



Photo Archives and the Photographic Memory of Art History Part III, March 25 - 26, 2011 Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

From Street to Storage: Grupo de Fotógrafos Independientes in the Personal Archives of Armando Cristeto

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This talk will relate my experiences working with the personal photography archives of Armando Cristeto, a photographer and historian living in Mexico City. Cristeto was a member of the photography collective known as the *Grupo de Fotógrafos Independientes*, one of the numerous cooperatives of artists known as *Los Grupos* proliferating during the late 1970s in Mexico. Founded by Cristeto's brother Adolfo Patiño, the *Fotógrafos* sought to reach new audiences by taking their exhibitions out onto the street, where their works could interact with the urban context and be appreciated by new classes of people. Their exhibitions were installed along the sidewalks of Mexico City, employing clothesline to hang their photographic prints, or were even paraded through the streets on wheeled carts. This ephemeral and interactive method of display bordered on the performative, and carried an institutional critique in the avoidance of traditional exhibition venues.

Due to the transient nature of the practices of the *Fotógrafos Independientes*, research in “hidden archives” like Cristeto's is essential to understanding the group's production. This paper will explore how the activities of the *Fotógrafos* can be reconstructed through the assembly of photographic documentation preserved in Cristeto's archives, including the images produced by the group's members themselves in addition to photographic records of their temporary exhibitions and events. This research comprises a part of my doctoral dissertation, which considers the theme of “the street” in photography in Mexico City after 1968.

Biographical Note

Denise Birkhofer is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University specializing in 20th century art of the Americas. Her dissertation addresses the theme of “the street” in photography in Mexico City after 1968. Denise has published her scholarship in *Woman's Art Journal* and *Anamesa*, and presented at conferences such as *Art-Archives: Latin America and Beyond* at the University of Texas, Austin, and at the College Art Association Annual Conference of 2011.