

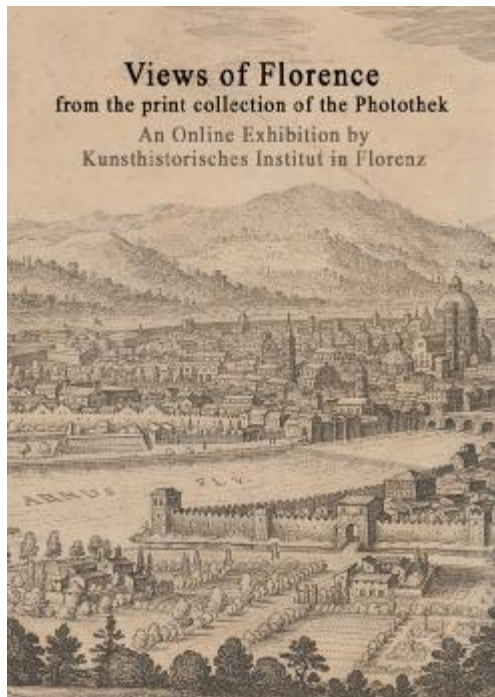


**Kunsthistorisches
Institut
in
Florenz**

Max-Planck-Institut

Press Release

**Florentine Views from the Print Collection of the Photo Library
An Online Exhibition by the Photo Library of the Kunsthistorisches Institute in Florence
April 28, 2008 – July 6, 2008
<http://expo.khi.fi.it>**



With the online exhibition “Florentine Views”, the photo library of the Kunsthistorisches Institute in Florence presents a selection from its print collection for the first time. The “creation of a large collection of illustrations suitable for comparative studies” was one of the main aims of the Kunsthistorisches Institute in Florence right from its establishment in 1897. This early collection, which came from donations and bequests, contains not only photographic material but also engravings and prints. Photography soon established itself as the preferred instrument of art-historical research in place of other portrayal and reproduction mediums, so that today’s collection of photographs evolved from this core. The set of more than one thousand prints are today stored in the photo library as Rariora. This material, which is of historical and art-historical relevance, has now been digitalised to make it accessible to a wider public via the Internet. Users can already consult more than one quarter of the plates in the digital photo library of the Kunsthistorisches Institute (<http://www.khi.fotothek.org>).

The online exhibition focuses on “Florentine Views”, which represent the largest group by far within this heterogeneous collection. The exhibition is structured by subject. It begins with a range of views which clearly illustrate the changes as well as the constants in the visual appearance of the city between the 15th century and the 19th century. The exhibition includes a copy from 1758 after the famous Florentine chain map (created around 1485, now in the Museum of Prints and Drawings (Kupferstichkabinett) in Berlin), which was adapted in many later views of the city.

The city maps allow a differentiated view over the city and its monuments, documenting the urban growth of Florence over more than 300 years. Stefano Bonsignori's map from 1584 uses an axonometric perspective to provide both accurate views of the buildings and the exact route of the roads. Particularly numerous are the 19th century maps, which illustrate the urban development of the city.

The following sections of the exhibition deal with architectural ensembles such as the cathedral complex, the squares, the palaces, the bridges and the gardens. Several plates document the condition of Florence Cathedral before completion of the neogothic front in 1887. Our prints also include a bequeathed view of the architecture of the San Pier Maggiore church, which was demolished in 1783. This demonstrates the special source value of the collection.

The last section of the online exhibition is dedicated to "historical events" and provides a brief excursus on the use of print media in the context of the Italian unification movement of the 19th century.

With the digitalisation of its print inventory, the photo library of the Kunsthistorisches Institute has not only made this resource accessible to online users but at the same time also taken a first step towards the academic study of this important partial collection.

The next online exhibition by the photo library opens on July 7, 2008 and is devoted to the mediaeval art of Georgia.

Head of the photo library: Dr. Costanza Caraffa
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