

Saskia Asser

# Spaarnestad: Biography of an Analogue Press Photo Archive<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

This article presents a biography of the Spaarnestad Collection in the National Archives, the largest analogue press photo archive in the Netherlands, originating from De Spaarnestad, a major publisher of illustrated magazines. In the origins, development and structure of the archive, as well as in the physical aspects and mutual coherence of the photos themselves, Spaarnestad's role in the history of both photojournalism and the image industry is contained. Through digitisation, many analogue press photo archives, which previously had a utilitarian function as a company archive, have entered the public domain as a historical image bank. As a result, the original photos, which formed the basis of every publication in the twentieth century, are now available to researchers. A biography of, in this case, the Spaarnestad Collection, provides scholars with the relevant context to use these photos as historical sources and underlines the importance of the collection as a resourceful archive.

## Keywords

photo archives, press photography, photojournalism, image industry, illustrated magazines, photographic heritage

## Introduction

The Spaarnestad Collection in the Dutch National Archives in The Hague is the largest and most diverse analogue press photo archive in the Netherlands. The core is formed by the editorial archive of De Spaarnestad, the most important Dutch publisher of illustrated magazines in the twentieth century. The photo archive originated as a picture library in the 1920s and was transformed in the 1980s into a historical image archive. The collection represents a specific episode in the history of photojournalism - the heyday of the illustrated magazines (ca. 1920-1970) - and is exemplary for the development of the image industry in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Although 'Spaarnestad' is now a household name among users of historical images, the way in which the photo archive functioned within the

publishing company and reflected the prevailing photographic practice has hardly been investigated. This biography serves as the first step in that research.

In recent studies the importance of analogue press photo archives for the historiography of photojournalism has been highlighted.<sup>2</sup> Press photo archives are, as Alison Nordström writes in relation to the Magnum Archive, ‘simple repositories of visual reference materials that had been produced as part of doing business and preserved so that they could be used again.’<sup>3</sup> They originated from the interaction between publishers, (photo) editors, journalists, photographers and photo agencies and thus represent both the complex practice of photojournalism and the image industry in the twentieth century. Scholarly interest in these archives can be linked to a recent, more complex approach to news photos that describes them, as Thierry Gervais explains, ‘no longer as simple and truthful reflections of reality but as the result of the collaboration that took place in the newsroom.’<sup>4</sup> At the beginning of this century, many press photo repositories lost their original function and were transformed into historical archives and historical image banks. Mirco Melone examines this change of perspective in his study *Zwischen Bilderlast und Bilderschatz* on the Ringier Bildarchiv in Switzerland.<sup>5</sup> The Bettmann Archive and Bill Gates’ image bank Corbis, now part of Getty Images, are the focus of Estelle Blaschke’s book *Banking on Images*, in which she analyses technological changes that had given rise to the image industry during the interwar years and caused profound shifts in the mass production and distribution of photographs in the 1990s, with far-reaching consequences for the economic valuation of historical photographs.

Photographs in the Spaarnestad archive bear traces of use: the image sides have sometimes been retouched, while the back sides reveal detailed information about the origin and publication history, including technical, aesthetic and sometimes ethical instructions.<sup>6</sup> The prints, in fact, reveal the path that the images take from the camera to the printed page [Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6]. As Frido Troost remarked about the photographs in the Spaarnestad archive back in 1986, readers rarely doubt the truthfulness of published photos, but the publication practice should in fact make them doubt this truthfulness: ‘The published photograph has passed through many hands, has been selected from many others and has probably not been printed unchanged (...) The context in which a photograph is finally published sometimes no longer has much to do with the event recorded or with the photographer’s intention.’<sup>7</sup> Because of these characteristics, the Spaarnestad Photo Archive is a strong example of what Elizabeth Edwards has called a ‘resourceful archive’: an archive that is not so much a passive resource for historians and other users, but a ‘space of creative intensity, of ingenuity,



Figure 1. Two young Republican volunteers from Celebes (Sulawesi), members of the armed youth organisation KRIS (Kebaktian Rakyat Indonesia Sulawesi) on leave in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, December 1947; silver gelatin print used for publication in *Panorama*, January 30, 1948; credit: Nationaal Archief/Collectie Spaarnestad/Hugo Wilmar.

Spaarnestad photographer Hugo Wilmar (1923-1957) made this photo during an undercover reportage in Yogyakarta, the then capital of the Indonesian Republic. Wilmar posed as an American photojournalist, because Dutch journalists were forbidden to enter the Republican territories at that time. Between 1945 and 1949, Indonesia fought a bloody war of independence, also known as the Indonesian National Revolution, against its former coloniser the Netherlands. The photo reportage, including this picture, was published in both *Panorama* and *Katholieke Illustratie* within an anti-Republican context, as *De Spaarnestad* fully supported the Dutch government's policy on Indonesia. In 2022, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam chose this image as the key visual for its major exhibition *Revolusi! Indonesia Independent* (February 11 - June 5, 2022). The exhibition favoured a very nuanced view of the conflict, featuring personal stories that 'tell of the impassioned pursuit of a free Indonesia' (museum website, 2022).

of latent energy, of rich historical force.<sup>8</sup> The archive and the individual photographs in it represent both a social practice and the archaeology of a discipline and thus constitute its 'ecosystem.'<sup>9</sup> The crux of her argument is that the tangible aspects of the archive, in the form of prints, folders and



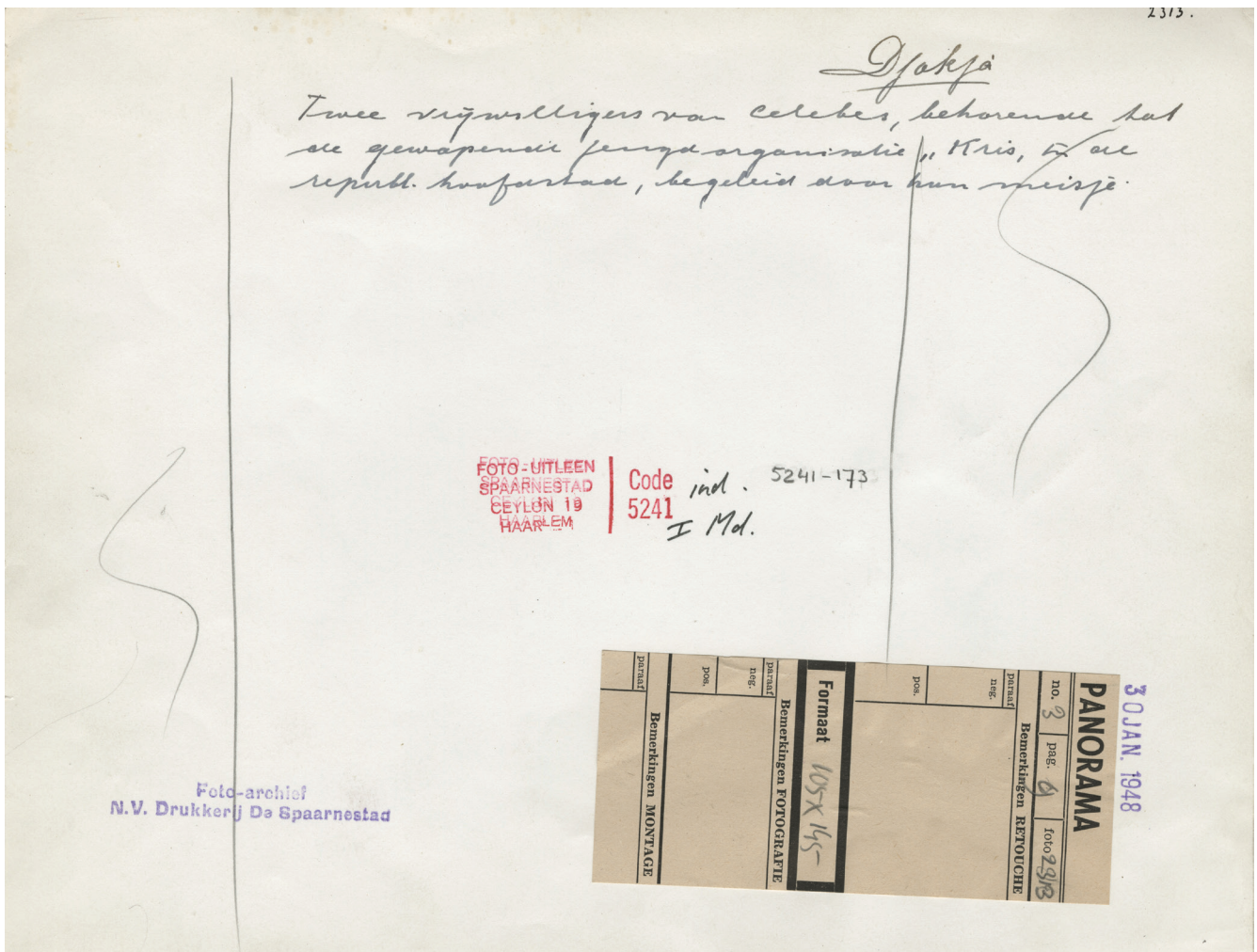


Figure 2. Verso of figure 1, explanation of the annotations: top centre, contemporary caption in pen: 'Yogya, Two volunteers from Celebes belonging to the Kris armed youth organisation in the republ. capital, accompanied by a girl'; below: label and stamp referring to the publication date in Panorama; left and right in pencil: cropping instructions; centre, red stamp referring to the Spaarnestad photo library and the CODEC-code 5241-173, a further subdivision of the CODEC main heading 5 (statesmanship): 'Staatsvorming Indonesië, vrouw en kind als militair' (State-building Indonesia, women and children as soldiers).

boxes, 'mediate experiences and articulate desires' insofar as they help shape the reality that scholars study.<sup>10</sup> For many years, the Spaarnestad photo archive functioned as a passive source. The archive became 'resourceful' through the tactile practice of doing archival research, which led to the questions: What information does the archive reveal about the processes of recording, production, distribution, and reception? And is it possible to learn from the archive how De Spaarnestad used photography to propagate a particular worldview for its readers? Or, as Jason E. Hill and Vanessa R. Schwartz put it more generally in *Getting the Picture* (2015): 'What is a news picture and how does





Figure 3. Panorama, January 30, 1948, 8-9, featuring figure 1 on page 9, credit: Nationaal Archief/Collectie Spaarnestad.

it work?'.<sup>11</sup> In order to investigate these questions, it is necessary to determine the characteristics of the Spaarnestad photo archive, its history, creation, structure, use, expansion, and transformation.

The photographs in Spaarnestad's photo archive have a material presence in space and time.<sup>12</sup> Concurrently, their visual content is traded in the form of reproductions up to the present day, thus constantly creating new meanings and contexts.<sup>13</sup> [Figures 1 and 7] This article, which specifically treats photographs as objects, methodologically builds on the biographical model of Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff, formulated in *The Social Life of Things* (1986).<sup>14</sup> They argue that an object, as Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart have phrased it in relation to analogue photography, 'cannot be fully understood at any point in its existence but should be understood as belonging in a continuing process of production, exchange, usage and meaning.'<sup>15</sup> It follows that if an object has a social life, it also has a biography. An object can also be a group of objects that belong together because meaning





*Figure 4. Two young Republican volunteers from Celebes (Sulawesi), members of the armed youth organisation KRIS (Kebaktian Rakyat Indonesia Sulawesi) on leave in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, December 1947; silver gelatin print used for publication in Katholieke Illustratie, January 29, 1948; credit: Nationaal Archief/Collectie Spaarnestad/Hugo Wilmar.*

and order have been assigned to them within an institutional context. Edwards and Hart call this a ‘synthetic object’, and archives are a typical example: ‘they are active environments for participating in the histories of objects, active environments that ultimately shape histories, through the preservation contexts that they themselves constitute.’<sup>16</sup>

The company and editorial archives of De Spaarnestad have not been preserved. This makes it difficult to write a historical ethnography of its collecting and archiving practices, as Melone has done of the comparable Ringier Bildarchiv.<sup>17</sup> However, the archive of the Spaarnestad Photo Foundation, established in 1986, still exists and is a valuable source.<sup>18</sup> It contains, among others, the transcript of an extensive interview conducted in 1986 by photographer Harm Botman and

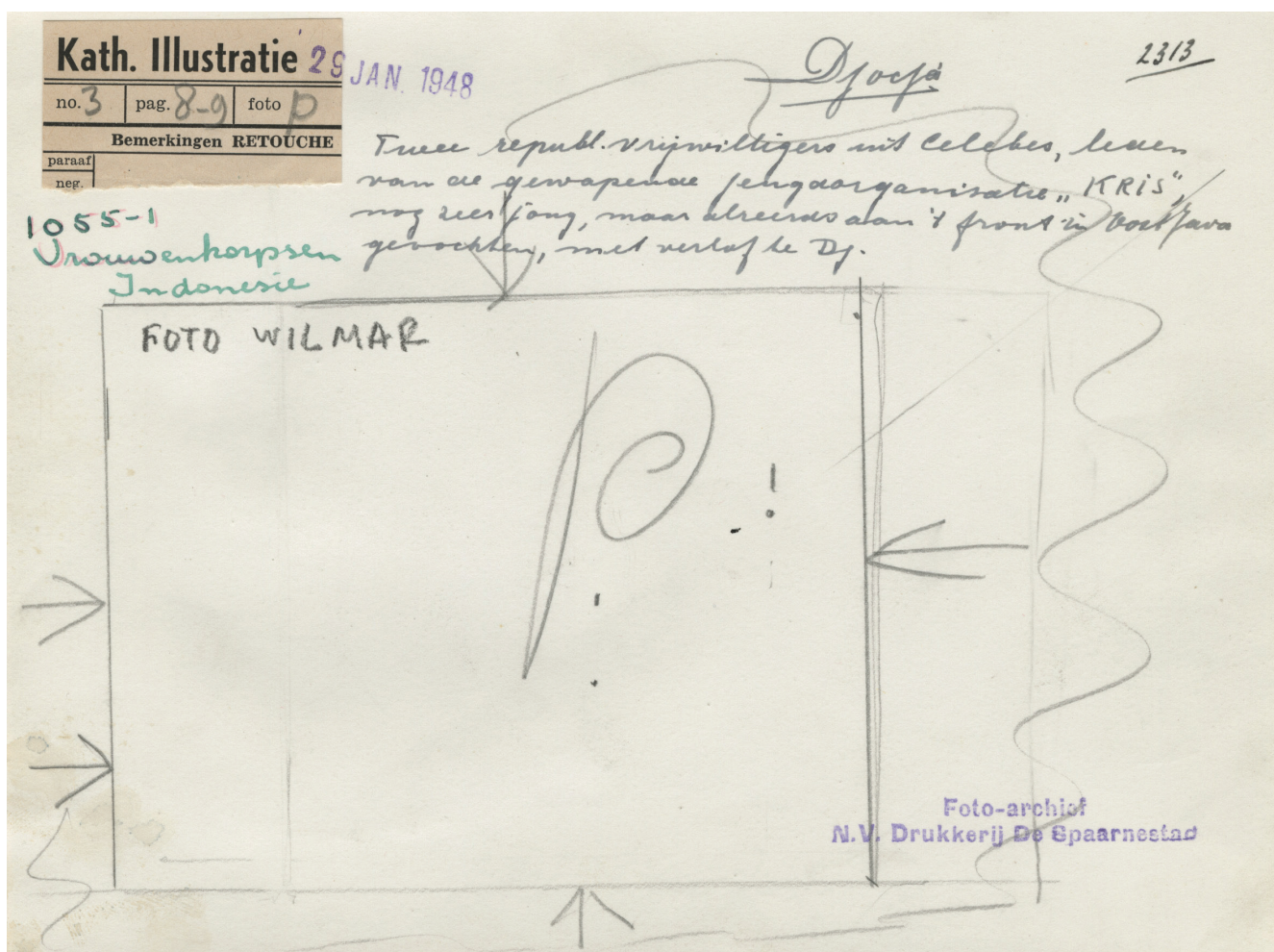


Figure 5. Verso of figure 4, explanation of the annotations: top right, contemporary caption in pen: 'Yogya, Two republ. volunteers from Celebes, members of the armed youth organisation "Kris", still very young, but already at the front in East Java, on leave in Y.'; top left: label and stamp referring to the publication date in Katholieke Illustratie; centre, in pencil: cropping instructions; left, in green pen: reference to CODEC-code 1055-1, a further subdivision of the CODEC main heading 1 (war): 'Vrouwenkorpsen Indonesie' (Women's Army Corps Indonesia), the person who filed the image assumed incorrectly that all persons depicted were women.

journalist Jaap Sluis with W.N. (Wouter) Stuifbergen, which can be considered a key document to this biography.<sup>19</sup> Wouter Stuifbergen (1906-2006) had joined the publishing company at a young age in 1919 and retired in 1971 as one of the vice-presidents of VNU, the legal successor to De Spaarnestad. During that long period, he was the central figure in Spaarnestad's photography policy. Stuifbergen understood early on that, in view of the growing magazine portfolio, it would be useful to build up a photo archive that could be of future use. Sluis used the interview for a brief history in the book *Twee miljoen foto's* (1986) but never mentions it as his source.<sup>20</sup> The interview





Figure 6. Katholieke Illustratie, January 29, 1948, 40-41, featuring figure 4 on page 41; credit: Nationaal Archief/Collectie Spaarnestad.

shows that Stuifbergen did not like being in the spotlight and saw himself primarily as a representative of De Spaarnestad. Although Stuifbergen would not have been able to shape either the photography policy or the photo archive without the support of the board of directors, it is certainly due to his personal vision and decisiveness that the Spaarnestad magazines had the best photography at their disposal and that owing to their excellent reputation the photo archive still exists today.<sup>21</sup>

This biography has a classical chronological structure and offers a national and international perspective on the formation of the Spaarnestad Photo Archive, against the background of historical developments in the international image industry. A brief characterisation of the publishing house and its major publications is followed by two sections describing the origins, concept, growth, use, organisation, and structure of the photo archive as an editorial archive (1923-1986). Two subsequent sections discuss the transformation of the archive into a cultural foundation that functioned both as a





Figure 7. Billboard campaign for the exhibition *Revolusi! Indonesia Independent* (11 February – 5 June 2022) Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, featuring Hugo Wilmar's photograph (figure 4) from the Spaarnestad Collection in the National Archives; photo by the author, Museumplein, Amsterdam, January 2022.

refuge for discarded photo archives and as a commercial image bank for historical photographs (1986–2008). The final two sections deal with the relocation of the Spaarnestad Photo Archive to the Dutch National Archives in The Hague, and the consequences of the incorporation into a public heritage institution and its digitisation policy (2008–now).

## De Spaarnestad and its principal publications

De Spaarnestad was a printer and publisher in the centre of Haarlem, situated on the river Spaarne, west of Amsterdam. The company was founded in 1906 and grew into one of the largest publishers of illustrated magazines in the Netherlands. De Spaarnestad was of Roman Catholic stock, a relevant fact in view of the strongly pillarised (Dutch: *verzuild*) society that characterised the Netherlands during the first half of the twentieth century and that was strongly reflected in the media.<sup>22</sup> The illustrated magazine *Katholieke Illustratie* played an important role in the emancipation of Roman Catholics, who had regained full religious freedom in 1853 after centuries of disadvantage. Founded in 1867, the magazine aimed to provide useful and entertaining reading material, while contributing to religious education at the same time.<sup>23</sup> It became a great success and could soon measure up to foreign examples such as *L'Illustration* in France. Publisher Henri Bogaerts paid much attention to the printing quality of the illustrations, and closely followed the latest developments. Although *Katholieke Illustratie* was not the first Dutch magazine to publish a photograph - the Protestant *Eigen Haard* had that scoop in 1882 - it was one of the first magazines to frequently use photography in that early period.<sup>24</sup> The high circulation, which in 1885 was around 25,000 to 30,000 copies, made it possible to invest in the new image technology.<sup>25</sup>

De Spaarnestad, which in 1910 took over the publication of *Katholieke Illustratie*, continued in this vein and purchased a rotogravure press in 1915. *Katholieke Illustratie* became the pinnacle of printing quality in the Dutch graphic industry. In order to make the expensive press profitable and to stay ahead of the competition, De Spaarnestad began to publish other illustrated weeklies, also targeting non-Catholic audiences.<sup>26</sup> In the 1920s, the company almost served the entire Dutch market with magazines like *De Sport Illustratie*, *De Stad Amsterdam*, *Groot-Rotterdam*, *'s-Gravenhage in Beeld*, *Brabant in Woord en Beeld* and *Limburg in Woord en Beeld*. The publisher struck a bargain in 1929 by taking over *Panorama*, which had been published since 1913 and was also known for its high-quality



printing.<sup>27</sup> *Panorama*, the neutral equivalent of *Katholieke Illustratie*, similarly focused on families with a wide variety of topics including current events, art, fashion, sports, and photo stories from home and abroad.<sup>28</sup>

*Katholieke Illustratie* and *Panorama* became the showpieces of De Spaarnestad, just like the women's magazine *Libelle*, which the company started publishing in 1934.<sup>29</sup> Soon *Libelle* was in competition with *Margriet*, the successful women's magazine of De Geïllustreerde Pers, the Catholic competitor from Amsterdam.<sup>30</sup> In 1964, the two publishers were forced to merge in order to cope with the rise of television and the secularisation of Dutch society.<sup>31</sup> This merger, which in 1965 resulted in the founding of VNU (Verenigde Nederlandse Uitgeversbedrijven), was big news because it concerned the two largest publishers of illustrated magazines in the Netherlands.<sup>32</sup> Although the editorial staffs became employees of the same company, they continued to operate strictly separate until the 1990s.

## The origins of the photo archive

When De Spaarnestad and De Geïllustreerde Pers merged, not only the editorial staff remained independent, but the photo archives were also kept separate. The photo archive of De Geïllustreerde Pers was much smaller than Spaarnestad's because it returned most photographs to the photographers and agencies after use, while De Spaarnestad kept most photographic material. Spaarnestad's photo archive was created around 1923 from the desire to systematically store the negatives of staff photographers.<sup>33</sup> The company employed staff photographers since 1910 and was one of the few Dutch publishers that could afford to do so. These included regional and studio photographers. After the Second World War, De Spaarnestad built a well-equipped studio and several darkrooms.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, VNU discarded nearly all negatives and colour slides by former Spaarnestad photographers in the early 1970s, including their day reports with detailed information for the editors.<sup>35</sup> Their photographs have been preserved only in the form of prints and as illustrations in the magazines.

For photos of subjects and events that were not covered by its own photographers, De Spaarnestad relied on Dutch and international photo agencies. Diethard Kerbs' well-known description of the period 1900-1933 as 'the era of photo agencies' is certainly reflected in the business practice of De Spaarnestad at this time.<sup>36</sup> Open any folder in the archive and a variety of national and international photo agencies stand out: A.B.C. Press Service, ACME, AP, Atlantic, Belga, Fox, Delius,

Hollandia, INP, Keystone, P.I.X., Polygoon, Three Lions, Trampus, UPI, Vereenigde Fotobureaux and Het Zuiden among others. Photo agencies and commercial picture libraries such as these ‘influenced and regulated the flow of images, ultimately shaping visual culture,’ Blaschke wrote.<sup>37</sup> They stilled, in the words of Jan Tschichold, the ‘picture-hunger of modern man.’<sup>38</sup> Wouter Stuijbergen recognised this ‘picture-hunger’ and he convinced De Spaarnestad’s management of the importance of a picture library for internal use.

Details of the agreements that De Spaarnestad made with image providers have not been preserved. The 1986 interview does, however, reveal the broad outlines. Spaarnestad took out subscriptions with most Dutch and foreign photo press agencies based on a monthly or annual fee. In return, the publisher received the complete photo production of that month or year. Stuijbergen subsequently used these images as he saw fit and without restriction in all magazines. Between 1931 and 1935, Stuijbergen consolidated his contacts with international photo agencies when he stayed in Berlin, London, and New York as a kind of scout, to acquire book titles for Spaarnestad’s series of popular literature.<sup>39</sup> With freelance photographers and representatives, Stuijbergen made strict agreements about the exclusive use of photo stories, to prevent the acquired images from appearing in other Dutch magazines.<sup>40</sup> De Spaarnestad’s directors and editors were generally known as tough negotiators.<sup>41</sup> Nadya Bair confirms this impression in her study on Magnum’s international network mentioning that Magnum was often dissatisfied with the low prices obtained by Imre Rona, its agent in the Netherlands.<sup>42</sup> Rona, a Hungarian immigrant in Amsterdam and an acquaintance of Robert Capa, had founded ABC Press Service in 1934, which would grow into one of the most important Dutch photo agencies for high-quality foreign photojournalism.<sup>43</sup> Besides Magnum, ABC Press represented Black Star, Camera Press, Stern and Sygma among others. De Spaarnestad was one of Rona’s major clients and often received the ‘right of first refusal.’<sup>44</sup> Interestingly enough, Stuijbergen felt that he always paid Rona a fair price because that guaranteed a continuous flow of images.<sup>45</sup>

All photos, published or not, were archived. Spaarnestad did not return any images and liberally used images from the archive without paying extra publication rights. Although the Dutch Copyright Act had protected photographs against reproduction without the permission of the copyright owner since 1912, it seems that no clear agreements were made about the (re)use of the images.<sup>46</sup> A contract was usually lacking. Stuijbergen made verbal agreements with Imre Rona, whom he saw weekly, after which Rona would send him an invoice. Stuijbergen was very careful to



ensure that the invoice stated the exclusive right of publication, but nothing was mentioned on the period of usage, possible reuse, or the return of materials. The Netherlands being a small country, photo agencies and photographers tacitly assumed that the use was one-off, while publishers such as De Spaarnestad believed that, as the copyrights had already been paid, they could keep and republish the images. Incidentally, Imre Rona did not return photographs to the photographers and agencies he represented either. Like De Spaarnestad and other publishers he considered all material as his own property.<sup>47</sup>

### Spaarnestad's 'Documentary Impulse'

Stuifbergen is also a representative of what scholars have come to describe as 'the documentary impulse': the belief, which arose at the end of the nineteenth century, in the ability of photography (and film) to record and to catalogue the entire world visually, and thus making it usable for all possible applications.<sup>48</sup> As Stuifbergen strived to make his photo archive as comprehensive as possible, he not only kept the photos that came in but also began to actively collect them. From Herbert Ponting's representative Mondial Photo Press, for example, he purchased photographs of Robert F. Scott's famous but ill-fated Antarctic expedition (1910-1912). He also commissioned reproductions of older illustrations from *The Illustrated London News*, *The Sphere*, *The Graphic* and *L'Illustration*.<sup>49</sup> After the Second World War, Stuifbergen actively looked for photographs to fill the gap in the archive left by the war. Immediately after the German occupation, the influx of international photos had dried up and the Dutch media had to rely on German or Nazified agencies.<sup>50</sup> After the war, Stuifbergen travelled to London where he managed to acquire thousands of photos from the Imperial War Museum, while INP in New York and the United States Department of Defence sent him American material.<sup>51</sup>

In 1967, Stuifbergen acquired the photo archive of *Het Leven geïllustreerd*, a liberal magazine of some notoriety that appeared between 1906 and 1941 and distinguished itself by daring reporting and striking photography.<sup>52</sup> Although *Het Leven* was no longer published after the war, the publisher Scheltens & Giltay continued to exploit its photo archive. The archive and its archivist, Miss Willy van Lee, became a household name among publishers and media companies looking for historical images. It comes as no surprise that Stuifbergen was extremely interested when the merger with publisher Sijthoff forced Scheltens & Giltay to sell the archive.<sup>53</sup> After lengthy negotiations, he was

able to add more than 42,000 photographs - mainly prints - to Spaarnestad's photo archive for the considerable sum of 35,000 guilders.<sup>54</sup>

The photo archive of *Het Leven* was not physically merged with that of De Spaarnestad but was rearranged according to the archive and retrieval system of the publishing house. In 1949, Jan Bomans (1915-2000) had taken office as the new, energetic head of the photo archive. He developed the Concrete Decimal Classification, abbreviated to CODEC, based on the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) used by libraries. Just like the UDC, the CODEC had ten main headings, numbered 0-9, which could be further subdivided to a maximum of seven digits. This was more practical than the much longer number series that could arise with the UDC. The headings were carefully chosen based on the pictures and the magazines' target groups: persons (0), war (1), economy (2), nature & sciences (3), social life (4), statesmanship (5), religions (6), art (7), women's life (8) and topography (9) [Figures 2 and 5]. The complete CODEC was recorded with an extensive manual that still provides access to corresponding folders that once hung in drawers and now stand in acid-free boxes. Annotations show that the system was regularly updated to conform to political, geographical, and social changes as well as practical experiences.

The CODEC's purpose was to help the editorial staff find images as quickly and efficiently as possible. Illustrative of the dynamics that prevailed in the photo archive is the name *fototheek*, photo library, used by Bomans: 'That [archive] had such a dull sound. And it didn't make sense either. To archive is to preserve, and we did that, but the most important thing we did was to lend. So, I came up with the word *fototheek*,' said Bomans, who called himself a *fotothecaris*, a photo librarian, in an interview with the Dutch daily *Het Parool*.<sup>55</sup> As *Het Parool* concluded, the CODEC betrays a specific zeitgeist: 'Thus we find in section 4, social life: the group of *a-socials*. Later (guiltily?), pencil was added with *eccentrics*.' The Catholic character of the publishing company was expressed in the section 'religions.' The section 'women's life' was chosen in relation to the specificities of De Spaarnestad's magazine portfolio. CODEC reflected in its choice of headings and terminology not only the period in which it originated, the early 1950s, but also Spaarnestad's rather traditional Roman Catholic vision on society, which prevailed at that time, and which will be further analysed in follow-up research.

The institutional cataloguing of the photo library is an exception to other image archives, which developed their archiving systems more or less intuitively from the needs that arose in daily commercial use.<sup>56</sup> Bettmann's archive and retrieval system is one of the few others that can be compared to De Spaarnestad's in its thoroughness.<sup>57</sup> Bettmann's system primarily served a



commercial purpose, whereas Spaarnestad's CODEC was mainly intended to promote a professional workflow. Meanwhile at Magnum, John G. Morris and colleagues Sam Holmes and Inge Bondi had the greatest difficulty in turning the renowned photo agency into a professional organisation, with a streamlined workflow, so that the growing mountains of 'unfiled material' would become a thing of the past and the exploitation of the photographs would be more efficient and profitable.<sup>58</sup>

### **The photo archive becomes independent**

Wouter Stuijbergen retired in 1971, Jan Bomans followed in 1981, and in 1985 it became clear that VNU wanted to dispose of the photo archive. Bomans' photo library had slowly changed from a dynamic editorial archive into a static historical picture archive. At that point, the archive contained two million black-and-white prints, 200,000 colour slides and over 1500 bound volumes of magazines.<sup>59</sup> Thanks to the efforts of the Haarlem photographer Harm Botman (1952-2012) and his fellow members of the Haarlem bibliophile and graphic society *Het Beschreven Blad*, the archive could be preserved. The society was closely involved with the establishment of the foundation *Nederlands Foto- en Grafisch Centrum*, which received the Spaarnestad Photo Archive on loan from VNU on 4 September 1986 for 99 years. The municipality of Haarlem guaranteed the accommodation and the curator's salary and the foundation would preserve, exhibit, and exploit the collection while respecting copyright obligations.<sup>60</sup> The archive thus became publicly accessible and the transfer was celebrated with a publication and a large exhibition in the *Vishal* of Haarlem's *Frans Hals Museum*.<sup>61</sup>

Through his close involvement with the photo collection of Leiden University's Print Room, Harm Botman had become convinced of the importance and possibilities of historical photography.<sup>62</sup> In the book accompanying the exhibition, Ingeborg Leijerzapf, curator of photography at the Print Room, and journalist Herman Hoeneveld stressed the photo-historical significance of the collection, which made it possible to expand the history of Dutch photography and that of photojournalism in particular.<sup>63</sup> They emphasised its international character and praised the high quality of the prints. They also pointed out the authenticity and material aspects of the prints.<sup>64</sup> At the exhibition in the *Vishal* the photos were displayed between transparent Plexiglass plates making the backs visible as well. 'This gives a nice insight into the treatment of the photos by the editors,' Dutch newspaper *De Waarheid* wrote, 'there are photographers who indicate by means

of a stamp on the back that they do not want the photograph to be “cropped”, a great frustration for many photographers.’<sup>65</sup>

The CODEC received a great deal of attention in 1986 as well. *Het Parool* had Jan Bomans demonstrate how, within one minute, he could extract a photo of a cup and saucer with a slanting spoon from a collection of two million photos.<sup>66</sup> The consistent and egalitarian structure of the system was emphasised: “Vintage prints”, work by (now) classic photographers, rare images and particularly beautiful images are no easier to find than any other photo,’ the book states, ‘the archive simply served commerce rather than photo history.’<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, from that moment on Spaarnestad began to store these so-called vintage prints separately in the Vintage Collection. In the 1980s and 1990s, Spaarnestad used these well-known photographs to underline the importance of the archive and obtain government funding for the preservation. Nowadays, the cultural and financial value determines whether a photograph gets a separate treatment. The fact remains that the term ‘vintage’ is somewhat misleading because these photos are no more vintage than the other press photos in the archive.

The rescue of Spaarnestad’s photo archive was not an isolated case but should be assessed within a broader discussion that started in the late 1970s about the Dutch government’s photography policy, which was considered incoherent, incompetent, and financially inadequate. Photographers, conservators, and curators called for a clear vision and structural government funding for a broad range of photographic expressions, preferably brought together in a national photo institute.<sup>68</sup> The preservation of photographic heritage was an important point of discussion and led, prior to the privatisation of Spaarnestad’s photo archive, to the establishment of the Maria Austria Instituut in Amsterdam (1979) and the Nederlands Fotoarchief in Rotterdam (1982). Both foundations were specifically created to provide Dutch photographers with an institutional environment where they could house their archives after their professional life had ended.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, the establishment in 1991 of the Nederlands Fotogenootschap (NFg), a professional network of institutions with photography collections, also resulted directly from the then very real fear that photographic heritage would disappear.<sup>70</sup>

This discussion was not only taking place in the Netherlands. After 1970, when the market for illustrated magazines became smaller due to the rise of television, the international market for image providers changed as well. Many press photo agencies went bankrupt or were forced to merge, their photo archives taken over by large media companies and commercial image banks or thrown onto the



streets.<sup>71</sup> The current trade in historical photographs has its roots in this period, when commercial image providers first began to distinguish between news, stock and historical photographs.<sup>72</sup> ‘Rettet die Bilder!’ – save the images – exclaimed Diethard Kerbs in 1986 in an eponymous pamphlet. In it, he explained why the loss of press photo archives was regrettable and that there should be a public institution for orphaned photo archives, comparable to the German National Library, which preserves every German-language book, and the Deutsches Literatur Archiv, where writers can house their estates.<sup>73</sup>

### Refuge for orphaned photo archives

The independent status of the archive forced Spaarnestad to think and act commercially. Whereas previously the photos were only intended for internal use, now the images had to be sold to third parties so that the foundation could support itself. Stuijbergen had an idea about that: The Spaarnestad should follow the example of what he considered to be the largest and most beautiful photo archives in the world, those of Otto Bettmann, Sir Edward Hulton and Paul Popper – all now part of Getty Images – and activate the archive through expansion. He was very taken with Bettmann’s business model and advised Spaarnestad to make reproductions from special books in Dutch libraries, ‘then you have tens, hundreds of thousands of records for nothing,’ because the origins could not be traced and the works themselves were no longer under copyright.<sup>74</sup> In addition, Spaarnestad had to take over new archives in order to meet future needs.<sup>75</sup> Stuijbergen’s first advice was ignored. Making tens of thousands of reproductions without explicit permission, like Bettmann had done in the Staatliche Kunstbibliothek in the early 1930s, was no longer possible fifty years later.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, the new foundation was not concerned with setting up a commercial image bank with new material, but with preserving photographic heritage. Stuijbergen’s second recommendation was taken to heart and over the years Spaarnestad developed into a haven for orphaned photo archives. In 1986, the photo archive counted more than two million photos; in 2008, just before the move to The Hague, the counter stood at about twelve million photos.<sup>77</sup>

Among the hundreds of archives that Spaarnestad has taken into its care since 1986 are more than forty press photo archives, and not the least of them.<sup>78</sup> With the advent of digital photography at the beginning of this century, the media shut down their analogue archives in droves after digitising them.<sup>79</sup> When ANP-Foto, founded in 1949 as part of the Algemeen

Nederlands Persbureau (ANP), wanted to destroy its analogue photo archive in 2000 to save costs, Spaarnestad protested. Half a century of domestic and foreign news, contained in over one million black-and-white and colour negatives, 95,000 prints and 10,000 slides, was moved to Haarlem. In 2007, the joint photo archive of the newspapers *Trouw* and *Het Parool* followed. Renowned photo agency Hollandse Hoogte transferred its analogue archive in parts from 2006 onwards, after being one of the first Dutch agencies to scan all photographs for its own image bank.<sup>80</sup> This transfer also included the analogue archives of photo agencies Transworld Features and Rob Brijker Press, as Hollandse Hoogte had acquired these companies in 2006 and 2007 respectively. This gave an enormous boost to the international character of Spaarnestad as, together with ABC Press Service, they were among the most important Dutch agents for high quality foreign photography. The ABC Press archive had already been transferred to Spaarnestad in 2003. The decline of newspapers and magazines, caused by falling advertising revenues, and competition from Corbis and Getty Images had heralded the end of Imre Rona's renowned photo agency.<sup>81</sup> All incoming archives were kept physically separate but outwardly functioned under one name: the Spaarnestad Photo Archive, and from 2005, when the first image bank went online, as Spaarnestad Photo.

### **Spaarnestad Photo in the National Archives**

The Spaarnestad business model has always been precarious. Although the revenue from the image sales provided a reasonable financial basis until the beginning of this century, it was never large enough to fully cover the costs of management and conservation. A small paid staff, aided by many volunteers, have kept the photo archive going from the start.<sup>82</sup> It also had a difficult competitive position because part of the income had to be paid to the copyright owners, including the agencies that had transferred their analogue archives. The photographs of all those great (inter)national names, including Emmy Andriess, Cecil Beaton, Eva Besnyö, Werner Bischoff, Erwin Blumenfeld, Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Alfred Eisenstaedt, Ed van der Elsen, André Kertész, Erich Lessing, Cas Oorthuys, Sem Presser, Erich Salomon and Krijn Taconis, established the stature of the archive but hardly brought in any money. Moreover, they formed only a relatively small part of the archive, which provides in its entirety a much broader picture of photographic production in the twentieth century.<sup>83</sup>



After 2000 the financial situation of Spaarnestad worsened when media budgets plummeted and competition grew as a result of digitisation. When professional archiving and conservation in Haarlem was threatened, the National Archives took over the collection.<sup>84</sup> Between 2008 and 2011, the millions of photos were moved to The Hague, where the Spaarnestad Photo Archive became the Spaarnestad Collection of the National Archives. The Spaarnestad Photo Foundation was not disbanded but took up residence as an independent institution in the National Archives building, where it still runs the photo collections commercially and uses the proceeds to stimulate and facilitate research into collection. Through this construction, the National Archives, which are not allowed to profit financially from the collections, indirectly generate extra income which benefits the enrichment of the content and the reputation of the entire archive.

The National Archives acquired the Spaarnestad photo archives mainly because of its cultural and historical value. This is an argument that virtually all cultural and academic institutions use when acquiring extensive press photo archives. Press photographs document all the important aspects of a country's history, they reflect the whole range of human behaviour and emotions and contribute to our collective visual memory.<sup>85</sup> The Spaarnestad archives also dovetailed nicely with the photo archives already present in The Hague, including those of the State Information Service (RVD) and photo press agency Anefo.<sup>86</sup> Spaarnestad's arrival was followed by the photo archives of magazines *Vrij Nederland* and *De Groene Amsterdammer*, World Press Photo and various photojournalists. The National Archives had thus made up a lot of ground, because until 1996, it did not regard the preservation of photo collections as part of its remit.<sup>87</sup> Nowadays it manages the largest photo collection in the Netherlands, with 15 to 16 million photos. The Nederlands Fotogenootschap recently counted 161 press photo archives in 19 public institutions during an initial inventory of this type of archives in the Netherlands.<sup>88</sup> 45 of them are in the National Archives, of which at least seventy-five percent is part of the Spaarnestad Collection.

The transfer of the Spaarnestad photo archives to a public institution coincided with similar developments abroad as a result of the rise of digital photography at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Swiss institutions experienced an influx of analogue press photo archives around 2010, which led to the establishment of the Netzwerk Pressebildarchiv.<sup>89</sup> In Germany, the Netzwerk Fotoarchiv was founded in 2011 on the initiative of the German photo magazine *Photonews*. Following Diethard Kerbs' urgent appeal 25 years earlier, the magazine's editors once again underscored the need for a

broad-based organisation that would take on both the immaterial and material care of photo archives, so that they would not be abandoned to the game of chance and thus mostly to ruin.<sup>90</sup> Members of the network include the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, which in 2019 was gifted the 15 million-photo analogue archive of illustrated weekly *STERN*.

Because of the high investments required for preservation and management, Spaarnestad Photo never paid for the acquisition of archives after its independence in 1986, except for a token amount. But it is difficult to bring a photo archive into the public domain if the owner asks a market price. This is how, for example, the photo archive of the illustrated weekly *Ons Vrije Nederland* (1940-1950), a former Dutch resistance magazine that obtained its photos from international press agencies and well-known Dutch photographers, did not end up at Spaarnestad but became fragmented and barely accessible.<sup>91</sup> Thanks to philanthropists the photo archives of the renowned photo agencies Black Star and Magnum did not suffer this fate and ended up at Ryerson University (Toronto) and the University of Texas (Austin) respectively.<sup>92</sup> Meanwhile, The Bettmann Archive is hardly accessible, because in 2002 Corbis moved it to Iron Mountain, a high-security storage facility in a former mine near Pittsburgh. This will preserve the material for eternity, but, as Blaschke aptly writes: ‘with the preservation of photographs and film this notion of immortalization in a high-security, sub-zero storage facility creates a noteworthy tautology: photography freezes the moment and is frozen in time.’<sup>93</sup>

The accessibility of the Spaarnestad Collection is guaranteed by the Dutch Archives Act, which states that records in an archive repository are in principle public.<sup>94</sup> All photos can be consulted in the National Archives reading room if the physical condition of the material permits and if there are no legal impediments. In practice, it will often be necessary to seek advice from staff members, because there is no official inventory of the Spaarnestad Collection yet, nor can visitors consult the CODEC themselves, and the information online is sparse.<sup>95</sup>

## Conclusion

Before Spaarnestad’s photo archives moved to the depots of the National Archives, visitors were able to browse through the filing cabinets themselves.<sup>96</sup> Although undesirable from a preservation point of view, this situation always yielded unexpected discoveries and new insights. Presently, not only



study room protocol but also digitisation limits such ‘idiosyncratic searches.’<sup>97</sup> Digitisation has rescued many historical photographs from oblivion and enabled the use of computer vision techniques in research. However, due to the high costs and time-consuming procedures, most institutions digitise only a fraction of their photos.<sup>98</sup> Subsequently, the photos are usually reduced online to ‘visual content’, stand-alone images without physical properties and mutual coherence. The non-digitised photos, their original use and the organisational structure of the archive are in danger of disappearing from view.

Scholars have pointed out the problematic aspects of this situation, which are also carefully listed in the Florence Declaration, a set of recommendations for the preservation of analogue photo archives (2009).<sup>99</sup> Digitising is ‘History in the Making’, Melone writes, and institutions bear a responsibility because selective disclosure creates the risk that a (photo) history will be reconstructed from press photo archives which reproduces the view prefaced by the mass media.<sup>100</sup> There is a real danger that digitisation processes will not only determine the image of history, but also steer the content and methodology of historical research itself. A biography of a photo archive can correct this imbalance. Biographical knowledge encourages researchers to study the physical photographs in the reading room and, consequently, to use them as historical sources. In addition, a biography draws attention to the many photos that are not (yet) accessible online.

Currently, more than 600,000 photos from the Spaarnestad Collection, about five percent of the total, can be found online. These images relate predominantly to subjects belonging to the National Archives’ focus areas, which include both World Wars, the former colonies, and economic, political, and social life in the Netherlands. This is a valid choice, given the archives’ role as the repository of ‘our national memory,’ as their tagline goes. But, as this article demonstrates, the Spaarnestad Collection has a distinctly international character and covers a broad range of subjects, which are characteristic of photojournalism and the image industry. On their website, the National Archives advise prospective researchers to think from the archive creator’s perspective because an archive ‘is a reflection of the structure and working processes of an organization (the archive creator).’<sup>101</sup> This biography provides researchers with a handle to think from the creator’s perspective when using the photos in the Spaarnestad Collection, both in their material and digital appearance.

## Notes

1. I owe many thanks to Freek Baars, Senior Advisor at Spaarnestad Photo, and Elwin Hendrikse, Photographic Collections Specialist at the National Archives, for providing me with additional information and for the inspiring conversations.
2. Nadya Bair, *The Decisive Network: Magnum Photos and the Postwar Image Market* (Oakland CA: University of California Press, 2020); Estelle Blaschke, *Banking on Images: From the Bettmann Archive to Corbis* (Leipzig: Analysis & Excess Spector Books, 2016); *Schweizer Pressefotografie: Einblick in die Archive/Photographie de presse en Suisse: Regards sur les archives* (Zürich: Limmat Verlag, 2016); Mirco Melone, *Zwischen Bilderlast und Bilderschatz: Pressefotografie und Bildarchive im Zeitalter der Digitalisierung* (München/Leiden: Wilhelm Fink Verlag/Brill, 2018); Steven Hoelscher, ed., *Reading Magnum: A Visual Archive of the Modern World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014); Alison Nordström, "On Becoming an Archive," in *Reading Magnum*, 17–35.
3. Nordström, "Becoming an Archive," 18.
4. Thierry Gervais, "Reaching beyond the index: The publication of news photographs," in *Photography and Doubt*, eds. Sabine T. Kriebel and Andrés Mario Zervigón (London/New York: Routledge, 2019), 81–101, specifically 82 and note 5 for an overview of literature on this subject.
5. Melone, *Bilderlast und Bilderschatz*, 26–30.
6. Melone, *Bilderlast und Bilderschatz*, 139–143; Nordström, "Becoming an Archive," 22–24; see also Gervais, "Beyond the index," 91–97.
7. Frido Troost, "Een saillant detail: De onwerkelijkheid van de fotografische werkelijkheid," in *Twee miljoen foto's: Het Spaarnestad Fotoarchief*, ed. Harm Botman (Haarlem: NFGC, 1986), 24–29, specifically 24.
8. Elizabeth Edwards, "Photographs: Material Form and the Dynamic Archive," in *Photo Archives and the Photographic Memory of Art History*, ed. Costanza Caraffa (Berlin/München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011), 47–56, specifically 47; see also: Costanza Caraffa, "From Photo Libraries to Photo Archives: On the Epistemological Potential of Art Historical Photo Collections," in *Photo Archives and the Photographic Memory*, ed. Caraffa, 11–44.
9. Edwards, "Material Form," 48–49.
10. Edwards, "Material Form," 50.
11. Jason E. Hill and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds., *Getting the Picture: The Visual Culture of News* (London/New York: Bloomsburg, 2015), 2.

12. For a historiography of the material turn in photography studies, see: Costanza Caraffa, “Objects of Value: Challenging Conventional Hierarchies in the Photo Archive,” in *Photo-Objects: On the Materiality of Photographs and Photo Archives in the Humanities and Sciences*, eds. Julia Bärnighausen, Costanza Caraffa, Stefanie Klamm, Franka Schneider, and Petra Wodtke (Max Planck Research Library for the History and Development of Knowledge Studies, 12, 2020), 11–32, specifically 18–24.
13. The *Florence Declaration for the preservation of analogue photo archives* (2009) contains a clear analysis of the difference between analogue photos and their digital reproductions, URL: <https://www.khi.fi.it/en/photothek/florence-declaration.php>.
14. Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Igor Kopytoff, “The cultural biography of things: commodization as process,” in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. Appadurai, 64–91.
15. Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, eds., *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (London/New York: Routledge, 2004), 4.
16. Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, “Mixed Box: The cultural biography of a box of ‘ethnographic’ photographs,” in *Photographs Objects Histories*, eds. Edwards et al., 48–64, specifically 50.
17. Melone, *Bilderlast und Bilderschatz*, 20–23.
18. Historical newspapers offer another valuable source, which are available through Delpher, an online search system developed and managed by the KB National Library of the Netherlands, URL: <https://www.delpher.nl>
19. Harm Botman and Jaap Sluis, interview with W.N. Stuifbergen, 29 July 1986, transcript made available by Spaarnestad Photo.
20. Jaap Sluis, “Een paar dozen op zolder: De geschiedenis van het Spaarnestad Fotoarchief,” in *Twee miljoen foto’s*, ed. Botman, 6–9.
21. Wim Blom and Levien Willemsse also interviewed Stuifbergen in 1987 for their master thesis *Een ingeblikte werkelijkheid: Het fotoagentschap A.B.C. Press Service en zijn plaats in de geschiedenis van de Nederlandse persfotografie* (Master Thesis, EUR, 1991).
22. Nel van Dijk, “Nederlandse Publiekstijdschriften in de afgelopen 150 jaar,” in *Magazine! 150 jaar Nederlandse publiekstijdschriften*, eds. Marieke van Delft, Nel van Dijk, Reinder Storm (Zwolle: Waanders/Den Haag: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2006), 8–9.
23. Joan Hemels and Renée Vegt, *Het geïllustreerde tijdschrift in Nederland: Bron van kennis en vermaak, lust voor het oog. Bibliography: Part 1* (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel, 1993), 262–267, Part 2 (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel, 1997), 593–600; Leonard Jentjens, *Van strijdorgaan tot familieblad: De*



- tijdschriftjournalistiek van de Katholieke Illustratie 1867–1968* (Amsterdam: Otto Cramwinckel, 1996); Tijn Hottinga, *De Katholieke Illustratie: De verkochte bruid, honderd jaar tijdschriftgeschiedenis* (Baarn: Tirion, 2000); Hans Renders, “Katholieke Illustratie (1867–1968),” in *Magazine!*, eds. Marieke van Delft et al., 36–37.
24. Martijn Kleppe and Freek Baars, “De eerste Nederlandse persfoto,” *Fotografisch Geheugen* 69 (Winter 2010/2011): 6–9, specifically 7.
  25. Jentjens, *Strijdorgaan*, 64, 66.
  26. Hottinga, *Katholieke Illustratie*, 64–70.
  27. Hottinga, *Katholieke Illustratie*, 72, 75–76.
  28. On *Panorama*, see: Hemels et al., *Het geïllustreerde tijdschrift*, Part 1, 347–351, Part 2, 847–863; Dirk J. Tang, “Panorama (1913-nu),” in *Magazine!*, eds. Van Delft et al., 58–59.
  29. On *Libelle*, see: Hemels et al., *Het geïllustreerde tijdschrift*, Part 1, 289–291, Part 2, 642–655; Marloes Hülsken, “Libelle (1934-nu),” in *Magazine!*, eds. Van Delft et al., 84–85.
  30. On *Margriet*, see: Hemels et al., *Het geïllustreerde tijdschrift*, Part 1, 296–299, Part 2, 691–709; Marloes Hülsken, “Margriet (1938-nu),” in *Magazine!*, eds. Van Delft et al., 94–95.
  31. Jentjens, *Strijdorgaan*, 28–29.
  32. Gert-Jan Johannes and Michiel Cohen de Lara, *Van Haarlem naar Manhattan: Veertig jaar VNU 1965–2005* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2005), 19–53.
  33. Johannes, *Van Haarlem naar Manhattan*. interview Stuifbergen, 1986; all information relating to Stuifbergen and the archive is taken from this interview unless otherwise stated.
  34. See on Spaarnestad’s staff photographers: Tom van der Linden, *Spaarnestad-Fotografen: Broodfotografen of unieke beeldkunstenaars? Een onderzoek naar de fotografie van uitgeverij De Spaarnestad tussen 1910 en 2000* (Master Thesis, EUR, 2013).
  35. Wiel van der Randen (1897–1949) is the only Spaarnestad photographer whose complete archive of 37,000 negatives has been preserved, see: Carla van der Stap, “Wiel van der Randen,” in *FotoLexicon (Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse fotografie in monografieën en thema-artikelen)*, ed. Ingeborg Leijerzapf, 16 (November 1999) 32, URL: <https://depthoffield.universiteitleiden.nl/1632f05en/>; Frido Troost and Floor Koomen, *Wiel van der Randen: bescheiden camera, moderne blik* (Haarlem: Spaarnestad Photo/Amsterdam: Bas Lubberhuizen, 2006).
  36. Diethart Kerbs, Walter Uka, Brigitte Walz-Richter, eds., *Die Gleichschaltung der Bilder: Zur Geschichte der Pressefotografie 1930–36* (Berlin: Fröhlich und Kaufmann, 1983) 32; Recent studies on the emergence of the 20th century picture market include: Bair, *The Decisive Network*; Blaschke, *Banking on Images*; Zeynep Devrim

Gürsel, *Image Brokers: Visualizing World News in the Age of Digital Circulation* (Oakland CA: University of California Press, 2016); Annette Vowinckel, *Agenten der Bilder: Fotografisches Handeln im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2016); Special issue of *Fotogeschichte: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Ästhetik der Fotografie*: “Business mit Bildern. Geschichte und Gegenwart der Fotoagenturen,” 36/142 (Winter 2016), which includes: Bernd Weise, “Strukturen des Bildertransports: Fotoagenturen im Deutschen Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik,” *Fotogeschichte* 36/142 (Winter 2016); Estelle Blaschke, “Bilder als Kapital: Corbis, Getty Images und der digitale Bildermarkt,” *Fotogeschichte* 36/142 (Winter 2016): 49–54; See also: Christian Joschke, “Le marché transnational des images politiques: Le Secours ouvrier international dans le contexte des agences photographiques soviétiques (1924–1933),” *Études photographiques* 35 (2017): 60–87; Audrey Leblanc and Sébastien Dupuy, “Le fonds Sygma exploité par Corbis: Une autre histoire du photojournalisme,” *Études photographiques* 35 (2017): 88–111; see also Matthias Bruhn, “Tarife für das Sichtbare: Eine kurze Geschichte der Bildagenturen,” *Fotogeschichte* 27/105 (2007): 12–25.

37. Blaschke, *Banking on Images*, 11.
38. Blaschke, *Banking on Images*, 11, Blaschke here quotes Jan Tschichold, *Die neue Typographie: Ein Handbuch für zeitgemäss Schaffende* (Berlin: Verlag des Bildungsverbandes der Deutschen Buchdrucker, 1928).
39. Adriaan van der Weel, “Scouting for Popular Fiction Between the World Wars,” in *New Perspectives in Book History: Contributions from the Low Countries*, eds. Marieke van Delft, Frank de Glas and Jeroen Salman (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2006), 203–218.
40. Also mentioned in: Blom et al., *Ingeblikte werkelijkheid*, 159–160.
41. Blom et al., *Ingeblikte werkelijkheid*, 151.
42. Bair, *Decisive Network*, 40.
43. Blom et al., *Ingeblikte werkelijkheid*; Durkje van der Wal started a follow-up research project to this thesis in 2021 in which she is examining Imre Rona’s international network within Dutch photojournalism.
44. Blom et al., *Ingeblikte werkelijkheid*, 155–156.
45. Blom et al., *Ingeblikte werkelijkheid*, 145.
46. Blom et al., *Ingeblikte werkelijkheid*, 156–157; interview Stuijbergen, 1986; on Dutch copyright law in relation to photojournalism see: Bram Wisman, *Argusogen: Een documentaire over de Persfotografie in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Voetnoot, 1994), 211–222; Ronald Vecht, “Kroniek foto-auteursrecht 1983–1994,” in *Stilstaande beelden: Ondergang en opkomst van de fotografie: Jaarboek Kunst en Beleid 7* (Amsterdam: Boekmanstichting/Van Gennep, 1995), eds. Hans van Dulken et al., 207–223.

47. Blom et al., *Ingeblikte werkelijkheid*, 160.
48. Gregg Mitman and Kelley Wilder, eds., *Documenting the World: Film, Photography, and the Scientific Record* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 1–22.
49. Sluis, “Dozen op zolder,” 8–9.
50. See: René Kok, Herman Selier, Erik Somers, *Fotografie in bezettingstijd: Geschiedenis en beeldvorming* (Amsterdam: RIOD/Zwolle: Waanders, 1993); Louis Zweers, Tineke Luijendijk, *Foute foto’s: De geïllustreerde pers tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1993); *Katholieke Illustratie* appeared until March 1942 and *Panorama* until September 1944: Jentjens, *Strijdorgaan*, 107–110; Hemels et al., *Het geïllustreerde tijdschrift*, Part 1, 130, 350.
51. Sluis, “Dozen op Zolder,” 8–9.
52. Flip Bool, Henk Overduin and Gerrit Jan de Rook, eds., *Het Leven 1906–1941* (Den Haag: Gemeentemuseum, 1981); Rob Moorees, ed., *Life is Strange* (Rotterdam: nai010/Amsterdam: Huis Marseille, 2015).
53. The sale was national news: *Het Parool*, January 11, 1967 and December 30, 1967, *Trouw*, January 10, 1967, *de Volkskrant*, January 12, 1967, *Het Vrije Volk*, January 12, 1967.
54. Letter from M.G.J.W. Baltussen (N.V. Uitgeverij De Spaarnestad) to the Board of Directors of the V.N.U., April 5, 1967, copy made available by Spaarnestad Photo.
55. Paul Arnoldussen, Hans Hoekstra, “Heeft u voor mij een juffrouw zonder smaak?": De Spaarnestad draagt stokoud archief over,” *Het Parool*, September 6, 1986.
56. Compare: Bas Mulder, *Het fotoarchief van Het Parool en Trouw: Onderzoek naar het gebruik en de totstandkoming* (Master Thesis, EUR, 2009), 73–75; Kristel Vermeulen, *In een flits van het ene einde van de aarde naar het andere geschoten: De rol van telexfoto’s in NRC Handelsblad en Algemeen Dagblad* (Master Thesis, EUR, 2010), 40–41, and further: Nicole Graf, Jochen Hesse, “Ablagesysteme,” in *Schweizer Pressefotografie*, 121–128.
57. Blaschke, *Banking on Images*, 112–130; the picture libraries of *Life* (18 million photographs) and *Look* (25 million photographs) were also exceptionally well organized and indexed, see Bair, *Decisive Network*, 203.
58. Bair, *Decisive Network*, 200–207.
59. In addition to photographs and periodicals, the archive also contains approximately 1740 drawings by Herman Moerkerk (1879–1949), made for *Katholieke Illustratie*.
60. Botman, *Twee miljoen foto’s*, 2, 4–5; Ingeborg Th. Leijerzapf and Joke Pronk, “Harm Botman” in *FotoLexicon (Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse fotografie in monografieën en thema-artikelen)*, ed. Ingeborg Leijerzapf, 28/44 (October 2011), URL: <https://depthoffield.universiteitleiden.nl/2844f02en/>.



61. *Het Parool*, September 6, 1986; *NRC Handelsblad*, September 10, 1986; *Trouw*, September 5, 1986; *de Volkskrant*, September 6, 1986; *Het Vrije Volk* August 29, 1986; *De Waarheid*, September 17, 1986.
62. Leijerzapf et al., “Harm Botman,” no pagenummer.
63. Ingeborg Leijerzapf and Herman Hoeneveld, “De kracht van een collectie,” in *Twee miljoen foto’s*, ed. Harm Botman, 3–5, specifically 4.
64. See: Troost, “Een saillant detail,” 24–29.
65. Jurgen Limonard, “Foto-tentoonstelling in Spaarnestad: Selectie uit meer dan twee miljoen foto’s,” *De Waarheid*, September 17, 1986.
66. *Het Parool*, September 6, 1986.
67. Botman, *Twee miljoen foto’s*, 36.
68. For a review of the Dutch government’s photography policy and the development of a professional infrastructure for photography, see: *Stilstaande Beelden*, eds. Hans van Dulken et al., published by the Boekman Foundation, an independent centre for research and knowledge dissemination in the field of Dutch art policy. See specifically: Mattie Boom, “De fotocollectie Nederland: meer geluk dan wijsheid,” in Dulken, *Stilstaande Beelden*, 13–31, and Eddie Marsman, “Voltooid? De moeizame geschiedenis van het Nederlands Foto Instituut,” in Dulken, *Stilstaande Beelden*, 33–53.
69. The Maria Austria Instituut is a foundation housed in the Amsterdam City Archives. The Nederlands Fotoarchief is now a department of the Nederlands Fotomuseum in Rotterdam, which opened its doors in 1994 as the Nederlands Foto Instituut.
70. Mattie Boom, “Peilmoment 2020: Fotografisch erfgoed in tijden van overdaad,” *Fotografisch Geheugen* 100 (March 2020): 25–28.
71. Mirco Melone, “Kommerz-Geschichte: Historische Pressefotografie zwischen Profit und Politik,” *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 12 (2015): 326–335, specifically 328–330; Blaschke, *Banking on Images*, 142–145, and note 260 for a reference to studies on the (history of the) image industry.
72. Paul Frost, *The Image Factory: Consumer Culture, Photography and the Visual Content Industry* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2003), 35–48.
73. Diethard Kerbs, *Das Bildarchiv I. Rettet die Bilder!* (Berlin: Dirk Nishen Verlag, [1986]), 3; see also: Matthias Bruhn, “Bilder außer Dienst? Transformationen der Gebrauchsfotografie” in *Photo Archives*, ed. Caraffa, 405–414, specifically 405–406.
74. Blaschke, *Banking on Images*, 58–75.

75. Comparable to Bettmann's 'either you grow or you go' policy adopted in the 1960s: Blaschke, *Banking on Images*, 142–143.
76. Blaschke, *Banking on Images*, 53–57.
77. In 2005, as part of the national Museum Inventory Program (MUSIP), Spaarnestad Photo counted more than 230 sub-collections with a total of nine million photographs, see: Marja van Hout and Hains Hamelink, "Het album beveel ik in uwe welwillende aandacht aan': Spaarnestad Photo en het bedrijfsarchief van Cebeco," *Nieuwsbrief Nederlands Fotogenootschap* 52 (September 2006), 10–11.
78. For a complete overview and explanation, see Saskia Asser and Elwin Hendrikse, "De onontgonnen goudmijn van ons visuele geheugen: Het belang van persfotoarchieven, een eerste inventarisatie in Nederland en een blik op de collectie van het Nationaal Archief," *Fotografisch Geheugen* 104 (June 2021): 4–12.
79. Melone, "Kommerz-Geschichte," 326–328; Melone, *Bilderlast und Bilderschatz*, 26–30; Gürsel, *Image Brokers*, 57–63; Vowinckel, *Agenten der Bilder*, 432–435.
80. Simon B. Kool, *Hollandse Hoogte: het verborgen archief* (Den Haag: HannaBoek, 2019), 19–20.
81. Erik van den Berg, "De teloorgang van ABC Press," *de Volkskrant*, July 15, 2003.
82. Berg, "De teloorgang van ABC Press.,"; Ger Thonen, Wil Roostenburg, "Spaarnestad Fotoarchief," *Kwartaalblad van de Vereniging van Pers- en Omroep Documentalisten*, 6/3 (2000) 4–5; Froukje Hoekstra, "Dromen van een museum," *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, November 20, 1987.
83. On the economic value of the photojournalist as 'author', see Leblanc et al., "Le fonds Sygma," 88–111.
84. "Fotoarchief naar hofstad," *de Volkskrant*, March 24, 2011; Merel Bem, "Een veilige bunker voor Spaarnestad," *de Volkskrant*, August 4, 2010.
85. See, for example, in relation to the Magnum Archive: Geoff Dyer, "Foreword," in *Reading Magnum*, ed. Steve Hoelscher, vi–vii; and to the Swiss press photo archives: Gilbert Coutaz and Nora Mathys, "Introduction," in *Schweizer Pressephotographie*, 21–30, specifically 21, 28–29.
86. Asser et al., "Onontgonnen goudmijn," 7.
87. Elwin Hendrikse, "Blikvangers: Een keuze uit de collectie," *Fotografisch Geheugen* 85 (Winter 2014/2015): 4–6; this situation was not unique to the National Archives, see on the Swiss situation, for example: Gilbert Coutaz, Amandine Cabrio, Mathieu Emonet and Nicolas Schaetti, "Archives et Bibliothèques," in *Schweizer Pressefotografie*, 173–184, specifically 177–179.
88. Asser et al., "Onontgonnen goudmijn," 11–12.
89. See: *Schweizer Pressefotografie*, note 1.

90. Enno Kaufhold, "Rettet die Fotoarchive: Eine dringende Initiative," *Photonews Thema: Archive und Nachlässe*, 7/8 (2010): 4–5.
91. A large part of the photo archive of *Ons Vrije Nederland* ended up at the Archive of Modern Conflict, which acquired the ICM collection of photo dealer Frido Troost in 2013, after Troost had put the archive on the market in the early 2000s. The Rijksmuseum acquired 311 photographs: Durkje van der Wal, "Aanwinsten Ons Vrije Nederland," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 53/4 (2005): 445–459; About the magazine: Hemels et al., *Het geïllustreerde tijdschrift*, Part 2, 831–837; Durkje van der Wal, *Tussen rede en gevoel: Het Duitslandbeeld van het voormalige verzetsblad Ons Vrije Nederland, 1940–1950* (Master Thesis, UvA, 2007).
92. Canadian billionaire Jim Pattison bought and donated the Black Star Collection in 2003 to Ryerson University, while Magnum's New York print library was bought and then donated by Michael Dell to the University of Texas, see Bair, *Decisive Network*, 228.
93. Blaschke, *Banking on Images*, 195.
94. See on the inaccessibility of (government) archives in relation to research: Idil Çetin, "Where is the Archive? The Reality of Conducting Research on Atatürk Photographs," in *Photo-Objects*, eds. Bärnighausen et al., 103–114; Lucie Ryzova, "Mourning the Archive: Middle Eastern Photographic Heritage between Neo-liberalism and Digital Reproduction," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46/4 (2014): 1027–1061.
95. URL: <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/fotos/over-de-fotocollectie>.
96. Bem, "Veilige bunker".
97. Blaschke, *Banking on Images*, 194–195.
98. On the complex operations involved in the digitisation of press photos, see among others: Blaschke, *Banking on Images*, 170–178, 185–188; Melone, *Bilderlast und Bilderschatz*; Alex Anderfuhren, Nora Mathys, "Bildrechte" in *Schweizer Pressefotografie*, 129–139; Barbara Spalinger, "Die Materialvielfalt in Pressebildarchiven und die Problematik der Erhaltung," in *Schweizer Pressefotografie*, 139–149.
99. Blaschke, *Banking on Images*, 184–195; Bruhn, "Bilder außer Dienst?"; Edwards, "Material Form"; Michel Pfeiffer, "Wie können Bildbestände bewertet werden?," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 12 (2015): 317–325; Joanna Sassoon, "Photographic Materiality in the Age of Digital Reproduction," in *Photographs Histories Objects*, eds. Edwards et al., 196–212.
100. Melone, *Bilderlast und Bilderschatz*, 182–190; Melone, "Kommerz-Geschichte," 335.
101. URL: <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/hoe-doe-ik-onderzoek-in-archieven>.



## Biography

**Saskia Asser** is a photo historian based in Amsterdam. As a curator, author and researcher, she has more than twenty-five years of experience at institutions such as Huis Marseille Museum for Photography and World Press Photo. Since 2015, she has worked regularly as a project curator at the Rijksmuseum for special research projects on the history of photography. In 2021, she organised an extensive online programme on the history of photojournalism, funded by the Rijksmuseum's Vincent Mentzel Fonds. She was also editor of the Rijksmuseum Studies in Photography. Currently, she is writing a dissertation on the Spaarnestad Collection in the Dutch National Archives at the University of Groningen.

### **TMG Journal for Media History**

Volume 25 No (1)/2022

### **DOI**

<https://dx.doi.org/10.18146/tmg.818>

### **PUBLISHER**

Netherlands Institute for Sound & Vision

### **COPYRIGHT**

Each article is copyrighted © by its author(s) and is published under license from the author(s). When a paper is accepted for publication, authors will be requested to agree with the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.