

Summary

MARTINE HAMILTON KNIGHT (Nottingham Trent University) / “The Pevsner Way of Seeing”. A paper on contriving the timelessness’ of architectural photography for Sir Nikolaus Pevsner’s “Buildings of England” series of books

This paper explores the challenges of using a specific photographic style as seen within a series of books about architecture which have been published over the last 70 years and subsequently revised throughout that period. A commercial architectural photographer and academic at Nottingham Trent University in the UK, Martine Hamilton Knight was commissioned to provide the illustrations for *Nottinghamshire*, one of the recently updated titles in the “Buildings of England” series begun by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner in 1951. In her 30-year career documenting the built environment for the British architectural press, there has always been an emphasis on capturing buildings in their everyday use. The approach required to showcase structures dating from early Norman times to the present day threw up a number of challenges for Hamilton Knight concerned with context and representation. With reference to the historic writings of Walter Benjamin and Roland Barthes, together with contemporary views from photographic critics including Liz Wells, Steve Edwards and architectural specialists including Kate Bush, Tom Picton and Robert Elwall, the author explores what she defines as the “Pevsner Way of Seeing”. With a new body of images prepared using modern photographic methods for a digitally produced print publication, it calls into question the legitimacy of utilising a visual narrative established shortly after World War II. This is set against the parameters of creating a body of images which are not for immediate discard, but instead have an anticipated shelf life in excess of three or four decades, thus requiring them to maintain currency at all times.