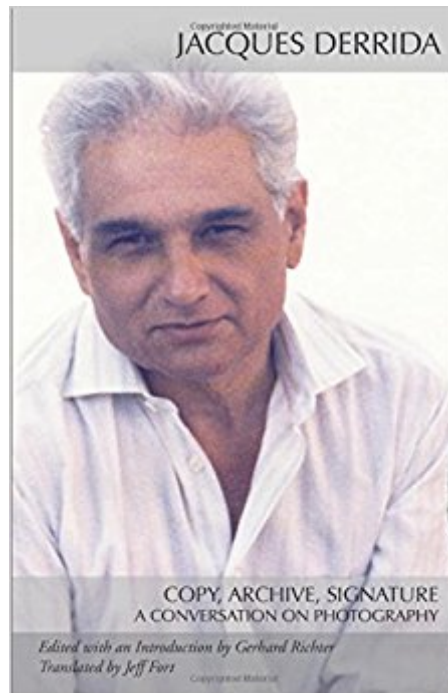




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Copy, Archive, Signature: A Conversation On Photography



Synopsis

This book makes available for the first time in English and for the first time in its entirety in any language an important yet little-known interview on the topic of photography that Jacques Derrida granted in 1992 to the German theorist of photography Hubertus von Ameln and the German literary and media theorist Michael Wetzl. Their conversation addresses, among other things, questions of presence and its manufacture, the technicity of presentation, the volatility of the authorial subject, and the concept of memory. Derrida offers a penetrating intervention with regard to the distinctive nature of photography vis-à-vis related technologies such as cinema, television, and video. Questioning the all-too-facile divides between so-called old and new media, original and reproduction, analog and digital modes of recording and presenting, he provides stimulating insights into the ways in which we think and speak about the photographic image today. Along the way, the discussion fruitfully interrogates the question of photography in relation to such key concepts as copy, archive, and signature. Gerhard Richter introduces the volume with a critical meditation on the relationship between deconstruction and photography by way of the concepts of translation and invention. Copy, Archive, Signature will be of compelling interest to readers in the fields of contemporary European critical thought, photography, aesthetic theory, media studies, and French Studies, as well as those following the singular intellectual trajectory of one of the most influential thinkers of our time.

Book Information

Paperback: 112 pages

Publisher: Stanford University Press (July 13, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0804760977

ISBN-13: 978-0804760973

Product Dimensions: 4.5 x 0.3 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.0 out of 5 stars See all reviews (2 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #952,240 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #175 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Movements > Deconstruction #345 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Movements > Phenomenology #5203 in Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Equipment, Techniques & Reference

Customer Reviews

This book is a translation of a conversation between Derrida and two German theorists that transpired in 1992. The interchange itself is about 14000 words, very short. The book also contains a brief introduction and some notes with interesting bibliographic references. Derrida's questioners are smart and interesting, but this is fairly staccato, incomplete, and interrupted exchange. Still, the book makes a little clearer some of the muddled relations of deconstruction and photography found in "Right of inspection" (1989) and scattered in his writing. I wish we had more and better on this topic. I think you must be interested a great deal in this application of deconstruction to be willing to buy such an incomplete and slim volume. Still, as my title suggests, there are moments of great excitement here even if this work does not bring its various promises to fruition.

It's a pity! This interview is so fragmented by the waywardness of the interviewers that Derrida does not get the chance to elaborate on any of the topics posed to him. Almost nothing is said about the "archive", and photography is barely addressed as such. The "copy" topic is buffeted this way and that rather whimsically by the interviewers themselves, and barely nothing comes out of it. Though the text is labeled as an "interview", it feels more like a random "after dinner" conversation. Nice as such, but not quite anything. I guess Derrida must have been an awesome dinner companion, and in this book the reader may have a faint glimpse at his candid and generous enthusiasm, but even this is spoiled by the interviewers' desperate desire to stand out. I recommend this book only to those exhaustive Derrida scholars who must have every book featuring Derrida! Now I know there is a limit...

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