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Danish Cool

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***Handout exhibition text in English and Chinese
by Anne Elisabeth Toft, Curator***

Danish Cool

Keld Helmer-Petersen, Photography and the Photobook

13 August – 10 October 2016

The Danish Cultural Center, 798 International Arts District, 706 Beiyi Jie, Beijing,
China. Beijing

Keld Helmer-Petersen, Photography and the Photobook

The exhibition *Danish Cool. Keld Helmer-Petersen, Photography and the Photobook* presents the ground-breaking work of late Danish photographer Keld Helmer-Petersen (1920-2013). It offers an exclusive insight into his artistic experiments with the media of photography and photobooks.

Focusing on his last work - the photobook *Black Light* from 2014 - the exhibition is built around Helmer-Petersen's photographic book publications, the original versions of which are today rare collector's items. In the exhibition the photobooks are put into perspective by a collection of Helmer-Petersen's photographs, which are displayed as projections in a large format. Like the photobooks, these photographs, selected from five different photographic series, constitute a catalogue of Helmer Petersen's artistic practice. The series illustrate different phases in Helmer-Petersen's photographic oeuvre, and they comprise a number of recurring motifs in his photographs. The exhibition is explained in a text consisting of three short chapters, introducing the main themes of the exhibition.

Helmer-Petersen was the leading Danish art photographer of his time and gained international recognition already as a young man. He is world famous for his early colour photography from the 1940s, his strict modernist image compositions and his unique use of the book as a privileged format for the presentation of photography.

His first work from 1948, *122 Colour Photographs*, is today widely considered a masterpiece. This book contributed to making the photography of Helmer-Petersen internationally acclaimed and led to nine images from the book being shown as a seven-page entry in the famous American magazine *LIFE* in 1949. The following year he went to the United States. This visit was in many ways crucial for Helmer-Petersen, who remained in the United States from 1950 to 1951 to study and teach photography at The Institute of Design, Chicago. The visit also led to Helmer-Petersen's participation in the ambitiously curated exhibition by Edward Steichen: *Post-War European Photography* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1953.

The book *Fragments of a City*, published in 1960, contains high-contrast black and white photos from his time in Chicago. It presents a characteristic, abstract graphic style and a vocabulary of motifs consisting of formal compositions that also recur in and characterise subsequent retrospective publications: *Frameworks, Photographs 1950-1990* (from 1993) and *Photographs 1941-1995* (from 2007). The same style is making its mark in *Danish Beauty*, a small photobook in colours from 2004.

When working on *Black Light* Helmer-Petersen returned to his point of departure: abstract black and white photography, but using modern, digital technology. The exhibition offers a look behind the pictures in the book: it consists of archival materials and a number of Helmer-Petersen's private belongings - *objet trouvés*, sketches and drafts, et cetera – that document the process of

making the book, and also shed light on Helmer-Petersen's visual universe, his influences, working methods and techniques.

The archival materials have not previously been assembled and showcased. It is also the first time Helmer-Petersen's photographic book publications are exhibited in their entirety, and that his work is shown in China.

Helmer-Petersen's photography is represented in collections and museums around the world, including Museum of Modern Art, New York and Moderna Museet, Stockholm. His work is available at The Rocket Gallery in London.

Anne Elisabeth Toft
Curator

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All archival material at the exhibition is kindly lent by Keld Helmer-Petersen's son Jan Helmer-Petersen and Architect and Photographer Jens Frederiksen, who, as a close friend and colleague of Helmer-Petersen, cooperated with him on *Black Light*.

I extend my sincere thanks to Jan Helmer Petersen, and to Jens Frederiksen, who has been external advisor on the exhibition and who is responsible for the selection of images for the large format projections.

Black Light

Black Light completed the trilogy of photo books created by Keld Helmer-Petersen in the last years of his life. It began with experiments and solitary works, made on the computer as cameraless photos, much in line with the many photograms and darkroom images he had created earlier in his career; but gradually the number of works became large enough for a publication. The first book, *Black Noise*, was published in 2010, designed by graphic designer Michael Jensen, who had also designed *Danish Beauty* (2004), and would later design *Back to Black* (2011) and *Black Light* (2014).

From the analogue darkroom, Helmer-Petersen was used to working in two different ways: on the one hand, there was the practical work of developing and enlarging recordings from the real world; on the other hand, there was his work with images that related quite freely to the motif, where the artistic aspect was the only thing that mattered.

When digital technologies, including scanners and computers, emerged around the turn of the millennium, he first became familiar with them as useful tools for printing old negatives as images in books and journals. However, he soon came to realise that many of the techniques he had used in his art work in the darkroom were easily accessible in the digital world.

It was not necessary to scan a negative in a film scanner, and Photoshop had a number of interesting tools, which could do fast and smoothly all the work that had been costly in materials and time in the days of the darkroom. In addition to this, the tools provided even more possibilities, so that now – in reality – imagination was the only limit.

However, Helmer-Petersen did not allow himself to be carried away by the grovelling admiration of the time for all the new things anyone could now do. To him, the crucial thing was always the final selection and editing. Everything that went ahead of this was, in his opinion, just technique. It is not in the computer, but in the subjective selection of some elements - and the discarding of others – that the artist manifests himself.

Jens Frederiksen

(Three short chapters, wall)

1.

Book and Photography: The Photobook's Significance as an Exhibition Format for Photography

A main reason why it is interesting to discuss the book as an exhibition format for photography is that photography was generally not acknowledged as an art form until far into the 20th century. Consequently photography was traditionally not exhibited in galleries or art museums until sometime in the early 1980s. It was also around this time photography finally started to gain a serious footing in the international art market. Books and journals are the traditional exhibition formats of early photography, not least architectural photography. Therefore, when it concerns a presentation of Keld Helmer-Petersen's photographs, the photobooks he published from his debut work *122 Colour Photographs* (1948) up to and including *Black Light* (2014) are essential to consider. In other words, many of Helmer-Petersen's photographs are conceived and made to be presented in the book format.

The earliest examples of photographically illustrated books are from the middle of the 19th century. They are nearly as old as the earliest photographs, which date back to the end of the 1830s. The history of photography is today a well-established canon. It is, however, a different matter with the history of the photobook and its historiography, on which very little critical research has so far been carried out. Lately, however, a growing interest in the photobook as a phenomenon has arisen. This interest is not restricted to researchers of photography but also includes curators and art collectors who collect photographs. More and more people in society today acknowledge the significance of the book as an exhibition format for printed photographs, and this has also manifested itself in a versatile international market for different kinds of photobooks, both contemporary and vintage publications. On the whole there is a growing understanding of the photobook's culture-historical value in society; many photographs, today, only exist as reproductions in the printed media, which in itself makes the photobooks irreplaceable, and if one studies the imagery of these books, their layout and graphic design, one would find that they and their aesthetics reveal a lot about the time and the culture in which they were made. As more and more analogue forms of production in society are changed into digital ones, there is a growing interest in the photobook's materiality and object-character and it is to a still greater extent considered a genuine piece of art. Digital technologies have, to some degree, outmatched the traditional offset-process, and digitisation has also led to the digital photobook, which shares some of the characteristics of the traditional analogue photobook, but which is, after all, a completely different medium.

Two central pioneers within the research of photobooks are Martin Parr and Gerry Badger: both acknowledged British photographers who also write about photography. In 2004 they published the first volume of *The Photobook: A History* (three volumes, 2004, 2006 and 2014) **1**, and in 2015 Parr's latest photobook history followed: *The Chinese Photobook* **2**, which offers a historical

conspectus of Chinese photobooks. The books by Parr and Badger not only provide an insight into the history of the photobook, they also provide new perspectives on the history of photography.

2

The Photographer Keld Helmer-Petersen: Themes and Motifs in His Photography

Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, the editors of *The Photobook: A History* (vol. 1-3), regard Keld Helmer-Petersen as an important photographer who has been crucial to the reception of colour photography as an artistic medium. With reference to the work *122 Colour Photographs*, from 1948, Parr even categorizes Helmer-Petersen as probably the first to make an intelligent colour photobook. **3**

In the first half of the twentieth century, colour photography was almost exclusively used by amateurs or for commercial purposes, for instance by advertising photographers. According to the traditional western history of photography it was not until the 1970s that colour photography became a serious and viable creative expression within art photography: this happened with the appearance of the famous American photographers Stephen Shore and William Eggleston. The latter's book, *William Eggleston's Guide* (1976), is often referred to as the first art photobook which consists solely of colour photographs. Helmer-Petersen's book, in which the experiment with colour photography is clearly driven by a critical artistic intention, was, however, published almost thirty years before Eggleston presented his pictures. Helmer-Petersen was ahead of his time and this also makes him interesting as a photographer.

Helmer-Petersen's photographs are driven by a curiosity towards visual phenomena, the camera and photography. He was interested in exploring what a photograph is and what it does; more specifically, the capacity of the photograph to present something in a photographic manner. As he himself expressed it: "I don't want my pictures to 'look like something'. They should just look like pictures." **4**

In his early colour photographs he explores colour as form, which motivates him to work with contrasted two-dimensional compositions, thereby emphasizing the significance of colour **5**. The photograph is cropped in such a way that its motif becomes abstract and attention is drawn to the fragment's parts, texture and composition. At the same time the camera is directed at common everyday things: things that are not traditionally considered to have any cultural value, and which are therefore often overlooked or suppressed in the visual arts. Helmer-Petersen zooms in on architectural details and industrial machines, and he presents those in ways that make them appear as *something else*; as abstract compositions. In *122 Colour Photographs* the graphic design of the book helps emphasize the modern expression and visual strength of the photographs.

In his black-and-white photographs Helmer-Petersen works with light and shadow and tonal transitions between black and white. Also in these photographs his preference for non-figurative compositions, which bring to mind abstract expressionist paintings or op art, is obvious. Sometimes the pictures appear as silhouettes, sometimes as collages. Helmer-Petersen's non-representational photography presents patterns, spreading across the book pages in large formations or repetitive sequences. In his many close-ups of architectural motifs, industrial landscapes and designs, an abstract formalistic imagery is introduced which becomes characteristic of his work. Not only is it linked to the modernism of the 1950s: in Helmer-Petersen's photography there is also a strong adherence to *Neue Sachlichkeit*, German expressionism and Bauhaus photography from the 1920s and 1930s.

Helmer-Petersen's investigations of photography and its potentials also led him to experiment with photograms and other types of cameraless images. These are reminiscent of his late digital works which are presented in *Black Light*. When it comes to the technical production of the digital pictures, it is, however, very different from that of the analogue photograms. In connection with the development of *Black Light*, *object trouvés* or old negatives were collected and scanned by Helmer-Petersen after which the scanned motifs would undergo extensive photo manipulation on the computer. As Jens Frederiksen, who assisted Helmer-Petersen at the computer, points out, the artistic challenge was in the photo-compositional work.

Helmer-Petersen was a photographer who worked conceptually, and already early in his artistic career he photographed on the basis of a number of self-imposed dogmas. He was preoccupied with finding motifs; in giving photographic close-ups and fragments new meaning by recontextualising them and creating new compositions out of them. He worked in series. The serial element is a leitmotif in Helmer-Petersen's photographic work. So is his fascination with the fragment.

3.

Five Photographic Series

As a young man Keld Helmer-Petersen dreamed of becoming an architect. He took an apprenticeship as a bricklayer with a view to gaining admission to The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture in Copenhagen. Later on he took an education in publishing but as an artist he was, on the whole, self-taught. He was, for some time, apprenticed to The Danish Museum of Decorative Art and its photographer Erik Hansen, however. Furthermore, he studied photography in the United States at The Institute of Design in Chicago where he was influenced by his teachers, among others the leading American photographers Aaron Siskind and Harry Callahan. Siskind's photography is inclined towards abstract expressionism, and Callahan's highly contrasted black-and-white pictures present motifs and a photographic vocabulary which Helmer-Petersen's photography is closely related to.

The young Helmer-Petersen learned about European and American photography by studying international photographic journals and books. As he worked with books at the Copenhagen publishing house Thanning & Appel he had both access to and understanding of these. The inspiration came from photobooks by German photographers Paul Wolff and Albert Renger-Patzsch and the American photographer Walker Evans **6**. Later Helmer-Petersen expanded his knowledge of art and photography through acquaintances and collaborations with a number of leading Danish architects and visual artists of whom several were his colleagues at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen.

122 Colour Photographs

The debut from 1948 contains Helmer-Petersen's photographic impressions from Copenhagen and its environs. The book is a potpourri of pictures that depict the city in all its diversity. The lens is directed at small and large motifs which Helmer-Petersen crops in such a way that they get a modernist expression. The pictures testify to Helmer-Petersen's attentiveness as an observer but also to the capacity of his small hand-held camera and the photographic opportunities it offered him at the time. Many of Helmer-Petersen's pictures were taken spontaneously and quickly when he was walking around in the city with his Leica. **7**

Fragments of a City

It was not until Helmer-Petersen attended The Institute of Design, Chicago that he learned to develop photographs. Before that he had never been in a darkroom and he had usually delivered his films for development to a professional bureau **8**. The introduction to the darkroom became decisive to Helmer-Petersen who quickly realized the connection between good darkroom-work and image quality. The book *Fragments of a City* which was published in 1960 collects studies and experiments from Helmer-Petersen's time in Chicago where the main motif is the city and its representation. The book is dedicated to black-and-white photography and it demonstrates Helmer-Petersen's skills and confidence in a darkroom. Black-and-white photography and its media characteristics are challenged to the utmost in the book in strict minimal image compositions which in several cases completely distance themselves from the figurative idiom.

Gefundenes Fressen

Gefundenes Fressen is the title of a photographic series stemming from the years 1976-1983. It testifies to Helmer-Petersen's ability to find motifs in that which is usually overlooked and unintentional. It focuses on a line of *object trouvés* - all of which are deformed beyond recognition. In other words, they have lost their identity and are therefore just as non-figurative as many of Helmer-Petersen's abstract images. Helmer-Petersen depicts the found objects through objective photography which exposes all details of their appearance. All objects are depicted the same way, which gives the series a coherent uniform expression.

Danish Beauty

This series, which Helmer-Petersen worked on from 1973 to 1993, has many formal resemblances to *Gefundenes Fressen*. Also in this series the viewer is presented with motifs that already exist, so

to speak, but which are first made obvious in Helmer-Petersen's objective photography. The pictures present the poetics of discarded consumer articles and abandoned buildings: in their deterioration and the traces left by the people who used them and touched their surfaces. The series is held together by the quadratic image format and by Helmer-Petersen's monochromatic two-dimensional colour photography.

Black Noise

In *Black Noise*, a series from 2008-09, Helmer-Petersen experiments with flatbed- and negative scanning of ink drawings, digital barcodes from receipts, *object trouvés* and old black-and-white negatives. A number of abstract pictures result from these experiments: a series of black-and-white prints which comment on and complement each other in what turns out to be indicative of a more comprehensive work, that is, the book series *Black Noise*, *Back to Black* and *Black Light*. The pictures are reminiscent of early photograms and pre-photographic silhouette cuts like those produced in the beginning of the 19th century. Furthermore there is a direct formalistic kinship between these pictures and many of Helmer-Petersen's early black-and-white works from the 1950s.

Notes

1.

Parr, Martin and Badger, Gerry (Eds.): *The Photobook: A History, Volume 1*. London, Phaidon Press Limited, 2004.

2.

Parr, Martin and Lundgren, Wassink (Eds.): *The Chinese Photobook*. New York, Aperture, 2015

3.

Colberg, Joerg: A conversation with Martin Parr (May 4, 2007). In: *Conscientious EXTENDED*
http://jmcolberg.com/weblog/extended/archives/a_conversation_with_martin_parr/

4.

Keld Helmer Petersen, 1948 as cited by Gerry Badger in: A Way of Seeing. In: *Keld Helmer-Petersen. Photographs 1941-1995*. Copenhagen, Christian Ejlers, 2007, p. 6

5. Colour as form. An expression which refers to Edward Weston, who in 1947 stated the following after he had experimented with colour photography: "The prejudice many photographers have against color photography comes from not thinking of color as form". Thrane, Finn: Keld Helmer Petersen. In: *Keld Helmer-Petersen. Photographs 1941-1995*. p. 12

6.

Keld Helmer-Petersen. Photographs 1941-1995. p. 278

7.

Parr, Martin: An Interview. In: *Keld Helmer-Petersen. Photographs 1941-1995*. p. 276

8.

Parr, Martin: An Interview. In: *Keld Helmer-Petersen. Photographs 1941-1995*. p. 276

Keld Helmer-Petersen Biography

1920 Born in Copenhagen, Denmark (20 August 1920)

1938 Receives a Leica camera as a high school graduation present from his mother. First black-and-white photographs

1941 First colour photographs

1948 Publishes the photobook *122 Colour Photographs*, the first photobook in Denmark containing colour photographs

1949 First experiments with photograms. Distribution of the short film *Copenhagen Boogie*, a study of light and form in black and white. Colour photographs from *122 Colour Photographs* are presented in American *LIFE Magazine*

1950-51 Travels to New York and Chicago. Studies and teaches at Institute of Design Chicago

1954 Professional photographer. Specialising in architecture and design from 1955

1956 Opens own photographic studio in Copenhagen, Denmark

1960 Publishes the photobook *Fragments of a City*, containing black-and-white photographs from Chicago

1964-90 Associate professor in photography at the Department of Visual Communication, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture, Copenhagen, Denmark

1974-78 Resumes experiments with photograms and cameraless photography. Works on series of photographs based on *object trouvés*

1984-94 Chairman of the Board of the Danish Museum of Photographic Art, Odense, Denmark

1993 Publishes the photobook *Frameworks, Photographs 1950-1990*, containing selected works

2004 Publishes the photobook *Danish Beauty*, containing a series of colour photographs

2007 Publishes the photobook *Photographs 1941-1995*, containing selected works

2008 Awarded a lifelong grant from the Danish Arts Foundation

2010-11 Publishes the photobooks *Black Noise* and *Back to Black*, containing digitised black-and-white works

2013 Dies in Copenhagen, Denmark (6 March 2013)

2014 The photobook *Black Light* is published posthumously

2014 The Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark acquires all photographic plates from the estate for archiving and digitising

2015 The first 14,000 digitised photographs are published on the webpage of The Royal Library

The curator

Anne Elisabeth Toft, Architect MAA, Ph.D.

Anne Elisabeth Toft is Associate Professor, Ph.D. in architectural history and theory at the Aarhus School of Architecture, Denmark. Her PhD dissertation: *Architecture and Photography. A study of the relationship between presentation and representation* (2006) theorises on the relationship between architecture and architectural photography. Toft has participated in group and solo exhibitions on architecture and architectural photography in Denmark and abroad, and she has lectured and taught at many international universities and schools of architecture. She has curated exhibitions on architecture and photography, and she has written interviews and essays for magazines and books about architecture, architectural education, architectural photography, and the visual arts. In 2014 she co-founded *Photobook Week Aarhus*, the first photo festival in Denmark dedicated to photobooks and their discourses. Her most recent book is: *Questions of Representations in Architecture* (2015).

Toft is a member of The European Society for the History of Photography and the Jury of the Danish Society of Artists. Since 2015 she has been President of the Nordic Association of Architectural Research (NAF). She lives and works in Aarhus and Copenhagen, Denmark.

Keld Helmer-Petersen, Photography and the Photo-book

此次展览中展示了已故丹麦摄影师Keld Helmer-Petersen (1920-2013) 开拓性的作品。展览带来了关于这位摄影师的摄影和照片集艺术实验的独特见解。

Helmer-Petersen 的档案材料从未被整理并整体展出。这是第一次他的摄影出版物被整体展示，同时也是Helmer-Petersen 的作品首次在中国展出。本展览聚焦于他的最新作品 - 出版于2014 年的照片集Black Light，照片集中作品的原版已经成为了稀有的收藏品。少量Helmer-Petersen 照片集中的摄影作品被放大并投影，用来强调影集的主题。像照片集一样，这些从5 个系列里选出的照片，组成了Helmer-Petersen 的艺术创作目录。这个系列阐释了摄影师全部作品的不同阶段，包含了很多他的作品当中重复出现的主题。

Keld Helmer-Petersen 在他年轻的时候就是丹麦艺术摄影师中的领头人，并得到了国际化的认可。现在他以1940 年代的彩色摄影，严格的现在主义构图和他特有的利用影集作为首要形式展示摄影作品闻名于世。他1948 年的第一套作品，122 Colour Photographs 至今一直被认为是一个杰作。这本照片集使得Helmer-Petersen 的摄影得到了国际上的赞扬并使其中的9 张作品在1949 年被著名的美国杂志LIFE 选中并用7 整页展示。接下来的一年，Helmer-Petersen 去美国拜访，从1950 至1951 年在芝加哥设计学院学习并教授摄影。这次旅行从各种角度看都对他意义非凡，使得他参加了Edward Steichen 在1953 年于纽约现代艺术博物馆具有雄心的策展 - 战后欧洲摄影。

出版于1960 年的影集Fragments of a City 包含了他在芝加哥时期创作的强对比黑白照片。照片集展示了他特有的抽象图像风格和包括正式结构的主题词汇，这些主题也在他随后的回顾性出版物Frameworks, Photographs 1950-1990 (1993 年出版) 和 Photographs 1941-1995 (2007 年出版) 中重复出现。同样的风格还在他2004 年出版的小型彩色影集

Danish Beauty 中成为标志。

在创作Black Light 时Helmer-Petersen 回到了他创作的起点：抽象黑白摄影，但是他采用了现代数码科技。展览带来了照片集图片背后的故事，包括档案材料和很多Helmer-Petersen 的私人物品：包含object trouve，素描和草稿等。这些物品记录了他制作这本照片集的过程，并阐明了Helmer-Petersen 的视觉世界，他的影响力，创作方法和技巧。

Helmer-Petersen 的摄影在世界各地的博物馆展览，包括纽约现代艺术博物馆和斯德哥尔摩现代艺术博物馆。他的作品同时也在伦敦的火箭画廊中展示。

Anne Elisabeth Toft
Curator, Architect, PhD

所有展览涉及的档案材料皆从摄影师Keld Helmer-Petersen 的儿子Jan Helmer Petersen 和他的一位好友和与他一起制作Black Light 的同事Jen Frederiksen 处所借。诚挚的感谢这两位，作为展览的外部咨询人和大尺寸投影图像选择的负责人，对本次展览的顺利进行作出的贡献。

Black Light

Black Light 是 Keld Helmer-Petersen 生命中最后几年创作的照片集三部曲中最后一部。他的创作以实验和独立单张照片开始，在电脑上作为无相机照片制作，和他早期的很多摄影和暗室图像有许多相似之处。逐渐作品积少成多，足够发表的数量，三部曲中的第一部Black Noise 在2010 年出版，由设计过照片集Danish Beauty (2004) 的图像设计师Michael Jensen设计。后两部Back to Black (2011) 和Black Light (2014) 也由这位设计师设计。从模拟暗室中，Helmer-Petersen 习惯于用两种不同的方式工作，一方面，有冲洗和放大写实摄影的实际工作；另一方面，他也处理和主题相关但相对自由的图像，在那些相片里艺术性是唯一重要的东西。

当数码技术，包括扫描仪和计算机，出现在千年之交的时候，他首先把他们当作有用的工具，来打印籍和期刊的图像的旧的底片。然而，他很快就意识到，许多他用在他的艺术作品中的暗室技术在数码世界中也可以轻易被制作出。

现在不再需要在胶片扫描仪上扫描底片，而且PS 图像处理软件有很多有趣的工具，可以快速、顺利的完成那些在暗室里费时费材料的工作。除此之外，工具提供了更多的可能性，因此，现在在现实中想象力是创作唯一的限制。

然而，Helmer-Petersen 不满足于从任何人都可以做到的那些新鲜事物中得到的敬仰，对他来说，最关键的事情一直是最后的选择和编辑。在他看来，这个步骤之前的一切都只是数码技术。然而，艺术家用来展现自己的不应在于计算机，而应在主观选择一些元素而抛弃另一些当中。

Jens Frederiksen

1.

Book and Photography: The Photobook's Significance as an Exhibition Format for Photography

书与摄影：摄影书作为作品展示形式的重要性

有趣作为摄影展览格式讨论这本书的主要原因是摄影不公认作为一种艺术形式直到入 20 世纪。讨论书作为摄影展览的形式很重要的一个原因是摄影知道进入20世纪才被公认为一种艺术形式。因此，摄影作品传统上不在画廊或者艺术博物馆展出，直到20世纪80年代初这种状况才有所改变。与此同时，摄影也终于开始被当作严肃的艺术形式立足于国际艺术市场。书籍和杂志都是早期摄影作品，尤其是建筑摄影的展示形式。因此，当考虑到展示Keld Helmer-Petersen 的摄影时，他的摄影书从第一本122 Colour Photographs (1948)到Black Light (2014)都是值得讨论的对象。换句话说，许多Helmer-Petersen的摄影作品都以书本的形式呈现。

摄影插图的书最早出现于 19 世纪中叶。他们和最早的照片一样，可以追溯到 1830 年代末。摄影的历史到今天已经成为既定的标准。然而，对于摄影书的历史的批判性研究到目前为止还非常少。然而最近，人们对摄影书的兴趣已经成为一种现象日益增长。这种兴趣并不局限于摄影研究者，但也包括策展人和收藏摄影作品的艺术收藏家。在社会中越来越多的人承认以书作为打印出的照片的展览格式的重要意义，这体现在摄影书在多元化国际市场中的地位日益增长，无论是党还出版物还是年代久远的出版物。整体上摄影书的文化历史价值得到了更多的关注。当今社会，很多摄影作品只在印刷媒体中复制，这使摄影书有了不可取代的位置。如果仔细研究摄影书中的图片，拍板排版方式和图形设计，不难发现这些审美方式反映了摄影书制作的年代和那个年代的价值观。随着越来越多的模拟形式的作品制作都转换成数字化制作，当对摄影书的实体性和对象性的兴趣日益增长，摄影书更加被认可为了一件真正的艺术。数字技术已经在某种程度上优于统胶印过程，而数字化也导致数码摄影书的产生，它们共享了一些传统模拟摄影书的特征，但实际上是完全不同的媒介。

研究摄影书的两个先驱人物是两个对摄影进行写作的英国著名摄影师 Martin Parr 和 Gerry Badger。在 2004 年他们发表了 *Photobook: A History* (共三册, 2004, 2006 and 2014)¹ 的第一册，在 2015 年 Parr 发表了他最新的摄影书研究 *The Chinese Photobook 2*，这本书讲述了中国摄影书的历史概要。Parr 和 Badger 的书不仅对摄影书历史的研究提出了见解，也为整个摄影史提出了新的观点。

2 摄影师 Keld Helmer-Petersen: 摄影的主题

The Photobook: A History (vol. 1-3) 的编辑 Martin Parr 和 Gerry Badger，认为 Keld Helmer-Petersen 是对于接受彩色摄影为艺术媒介的重要人物。参考了 Helmer-Petersen 1948 年的作品 *122 Colour Photographs*，Parr 认为 Helmer-Petersen 可能是第一个制作出有智慧的彩色摄影书的摄影师。

在 20 世纪上半叶，彩色摄影几乎专属于摄影爱好者或商业用途，比如被广告摄影师使用。根据传统西方摄影，直到 1970 年代，彩色摄影才演变成一个艺术摄影范畴内的认真可行的创作方式。这个演变由著名美国摄影师 Stephen Shore 和 William Eggleston 的出现而开始。William Eggleston 的摄影书 *William Eggleston's Guide* (1976) 经常被当作只含有彩色摄影作品的第一本摄影书。然而 Helmer-

Petersen对彩色摄影进行实验的摄影书完全出于艺术摄影的目的，早在William Egelston的作品出现的30年前就出版了。Helmer-Petersen的创作超越了他的时代，这是他作为摄影师非常有趣的一点。

Helmer-Petersen的摄影受到他对于视觉现象，相机和摄影的兴趣驱使。他对探索什么是照片和照片的作用很有兴趣。更具体的说，他想了解照片以摄影作品的方式用来展示事物的能力与最大限度。就像他自己所说：“我不希望我的照片会看起来像什么东西，它们应该只是看起来像一些图画。”

在早期彩色摄影中，他把颜色当成一种形式，并用二维对比构图来强调色彩的重要性。照片剪裁的方式让图案主题变得抽象，并把注意力吸引到破碎的部分，纹理质地和构图结构中。同时，相机指向了那些通常认为不具有任何文化意义并经常被忽略掩盖在视觉艺术之下的日常物品。Helmer-Petersen把建筑细节和工业机器在镜头前拉近，并把它们展示为其他形式。作为抽象作品，摄影书122 Colour Photographs的图像设计加强了现代表达主义并从视觉上加强了他摄影作品的冲击力。

在他的黑白摄影作品中，Helmer-Petersen处理光和影已经黑与白之间的色调渐变。在这些照片中他偏好非具象构图，使人联想到抽象表达主义和欧普艺术。有时照片展示了轮廓，有时又像剪贴画。Helmer-Petersen的非具象摄影展示了分布全书的以大型阵列或重复序列组成的图案。在他很多建筑主题，工业景观和设计的特写中，一个形式主义的抽象图像被他引入，并成为他作品的特色。这个特征不仅和1950年代的现代主义相关联，也和Neue Sachlichkeit-德国表现主义和包豪斯1920到1930年代的摄影关系密切

Helmer-Petersen对于摄影和摄影潜能的研究也指引他对黑影照片和其他无相机照片形式进行实验。这些作品回顾了他在Black Light里展示的后期数码作品。数码照片的技术处理和模拟黑影照片的处理非常不同。和Black Light相关联的是，现成品和老底片被Helmer-Petersen收集扫描并用电脑进行大量照片处理。正如帮助Helmer-Petersen电脑工作的Jens Fredriksen所指出的，艺术中的挑战在于照片的合成工作。

Helmer-Petersen是一个进行观念创作的摄影师，在他早期艺术生涯中他以自我设立的规则创作了很多摄影作品。他专注于寻找主题图案，通过给予摄影整体与碎片心的意义使它们重新置于背景中考虑并赋予它们新的意义。他以系列为

单位进行创作。列序元素是Helmer-Petersen摄影作品中的主旋律。他对于碎片的痴迷是另一个重要的主题。

3.

Five Photographic Series 五个系列摄影

Keld Helmer-Petersen年轻时候的梦想是成为一个建筑师。他在一个泥瓦匠那里当学徒，希望被丹麦哥本哈根的皇家艺术学院建筑学院录取。随后他学习了出版，但作为一个艺术家他完全是自学成才的。他有一段时间在丹麦装饰艺术博物馆实习，跟随那里的摄影师Erik Hansen。然而后来，他在美国的芝加哥设计学院学习摄影，并受到他的老师们的影响，包括当时美国的著名摄影师Aaron Siskind和Harry Callahan。Siskind的摄影倾向于抽象表现主义，Callahan的高强度黑白对比的照片展现了一些Helmer-Petersen照片里借鉴了很多的主题和摄影词汇。

年轻的Helmer-Petersen从国际摄影期刊和书籍中学到了关于欧洲和美国摄影的知识。当他在哥本哈根Thanning & Appel出版社工作的时候，他得以接触并理解这些书刊。他从德国摄影师Paul Wolff和Albert Renger-Patzsch和美国摄影师Walker Evans的摄影书里获取灵感。而后，Helmer-Petersen又通过结识和于很多丹麦重要建筑师和视觉艺术家合作扩充了他对摄影和艺术的理解。包括多位他在哥本哈根皇家艺术学院的同事。

122 Colour Photographs

这本出版于1984年的Helmer-Petersen首个作品集包括了他在哥本哈根环境中的摄影表达。这本摄影书是一个描绘这座城市多样性的集锦。他把镜头对准大大小小的主题图案，然后通过剪切，得到了一个现代化的表达。照片不仅证实了Helmer-Petersen是一个有洞察力的观察者也证实了他的手提式相机的表达能力和所能够提供的摄影机会。很多Helmer-Petersen的照片都是在他提着自己的莱卡在城里里闲逛时随机并快速地照出的

Fragments of a City

直到Helmer-Petersen来到芝加哥设计学院学习，他才学会冲洗照片。在此之前他从未进过暗室，经常把他的照片拿到专业机构去冲洗。Helmer-Petersen对暗室的接触使他很快意识到优质的暗室操作对图像质量的关联，这对他的创作起到了决定性的作用。出版于1960年的摄影书Fragments of a City收集了Helmer-Petersen在芝加哥时期的研究和实验，拍摄的主题选材来自于这座城市。这本摄影书关注了黑白摄影，并展示了Helmer-Petersen的暗室技术掌握娴熟的自信。书中的极简摄影构图，和多次完全脱离了形象表达习惯的作品使黑白摄影和它的媒介性质在这本书里受到最大程度的挑战，

Gefundenes Fressen

Gefundenes Fressen是一个拍摄于1976到1983年之间的作品系列的名字。这部摄影书见证了Helmer-Petersen发现经常被忽略的和下意识的拍摄主题的能力。本集关注于一系列现成品，并把他们拍摄成不易认出的变形形式。换句话说，它们失去了他们本来的特质，和Helmer-Petersen抽象艺术一样非具象。Helmer-Petersen把现成品通过客观摄影展露了它们所有的细节。所有的物品都被他以同样的方式拍摄，形成了一种和谐一致的表达。

Danish Beauty

这个系列中的作品，由Helmer-Petersen在1973到1993年间创作，形式上和Gefundenes Fressen有很多相似之处。在这个系列里，观众看到的是现存的图案主题，但是这些主题是第一次在Helmer-Petersen被明显的展示出来。这些照片展示了被丢弃的消费商品和废弃建筑诗性的一面，包括它们的腐坏和人们使用或触摸过的痕迹。这个系列以四格图像的形式和单彩色二维摄影构成。

Black Noise

在Black Noise，一个从2008到2009年的系列里，Helmer-Petersen用平板和底片扫描墨迹绘图、收据条形码、现成品和旧黑白底片进行实验。许多抽象图片来源于这些实验：一系列黑白照片印刷互相评论并相互补充，指向了一个更加完整的作品-系列摄影Black Noise, Back to Black和 Black Light。这些照片也缅怀了早期黑影照片和出现于19世纪早期前摄影时代的阴影剪辑。另外，这些照片和Helmer-Petersen的早期1950年代的黑白作品之间有着一个直接的形式相似性。