Defining the Present, Archiving the Past
Writing the History of Photography in the Middle East

Illustrated talk by
Mitra M. Abbaspour

Mitra Abbaspour is an art historian and curator. A doctoral candidate in Art History at the Graduate Center, CUNY, she is completing her dissertation, a study of photograph archives dedicated to Armenian, Kurdish, and pan-Arab practices. This study considers the ways in which photograph archives call on the history of the medium to represent modernity in the Middle East.

From 2010 – 2014, she was Associate Curator in the Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art, where she was a leader of a research initiative exploring the development of photographic modernism. Object: Photo. Modern Photographs from the Thomas Walther Collection 1909 – 1949 is the result.

In her talk on “Defining the Present, Achieving the Past,” Abbaspour maps the relationship between contemporary artists use historic photograph archives and the history told by the pictures themselves. This talk is presented in conjunction with Christian Palestinian Archive: A Project by Dor Guez, on view at The James Gallery April 8 – June 4, 2016.