detailed description of the objects is given in French in the center of the verso, with the addition that they were considered very rare: “(très rares)”. This inscription also includes a price range, which is encrypted by the other code word (VENTI MARZO) but confirms the same value of 8000 to 6000 lire for both tigers (“ROOO–MOOO due”). A note below in pencil suggests that a person named R.W. Paterson, who was staying



6a, b *Two sculpted tigers* (recto and verso), ca. 1900, silver gelatin print, 8 × 22.8 cm. Florence, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut, Photothek, inv. 612103

⁶² *Galerie Sangiorgi* (note 21), p. VI. See also Francesca Mambelli's paper in this volume, p. 22.

⁶³ For further thoughts on the value of photographs, see for example Costanza Caraffa, “Objects of Value”, in: *Photo-Objects* (note 25), <https://www.mprl-series.mpg.de/studies/12/2/index.html> (accessed on 6 May 2020). “Visual economies” such as the monetary and ideal values of collection objects are also addressed by Ina Heumann/Axel C. Hüntelmann, “Einleitung”, in: *Bildtatsachen: Visuelle Praktiken der Wissenschaften*, ed. by *idem* (= *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, XXXVI [2013]), pp. 283–293; 286. In addition, see *Sammlungsökonomien* (note I2) and Estelle Blaschke's and Armin Linke's research project *Image Capital*, which they presented among others in Florence: <https://www.khi.fi.it/de/aktuelles/veranstaltungen/2018/09/estelle-blaschke-armin-linke-image-capital.php> (accessed on 28 April 2020).

at the Ritz Hotel in Paris at the time, acquired the tigers for only 4000 lire (“£ 2000”). Judging from the fold in the middle of the photograph and from what we have learned from the Victoria and Albert files, it may have been taken to Paris by the agent himself. Apparently, Paterson then asked for delivery to his company Paterson, Boardman and Knapp in “8 + 10 Bridge Street New York”.⁶⁴ Left of the address three rows of faint letters are jotted down above each other (“VEOO / EOO / VTOO”): since the letters correlate with the VENTI MARZO code we can assume that what we see here is the adding up of sums and perhaps the delivery costs.⁶⁵

Similar to a memo, the photo-object records not only the sculptures that were on sale but also details about them and the negotiations that took place. Just as the images on the recto often visualize more than just the artworks, the annotations on the verso preserve a record of their journeys and purposes. While agents took notes, employees of the Galleria Sangiorgi also communicated with each other through photographs, and especially through inscriptions on the versos. Annotations such as “à reproduire”, “prêt” or “to be delivered” (all of which exist in different variations) indicate that a request was made to the artists in the workshop, the shippers, and the delivery staff. At the Galleria Sangiorgi, photographs were used similarly to the Victoria and Albert minute papers: to communicate information to other staff members

and to keep a record of the production or marketing of an object. At times, other dealers came into play, as in the case of a mantelpiece that circulated in a photograph now in the Federico Zeri Foundation: “NB before shipping wait further instructions as I might sell it to somebody else at better price as I have other dealings [deleted: French would be only] would give it French [French & Company] only when others fail.”⁶⁶ When it comes to the workshop and the reproduction of artworks, the notes get even more extensive.

Imitations, Copies, and Reproductions

Photographs also served as models for Sangiorgi’s artists, who copied, varied, or imitated original pieces with the help of a great range of tracing, copying, and drawing techniques. Parts of artworks could be added, left out, and changed according to the clients’ wishes and their financial capacities.⁶⁷ Other objects were created from scratch in the style of certain periods or artists, blurring the lines between reproduction and forgery: although Sangiorgi claimed authenticity for his original pieces and publicly promoted his reproduction services,⁶⁸ the question of forgery has been raised and calls for further investigation.⁶⁹ In addition to serving as models in the workshop, the Sangiorgi photographs were used as templates for catalogues.⁷⁰ A silver gelatin print of an ornamental frame with Sangiorgi provenance (Fig. 7) shows no written inscriptions at all. Apart

⁶⁴ In *Hendricks Commercial Register of the United States* [...], New York 331925, II, p. 1607, the company is listed among the food and oil businesses. An elephant figurine with the inscription “Compliments of Paterson, Boardman & Knapp 8 Bridge St. N.Y.” is pictured on a commercial trading website (<https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/paterson-boardman-knapp-ny-advertising-metal>; accessed on 18 February 2020), which indicates that the company gave away promotional gifts. The tigers may have served a similar purpose.

⁶⁵ There are at least four more prints of the same tiger sculptures in Bologna (inv. 268724, 268727, 269728, and 268729); however, they lack the name, address, and delivery notes. The varying Sangiorgi numbers suggest that the tigers existed in at least two versions.

⁶⁶ Bologna, Federico Zeri Foundation, inv. 265947.

⁶⁷ See for example a note on the verso of the photograph of a cassone carved in walnut: “N.B. as you can see there are two motives. One with cupids and the other with ornamental design to be selected either of them, which one likes best” (Bologna, Federico Zeri Foundation, inv. 266130; the recto is reproduced above in the article by Francesca Mambelli in this volume, p. 32, Fig. 20; for the use of drawing techniques, see *ibidem*, pp. 31–37).

⁶⁸ *Galerie Sangiorgi* (note 21).

⁶⁹ Loiacono 2011 (note 19). On the aspect of reproduction, see also Francesca Mambelli’s paper in this volume, esp. pp. 20, 25–28, 33f., 38f.

⁷⁰ This was common practice; see esp. Stefanie Klamm, “Transformationen einer Sammlung”, in: *Foto-Objekte* (note 5), pp. 128–167.

from a blind stamp of the firm Fotografia Reali, at first sight there seem to be no indications as to its context.⁷¹ However, the mise-en-scène and heavy retouching offers some clues as to its genesis: the photograph was taken with a cloth placed behind the mirror. It was then retouched on the negative plate, in order to conceal the mirror's reflecting surface, as well as on the positive, where a white line surrounding the frame was added. This type of intervention was usually done in preparation for publications, in this case an auction catalogue. The collection of the Florentine-based painter Edoardo Gelli (1852–1939) was sold under the direction of Giuseppe Sangiorgi in May 1910. Our photograph was reproduced on the title page of the plates section with the inscription “Collection Gelli / Florence” printed in the blank space (Fig. 8).⁷² The use of the Sangiorgi photographs as both models and templates takes the concept of hybridity to yet another level: that of reproduction.⁷³ Not only do the photographs depict objects that were reproduced in Sangiorgi's workshop using various techniques and media, they are themselves inherently transformational objects being developed, processed, altered, combined, and re-created all the time. The status of the concept of reproduction has changed drastically since Walter Benjamin detected a loss of “aura”, tradition, and singularity in artworks in what he called the age of technical reproduction.⁷⁴ Now, as Friedrich Tietjen has put it, “reproductions convey both more and less than that which they reproduce”.⁷⁵ While photographs may not be able to stand in for (or even replace) the objects they depict, they open up much more than what is visible in the



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7 Fotografia Reali,
*Mirror from the collection
of Edoardo Gelli, ca. 1910,*
silver gelatin print,
23.1 × 17.3 cm. Florence,
Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz -
Max-Planck-Institut, Photothek
(Cimelia Photographica),
inv. 615840

⁷¹ Fotografia Reali was active ca. 1910–1940. In the 1970s, Rodolfo Reali gave ca. 2,000 negatives to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. The mirror was not among them. See Bärnighausen, “Spiegelbilder” (note 6), pp. 110, 115.

⁷² *Catalogue de la vente des objets d'art avant appartenus à Mr. Edouard Gelli de Florence, 9.–17.5.1910, via Marsilio Ficino, n. 12, Rome 1910, n. p.*; the mirror frame appears again as lot no. 286.

⁷³ Cf. Friedrich Tietjen, “Hybrid Reproduction”, in: *Hybrid Photography* (note 37).

⁷⁴ Walter Benjamin, “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit” [1935–1939], in: *idem, Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann/Hermann Schweppenhäuser, Frankfurt 1991, I.2 (third version), pp. 471–508: 477.

⁷⁵ Tietjen (note 73).

image through their own materiality and the many layers of meaning-making attached to it.

More 'Paper Technologies'

Since the overwhelming majority of the Sangiorgi documents seem to be on paper, the history of the gallery presents itself as a history of paper technologies. The term was first coined in the history of sciences and used for the analysis of medical workflows through mostly written documents.⁷⁶ However, the concept is at least partly applicable to photographs in the sense that they often rely on paper supports. This is not to say that the Galleria Sangiorgi did not work with other materials. On the contrary, where there is a print there is (usually) also a negative – in the nineteenth century they were most commonly on glass, and later on photographic film. Besides the glass negatives in the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome, which still require thorough analysis, the Federico Zeri Foundation was recently bestowed with 190 stereoscopic glass slides.⁷⁷ While the limiting of photographs to paper objects may be problematic in general, the term also allows for a broader understanding of bureaucratic practices that otherwise may have been overlooked, like paper clipping and scrapbooking.⁷⁸

It also remains to be seen whether the archive of the Galleria Sangiorgi included more than just the one photographic album at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome: it contains forty-five albumen prints of sculptures and busts including inventory numbers, titles,

measurements, and estimated prices using the aforementioned code VENTI MARZO.⁷⁹ On the one hand, it cannot be ruled out that the album may be an exceptional artifact, even a later creation. On the other hand, it evokes similar objects in other institutions, such as Stefano Bardini's inventory albums⁸⁰ or the so-called Guard Books of the Victoria and Albert Museum, which not only documented artworks but also provided access to other photographic records of them.⁸¹ A detailed comparison with both examples may help us to gain a deeper understanding of the Sangiorgi album in the future.

Photo-Itineraries: Transformations and Shifting Values

At the Galleria Sangiorgi, photographs documented the buying and selling of artworks and were used to communicate and optimize workflows. They functioned as exemplary models for the reproduction of artworks (possibly forgeries) in the workshop of the gallery and provided templates for illustrations of the sales catalogues. On the outside, photographs were representational tools and essential to Sangiorgi's corporate identity and public relations, as can be seen in the catalogues as well as numerous advertisements and announcements in contemporary newspapers. They physically travelled with Sangiorgi's agents, were sent out to clients, and even sold on a regular basis. Not only did they enable communication processes and the gathering of information about valuable artworks, they were also objects of value themselves. In the broadest

⁷⁶ Volker Hess/J. Andrew Mendelsohn, "Case and Series: Medical Knowledge and Paper Technology, 1600–1900", in: *History of Science*, XLVIII (2010), pp. 287–314; *idem*, "Paper Technology und Wissensgeschichte", in: *NTM: Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Wissenschaften, Technik und Medizin*, XXI (2013), pp. 1–10. See also Lisa Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents*, Durham 2014.

⁷⁷ See Francesca Mambelli's paper in this volume, p. 16, note 20.

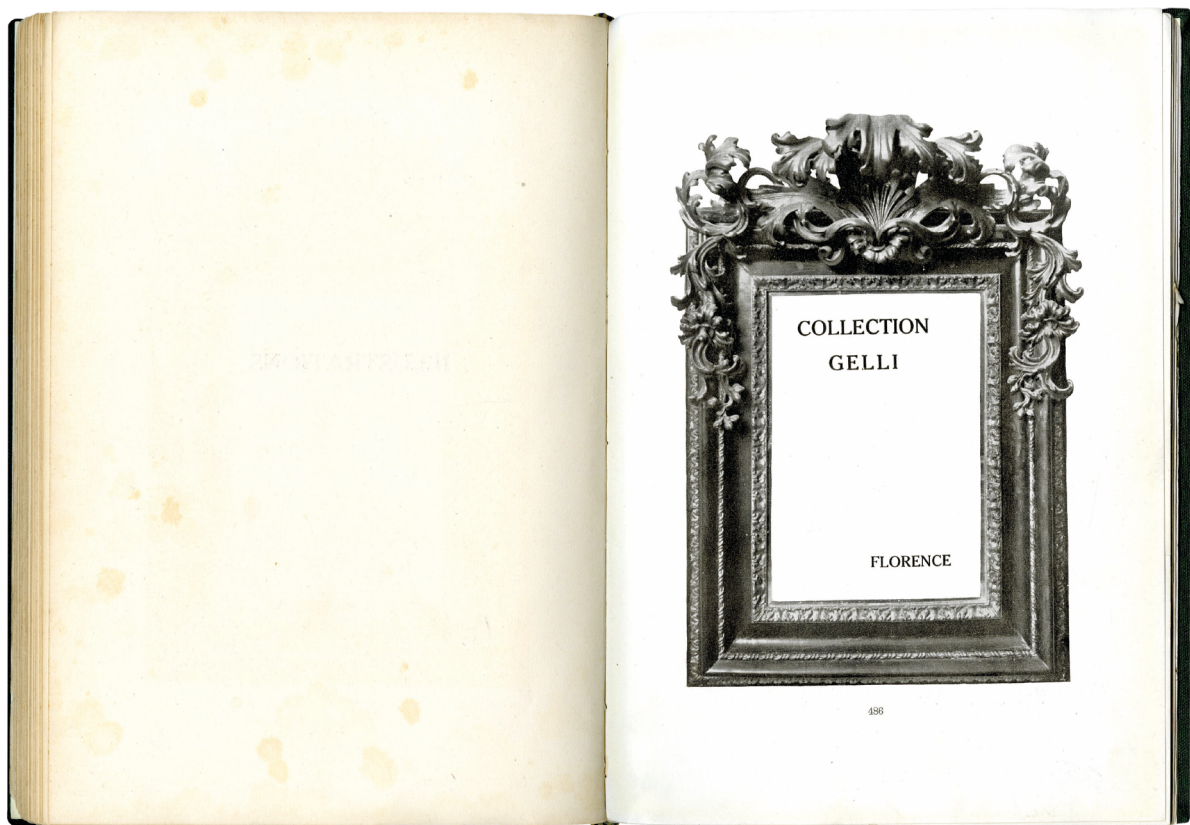
⁷⁸ On the scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings, see also Francesca Mambelli's paper in this publication, pp. 21f.

⁷⁹ ACS, Archivio Luigi Mancini, Fondo Galleria Sangiorgi, box 61. For this album, see also the article by Francesca Mambelli in this volume,

p. 38 and Fig. 26; in her view the prices relate to the copies of the statues produced in the workshop.

⁸⁰ See Lynn Catterson's paper in this volume, pp. 76f.

⁸¹ The Guard Books of the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum (formerly the South Kensington Museum) are bound volumes collecting studio photographs of artworks from 1856 to 1997. They were originally part of the museum's public picture library, where researchers could order prints from the stored negatives by referencing the print numbers: Steve Woodhouse, "The Guard Book Project", in: *V&A Blog*, <https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/news/the-guard-book-project> (accessed on 16 May 2020). Given this example, the Sangiorgi album too



8 *Catalogue de la vente des objets d'art avant appartenus à Mr. Edouard Gelli de Florence [...]*, Rome 1910, frontispiece of the plates section

sense of the word, the Sangiorgi photographs were commodities in the “monetary, epistemic, and communicative cycles”⁸² of the Galleria Sangiorgi.

The circulation of photographs has frequently been described by using metaphors of movement such as ‘trajectory’, ‘route’, ‘journey’, ‘travel’, or ‘itinerary’ – to name just a few.⁸³ Although each of them have their weaknesses, they capture some of the complexities connected to the mobility of photographs. According

to the editors of *Mobility, Meaning and the Transformations of Things* (2013), the term ‘itinerary’ allows for a less linear approach to the histories and provenance of cultural objects, as it includes both active and static moments, stopovers, irregular courses, and diversions: more than all other words related to mobility, which generally imply a beginning and a destination, ‘itinerary’ can allude to an unintentional movement for its own sake creating shifts in values and meanings.⁸⁴ The

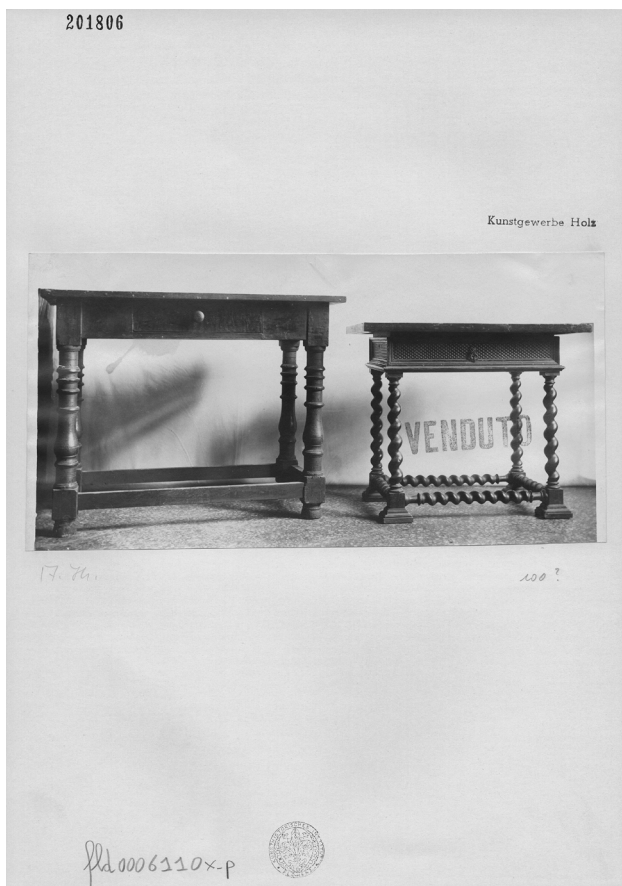
may have referenced not only artworks to be copied but also other photographic material held at the gallery.

⁸² Heumann/Hüntelmann (note 63), p. 286.

⁸³ For critical discussions of different approaches to the materiality of

photographs, including concepts of mobility, see esp. Elizabeth Edwards, “Objects of Affect: Photography Beyond the Image”, in: *Annual Review of Anthropology*, XLI (2012), pp. 221–234; Caraffa (note 47).

⁸⁴ Hans Peter Hahn/Hadas Weiss, “Introduction: Biographies, Trav-



9 Two seventeenth-century tables, ca. 1900, silver gelatin print mounted on cardboard, 11.4 × 22.3 cm. Florence, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut, Photothek, inv. 201806

10 *Récamière* with two chairs in Louis XV style, ca. 1900, albumen print mounted on cardboard, 11.5 × 22.5 cm. Florence, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz - Max-Planck-Institut, Photothek, inv. 176031

el, and Itineraries of Things”, in: *Mobility, Meaning and the Transformations of Things*, conference proceedings Frankfurt 2011, ed. by *idem*, Oxford et al. 2013, pp. 1–14: 2, 8.

⁸⁵ Florence, Kunsthistorisches Institut, Photothek, *Inventarbuch der Abbildungen*, XXI–XXIV, *passim*.

⁸⁶ See on the subject Costanza Caraffa, “Manzoni in the Photothek: Photographic Archives as Ecosystems”, in: *Instant Presence: Represent-*

latter are at the heart of the Sangiorgi photographs. None of the visual and material practices attached to them are easily explained. The photographs were circulated in various departments of the auction house and beyond: they changed hands, places, purposes, and shifted between media. Simultaneously, recurring annotations indicate that one photograph could touch the archival, bureaucratic, artistic, (re-)productive, and representational spheres of the auction house, thereby constantly acquiring new purposes and traveling on irregular itineraries (so to speak).

These itineraries continue at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz. We do not know when or how the Sangiorgi photographs entered the Photothek, since the inventory books attribute them to the so-called *Altbestand* (old holdings) without providing any other information on their former owners.⁸⁵ Unfortunately, neither the acquisition lists nor the accession books, nor the institute’s correspondence mention any accession of photographs from the Galleria Sangiorgi or its representatives. The history of the *Altbestand*, however, provides some helpful clues: it includes photographs that were not inventoried at the time of their acquisition but rather retrospectively. This activity was begun by Ulrich Middeldorf, collaborator of the Photothek from 1927 and 1935 and later director of the institute, in 1929.⁸⁶ Such stock-taking of the old holdings was likely due to cut-backs during World War I and its aftermath, which did not always allow the staff to keep up with new accessions.⁸⁷ It was also Middeldorf’s special interest in the Photothek that furthered the documentation and growth of its collections.⁸⁸ The Sangiorgi

ing Art in Photography. In Honor of Josef Sudek (1896–1976), ed. by Hana Buddeus/Katarína Mašterová/Vojtěch Lahoda, Prague 2017, pp. 121–136: 130.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁸ See Ute Dercks, “Ulrich Middeldorf Prior to Emigration: The Photothek of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz (1928–1935)”, in: *Art Libraries Journal*, XXVIII (2013), 4, pp. 29–36.



photographs were mostly inventoried in the 1960s, but Irene Hueck, head of the photo library between 1965 and 1999, suspects they may have entered the archive before 1933.⁸⁹ This date coincides roughly with the death of Giuseppe Sangiorgi in 1928, the man who had shaped the gallery in its most prosperous years.

Some photographs were mounted on the cardboards of the Photothek (Figs. 9, 10), inventoried in the books, and deposited in the main holdings. While the inventory books do not specify the provenance of the photographs, they do, however, attribute the artworks to the auction house. It is therefore safe to assume that whoever inventoried the photographs either worked with an intact corpus known to come from the Galleria Sangiorgi or deduced the provenance of the works from the annotations

on the photographs, which would have been a rather time-consuming task considering that the name Sangiorgi is not actually written or printed on most of them. The photographs that were thought of as being, for one reason or another, unsuitable for the main holdings were placed in the “Duplicates” and “Various” boxes mentioned above. While the “Duplicates” were considered visually redundant reproductions of images already present in the main holdings, the photographs labeled “Various” were probably never meant to be inventoried for different reasons. Given the fact that most Sangiorgi photographs in the “Duplicates” boxes are not doubles at all,⁹⁰ it seems that both categories were mixed up at some point and are now blended, making it rather difficult to differentiate between the two. The concepts of value attached to these boxes, and therefore to the Sangiorgi

⁸⁹ Correspondence with Irene Hueck, 16 January 2018. The author of the inventory entries remains unknown. Irene Hueck does not remember the Sangiorgi photographs.

⁹⁰ In 2015 and 2016 the author compared each of the Sangiorgi “Duplicates” to the main holdings, focusing on the applied arts. With some minor exceptions, there were no matches.



11, 12 Installation view of Sangiorgi photographs in the exhibition *Unboxing Photographs* in the Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (2018)

photographs inside them, are especially intriguing: since the “Duplicates” were mostly back-up images to be swapped with other institutions, they ranked quite low in the hierarchy of the archive, as did the miscellaneous (“Various”) photographs. Nevertheless, collections like these were essential to the functioning of image archives in that they ensured both

scholarly exchange and growth.⁹¹ Since the archivists of the 1960s were trained to focus on the represented artworks rather than the material photo-objects, they probably selected photographs accordingly. In 2015, we saw the Sangiorgi photographs with different eyes: on account of their materiality, they were re-invented and placed in the *Cimelia Photographica* section dedicated to especially valuable photographs.⁹² In a broader sense, this section was molded by criteria that go beyond aestheticism or visual representation and include photographic materiality in all its forms.⁹³ At the same time, a selection of Sangiorgi photographs both from the *Cimelia* section and the main holdings was digitized and uploaded to the digital photo library of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz,⁹⁴ where they were presented in new forms in the digital realm,⁹⁵ reaching out to users that may otherwise not have known about them. In 2018, some of the Sangiorgi photographs were presented in the exhibition *Unboxing Photographs* in Berlin (Figs. II, I2),⁹⁶ which once again raised the question of how to handle concepts of value. The photographs’ status changed drastically over the course of time: from bureaucratic instruments of art dealers they became working tools of art historians (with their own archival bureaucracies), some of them discarded and ready to be given away, and finally photographic ‘treasures’, digital files, and even exhibits.

Denoting something as valuable always involves the process of singling it out. In the case of the Sangiorgi photographs this happened by separating them from their archival surroundings, placing them in the

⁹¹ In his forthcoming paper “The Exchange Society, 1897–1901: la fotografia come veicolo per la circolazione dei codici miniati in Europa”, presented at the conference *Fattizität und Gebrauch früher Fotografie* (Biblioteca Hertziana, Rome, 22–24 March 2017), Patrizio Gianferro discusses the photograph exchange practices of scholars. See also Elizabeth Edwards, “Exchanging Photographs: Preliminary Thoughts on the Currency of Photography in Collecting Anthropology”, in: *Journal des anthropologues*, 80–81 (2000), pp. 21–46.

⁹² On this section, see Caraffa (note 7).

⁹³ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁴ See above, note 8.

⁹⁵ On the materiality of the digital see esp. Joanna Sassoon, “Photographic Materiality in the Age of Digital Reproduction”, in: *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, ed. by Elizabeth Edwards / Janice Hart, London 2004, pp. 186–202; Paolo Favero, *The Present Image: Visible Stories in a Digital Habitat*, Cham 2018.

⁹⁶ See above, note 9, and Stefanie Klamm/Franka Schneider, “Unboxing Photographs: Foto-Objekte ausstellen”, in: *Foto-Objekte* (note 5), pp. 244–263.



Cimelia boxes, digitizing a selection, and temporarily staging them in an exhibition setting. Although originally intended to stress the importance of formerly ‘marginal’ objects, this decontextualization also entails the risk of losing sight of the archival ecosystem as a whole, of building new hierarchies that did not exist before, and of underpinning certain problematic narratives by default, as Sharon Macdonald remarked in the context of post-national and transcultural exhibition projects.⁹⁷ Her argument also applies to our case study: the idea of the hybridity of photographs, for example, may

suggest the existence of other purely objective media, such as digital files, just as the idea of archives as performative institutions may enhance concepts of stability and evidentiality in other areas such as digital spaces.

This is dangerous since (beyond all existing discourse⁹⁸) digitization projects are still used as a knockout argument to legitimize the discarding of image archives.⁹⁹ While it is true that collections like the Photothek’s are based on selection strategies similar to those of commercial businesses and that their very existence goes back to ‘economic’ decision-

⁹⁷ Sharon J. Macdonald, “Museums, National, Postnational and Transcultural Identities”, in: *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, ed. by Bettina Messias Carbonell, Oxford 2012, pp. 273–286: 281f.

⁹⁸ Among the extensive scholarship on the subject, see for example Sassoon (note 95) and Favero (note 95), as well as Nina Lager Vestberg’s current research project *Digitization and Diversity: Potentials and Challenges for*

Diversity in the Culture and Media Sector, <https://www.ntnu.edu/employees/nina.vestberg> (accessed on 16 May 2020).

⁹⁹ On this problem, see Costanza Caraffa, *Florence Declaration: Recommendations for the Preservation of Analogue Photo Archives*, Florence 2009, p. 1, <https://www.khi.fi.it/en/photothek/florence-declaration.php> (accessed on 6 May 2020).

making about what to keep and what to get rid of,¹⁰⁰ the consequence of this must not be to accept the devaluation or dissolution of archives with a shrug of the shoulders. On the contrary, exploiting concepts of value may even help us to navigate through discourses of de-accessioning: in the wake of the desire witnessed in recent centuries to “document the world”, we are now faced with an extensive material heritage (including photographs) that needs to be taken care of.¹⁰¹ It seems that the survival of archives is not only a question of capacities but also of priorities on the part of decision-makers and of transparency about what is generally accepted as valuable and worth investing in.¹⁰²

A possible approach to escape the dilemma of creating new problems by default is, according to Macdonald,¹⁰³ to start with the objects themselves in order to avoid collective presuppositions and to carefully place these objects in context and reflect on our own perspectives and ideas critically and openly. This reflection includes the use and productive combination of both analogue and digital formats, as suggested, for example, by the *Florence Declaration*.¹⁰⁴

Epilogue: Photo Archives and Art Market Studies

Compared to large archives like Stefano Bardini's, relatively few written documents from the Galleria Sangiorgi seem to have survived.¹⁰⁵ This,

however, is not a deficit but rather a chance to write a truly object-based history of art dealing that takes seriously photographs (and other images) as material objects. Their study may result in greater appreciation of archival material, especially in art market studies and provenance research. While museum professionals and provenance researchers are aware of the potential of visual resources, many scholars have only just begun to reconsider the material qualities of photographs: some researchers have recently started to focus on photographs as the working tools of art dealers.¹⁰⁶ However, other media¹⁰⁷ as well as bureaucratic practices remain still largely underrepresented in this discourse. Sketches, drawings, paintings, prints, portfolios, books, and casts were only a few of the instruments used as working tools: despite initial enthusiasm, the technical capabilities of photography were still limited before and around 1850 and consequently viewed with some skepticism.¹⁰⁸ While photographs induced a desire for visual evidentiality and fostered the distribution and availability of information, they did not replace other media but were instead incorporated into already existing systems of media and practices.¹⁰⁹ It is therefore not surprising that the Galleria Sangiorgi continued to work with different kinds of bureaucratic instruments, combining them as required. A comprehensive *Wissensgeschichte* of art dealing that not only encompasses representation practices through

¹⁰⁰ Matthias Bruhn, “Entsorgen: Über den Umgang mit Fotografie”, in: *Sammlungswirtschaft* (note 12), pp. 235–251, esp. pp. 250f.

¹⁰¹ *Documenting the World: Film, Photography and the Scientific Record*, ed. by Gregg Mitman/Kelley Wilder, Chicago 2016.

¹⁰² See Schwartz/Cook (note 13). One of the most influential methods of archival appraisal has been developed by Terry Cook, “Macroappraisal in Theory and Practice: Origins, Characteristics, and Implementation in Canada, 1950–2000”, in: *Archival Science*, V (2005), pp. 101–161.

¹⁰³ Macdonald (note 97).

¹⁰⁴ Caraffa (note 99).

¹⁰⁵ On the Bardini archive, see Lynn Catterson's paper in this volume, pp. 69–91.

¹⁰⁶ See esp. Patrizia Cappellini, *Sulle tracce del fondo fotografico di Elia Volpi nella Donazione Vannini Parenti alla Fototeca del Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz*, master thesis Florence 2011; Candi (note 19); Annalea Tunesi, *Stefano Bardini's Photographic Archive: A Visual Historical Document*, PhD diss. Leeds 2014, <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/7490/> (accessed on 9 February 2020).

¹⁰⁷ *Photography and Other Media* (note 38).

¹⁰⁸ Mirjam Brusius, “From Photographic Science to Scientific Photography: Talbot and the Decipherment at the British Museum around 1850”, in: *William Henry Fox Talbot: Beyond Photography*, conference proceedings Cambridge 2010, ed. by *eadem*/Katrina Dean/Chitra Ramalingam, New Haven/London 2013, pp. 219–244.

¹⁰⁹ For example in archaeology, as shown by Klamm (note 38). For the

visual depictions but also does justice to the epistemological potential of photographs and other (visual) media as bureaucratic and hybrid objects has yet to be written. Crucial for such a study would be the question of how the emergence of photography coincided with political and economic factors, such as globalization in general and the introduction of new import and export laws in Italy and beyond, and what changes (if any) photography brought to art dealing practices.¹¹⁰

As we have seen, photographs were essential to art dealing at the Galleria Sangiorgi: they were used as documents, visual index cards, viewing copies, routing slips, models and templates – to name just a few of their vast range of purposes. Judging from other dealers' archives in Cologne, Leeds, and Los Angeles, as well as those analyzed in this volume, the Galleria Sangiorgi was not an exception in this regard either:¹¹¹ all these archives include vast numbers of photographs ranging from the nineteenth century up to the beginning of the twenty-first, thereby broadening the historical perspective with a more contemporary dimension.¹¹² Since images in general, especially photographs, were (and still are) at the heart of art dealing but have yet to be analyzed in a comparative study that ventures beyond representation, there seems to be a general need for expanded image literacy in the field of art market studies that also includes material and bureaucratic aspects, as pointed out in the introduction to this publication.

analogies in the handling and circulation of prints to that of photographs, see Anthony Griffiths, *The Print before Photography: An Introduction to European Printmaking 1550–1820*, London 2016.

¹¹⁰ My forthcoming dissertation (note 25) will consider these questions.

¹¹¹ As demonstrated in the introduction to this volume, pp. 6f. The publication of this paper precedes my research trips to some of these archives, which had to be canceled due to the current global health crisis. An analysis of the materials in these archives and their comparison to the Sangiorgi photographs must therefore be postponed to the doctoral thesis, for which see note 25.

In the wake of the foundation of many specialized institutions in the last few decades,¹¹³ dealers' archives are proving to be integral to the academic recognition of art market studies, which is taking place at this very moment in time. As suggested before, we are in the privileged position of observing the emergence of an academic discipline through the establishment of archives. The institutionalization of art history in the nineteenth century, which was one of the major research focuses of the project *Photo-Objects*, shall serve as a closing example. It is in many regards similar to the more current dynamics that are taking place in the field of art market studies, but also essentially different. In the project we attempted to demonstrate that photographs not only functioned as visual resources for art historians but they were also used as material working tools: they were written and drawn on, colored, stamped, cut and ripped apart, pasted back together, mounted, and so on. It was through these highly tactile practices, combined with the comparative analysis common not only to art history but also the natural sciences at the time, that scholars created new ideas and research, thereby shaping the disciplinary canon.¹¹⁴ While institutionalization processes are certainly not the same today as they were a hundred years ago, we are currently able to observe at least a few similar patterns: one of them is the creation of a collection of (visual) resources as a basis for scholarly work, which, in turn, is also shaped by these resources. Beyond this more obvious analogy,

¹¹² For example: the archives of Phillips of Hitchin (1882–2010), H.M. Lee & Sons, and R.A. Lee (1920–1995), and Stair & Andrew (Stair & Co., 1911–1980s) at the Brotherton Library Special Collections in Leeds; the records of French & Company (1911–1998) as well as the Heim Gallery Records (1965–1991) at the Special Collections of the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, and most of the holdings in the Zentralarchiv für Deutsche und Internationale Kunstmarktforschung in Cologne, according to the information listed on its website: <http://www.zadik.info/> (accessed on 6 May 2020).

¹¹³ See the introduction to this volume, p. 6.

¹¹⁴ *Foto-Objekte* (note 5).

art market studies is a nascent academic discipline that also considers itself to be essentially transdisciplinary: the aim of art market archives (and art market studies in general) is not only to lay a foundation for scholarly analysis but also to preserve more recent bequests from dealers and galleries, maintain international networks of exchange, share academic discourses outside of the canon, and draw conclusions about our current approach to art markets, consumerism, and the economy in general. It is through material like the photographs from the Galleria Sangiorgi in Rome that we become sensitive to the dynamics of institutions, the epistemological potential of photographs,

and the fact that everything is historically conditioned, thereby positioning ourselves critically within current research debates.

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Abbreviations

ACS Archivio Centrale dello Stato di Roma
ICCD Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo
e la Documentazione, Rome

Abstract

The paper examines material forms of image use in the Galleria Sangiorgi auction house in Rome around 1900 through photographs in the holdings of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz. Drawing from the history of sciences as well as art history, the analysis centers around both image patterns and object economies, attempting to establish a typology of photographic practices. As ‘bureaucratic hybrids’ the photographs were part of the ‘paper technologies’ of the Galleria Sangiorgi, serving as templates and models, visual index cards, routing slips, viewing copies, and archival documents at the same time. They circulated between customers, employees, dealers, and experts at the Galleria Sangiorgi and beyond. At the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz they continue to change in appearance, meaning, and value far beyond their initial context. Not only do the Sangiorgi photographs allow us to draw conclusions about the history of the auction house and the mechanisms of the international art trade at the turn of the century, they also enable us to look beyond academic narratives and venture into transdisciplinary contexts such as business and commerce while deconstructing conventional concepts of value and presuppositions. Finally, through their archival biographies and the re-evaluations they testify to, the Sangiorgi photographs provide an opportunity to reflect on the relatively new research field of art market studies, which is still in the process of academic institutionalization.

Photo Credits

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut (photo Stefano Fancelli): Fig. 1. – *Author*: Figs. 2, 3. – *Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut* (photos Stefano Fancelli/Cristian Ceccanti): Figs. 4–7, 9, 10. – *Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut*: Fig. 8. – *Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kunstbibliothek, Berlin* (photo Dietmar Katz): Figs. 11, 12.

Umschlagbild | Copertina:

Archivschachtel mit Sangiorgi-Fotos in der Photothek des Kunsthistorisches Institut
in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut | Scatola d'archivio con foto Sangiorgi nella Fototeca
del Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut
(Detail aus Abb. I, S. 42 | dettaglio da fig. I, p. 42)

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