

# Kaleidoscope

## The Visual Identity of the Fifties



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Literary Theory and Cultural Studies  
KU Leuven



Spiraling staircase, 1950s

Paolo Monti

Fondazione Biblioteca Europea di Informazione e Cultura

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# ***1950s in Europe - Kaleidoscope***

INEA/CEF/ICT/A2017/1568496

CEF Europeana 2017-EU-IA-0133



**KU LEUVEN**





## PHOTOGRAPHY



Browse ▾

Explore the history of photography in 3,507,174 items from European cultural heritage collections

# europeana

The Rosebud Garden of Girls [Fraser-Tytler sisters, from left: Eleanor, Christiana, Mary, Ethel], Julia Margaret Cameron  
Wellcome Collection

CC BY



Julia Margaret Cameron



Karl Heinrich Lämmel



Miloš Dohnány

FEEDBACK

<https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en>

People...

# Goals

Enabling users to **engage**  
**with Europeana** content of  
the Fifties



In this era people on **both sides of the East-West divide** started to rebuild their lives after the war

# Aspirations Anxieties Fears Hope

- How did people in the fifties see themselves?
- Can you see their aspirations and fears in photographic testimony?
- How were the Fifties canonized ?
- Do we have to revisit our established view of the Fifties after the fall of the Iron Curtain?



Birthday, next to the fridge, 1958  
Marti Massafont  
CRDI, Fons Marti Massafont Costals, Public Domain



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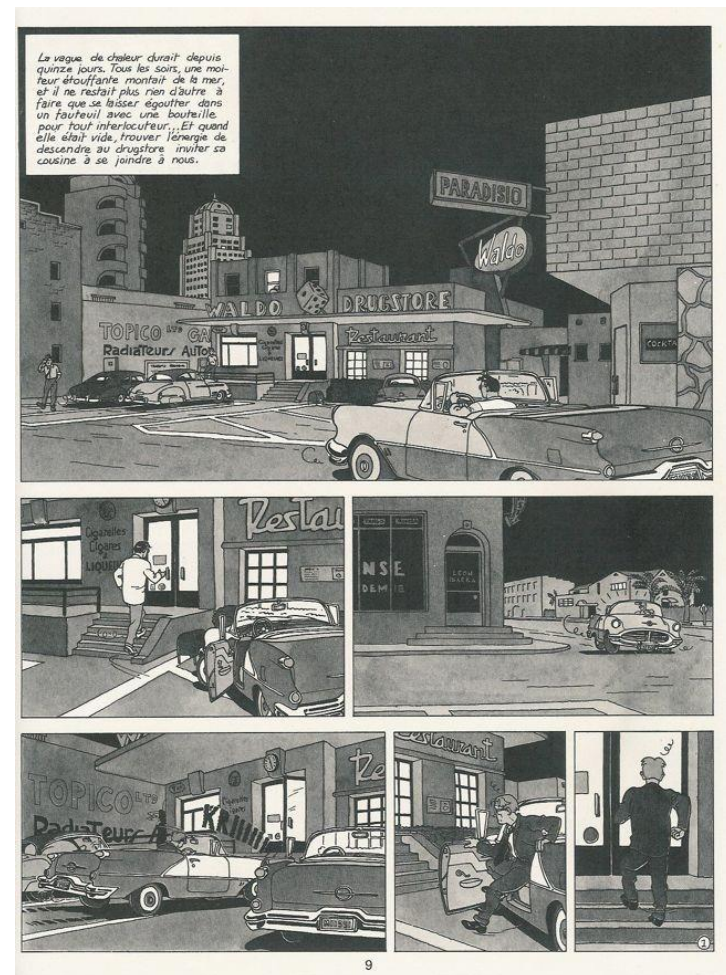
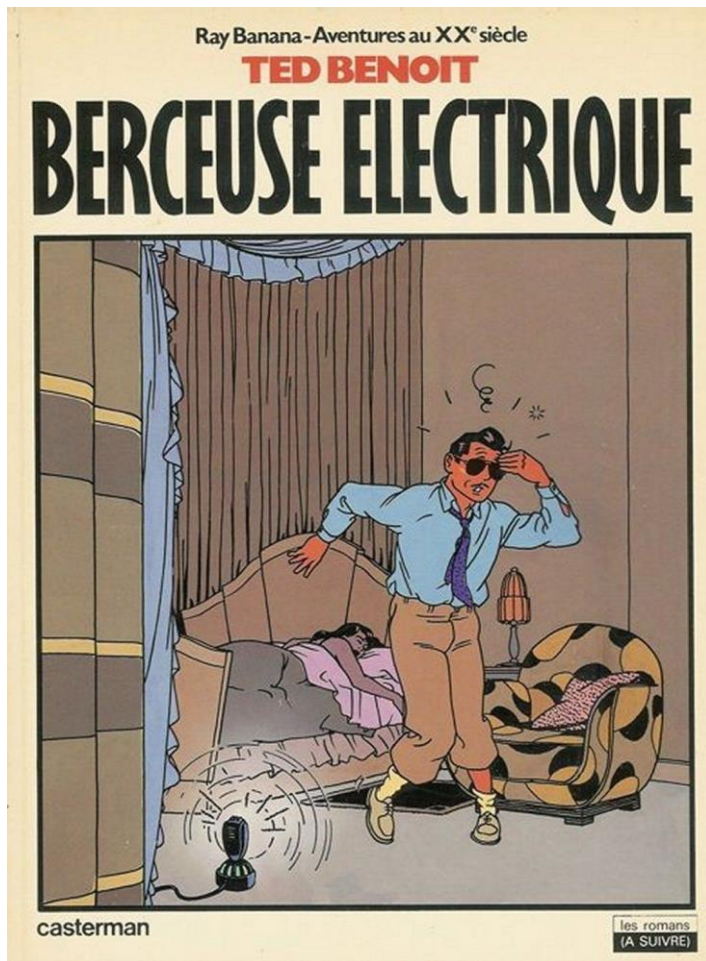


## The Fashion Coat

I brought this coat, because it belongs to my grandmother. She gave it to me last Christmas. It is a special object to me, as it is a very classy French Parisian fashion coat, and that is exactly who my grandmother was: fashionable, loving the Paris lifestyle. My grandmother is Polish. She moved to France in the late 1940s, after World War 2. She was a young girl then. She came with her late husband.

My dad was born in France in 1949. In the early 1950s, tensions between the East and the West came to a high, and my grandfather went back to Poland. However, my grandmother stayed, to make her life in Paris. The life she liked, the lifestyle she adored.

She never came back to Poland. As she was young and beautiful, she earned a living doing modelling in Paris. She came from a middle class family, and loved to wear nice clothes. She had this typical French classiness, the Paris 'chique'. She called herself 'Barbara'. She now lives in the south of France. The coat will always remind me of the charming, classy lady that my grandmother is!



In the eye of graphic artist Ted Benoit

# Visual Identity

- Is there a “look & feel” of the Fifties?
  - Did iconic images influence our perception and memory of the Fifties?
  - How deep was the East/West divide?
  - Was lifestyle similar across Western Europe?
- *If so, can we translate this “look & feel” into image properties we can identify algorithmically?*
- *Will that enable us to set apart Fifties photography collections?*
- *Can this help to enrich collections with semi-automated metadata?*





Paul Anka performs at Linnanmäellä, August 1959  
– UA Saarinen / Finnish Heritage Agency. In  
Copyright.

Marilyn Monroe 1952. Portrait session Earl Theisen



# Visual identity

We want to look into  
cultural  
encoding/decoding in day-  
to-day life and practices  
(~Stuart Hall)

## Cultural Studies



### West Indian Arrivals

West Indian immigrants arrive at Victoria Station, London, after their journey from Southampton Docks.  
Original Publication: Picture Post - 8405 - Thirty Thousand Colour Problems - pub. 1956

Picture: HAYWOOD MAGEE/ GETTY IMAGES

Immigrants Arriving 27th May 1956: Immigrants from the West Indies arriving by ship at Southampton Docks, Hampshire.  
Original Publication: Picture Post - 8405 - Thirty Thousand Colour Problems - pub. 1956

Created: 27th May 1956

Format: Photograph / Image Copyright: © Haywood Magee/Picture Post/Getty Images/Stringer  
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*To the land of  
promise, May  
1954 /  
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# Windrush Stories

Home Themes Articles Collection items Videos Teaching resources About the project Further reading



## Explorations of race, migration & culture

In June 1948 the *Empire Windrush* arrived at Tilbury Docks, Essex carrying hundreds of people from the Caribbean. 70 years on, *Windrush Stories* invites us to consider a longer, more complicated and ongoing relationship between Britain and the Caribbean.

What are you looking for? 🔍

- ☒ Search Windrush Stories

### Featured articles



#### Back to My Own Country: An essay by Andrea Levy

In this reflective essay, Andrea Levy delves deep into notions of racism and pinpoints events which compelled her to use writing as a tool to explore and understand her Caribbean heritage.



# Digital Humanities

← → ↻ 🏠 ⓘ Niet beveiligd | selfiecity.net/#selfieexploratory ☆ 📌 📄 📶 🕒 ⌵ 📱 📶 🌐

**SELFIECITY** 🐦 📘 📌

Introduction Imageplots **Selfieexploratory** Dataset Findings Theory Credits & contact Explore further

## THE SELFIEEXPLORATORY

The **SELFIEEXPLORATORY** is part of **SELFIECITY**

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

CITY:

YOUNG AGE OLD:

GENDER:

**POSE**

UP:

LEFT RIGHT:

LOOKING:

TILT:

**FEATURES**

EYES:

MOUTH:

GLASSES:


**MOOD**

CALM:

ANGRY:

HAPPY:

65 of 3200 faces. Normal Crop Crop & rotate



Experiment with all the data we collected.

*Do angry people tilt their heads more strongly? And what is a characteristic mood for people in Moscow? Find out!*

→ LAUNCH

Lev Manovich, SelfieCity



# Objectives

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- **Implement an intelligent visual similarity search** that integrates and complements the Europeana Core Service functionality, **applying state-of-the-art deep learning techniques** on a training photo collection
- Afterwards, the trained models will be applied to predefined collections and queries and on real life scenes, to be matched with images from the collections



Model in dress in gray lace with white waistband by Givenchy, autumn 1958  
Stiftelsen Nordiska museet. CC BY-NC-ND



## Featured Collections

[View all collections](#)



50s Life outside the cities



50s Travelling abroad



50s Fashion  
2 Items - By Stefan



50s New designs  
1 Items - By Stefan Rohde-Enslin



50s Trade and merchandise  
2 Items - By Stefan Rohde-Enslin



50s Still on war  
2 Items - By Stefan Rohde-Enslin

# Education

- **Publication of stories,** collections and quality pictures which will be available for re-use and for dissemination and education tools; in particular the project will develop a **MOOC** to educate the educators about the potential of Europeana for either formal and informal teaching and learning



epic

President Nasser nationalises the Suez Canal Company - 1956



## Methodology AI

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We want to capture the **visual identity of the Fifties** in East and Western Europe as it was established through photography

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We are looking for stereotypical concepts that can be translated in an algorithmic definition

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For this, we gathered collections of sample photographs from our photography partners as well as connaisseurs

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We tried to detect similarities and grouped images in sets

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These sets are now trained with deep learning algorithms

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Files

Name ↑



0005463.jpg



0527001.jpg



0623023.jpg



0623025.jpg



0857251.jpg



0877057.jpg



0877058.jpg



0936891.jpg



0983516.jpg



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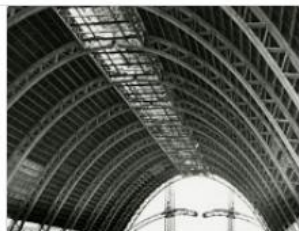




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## 1950s in Europe - Kaleidoscope

3.2k monthly viewers

Overview

**Boards**

Pins

Tries

Followers

Following

Drag and drop ▾

31 Boards



Create board



About Kaleidoscope

1 Pin



Colorful socio-political post...

32 Pins



Kaleidoscope partner images

2 sections  
29 Pins



Concept - The male gaze

20 Pins



Concept: Fashion - patterns

3 sections  
61 Pins



"Everyday life" at Cinema

10 Pins



Housing and Home

3 sections  
45 Pins



1956 Hungarian revolution

5 Pins



Personalities

7 sections  
29 Pins





# Colorful socio-political posters

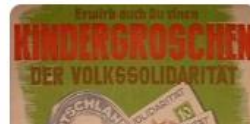
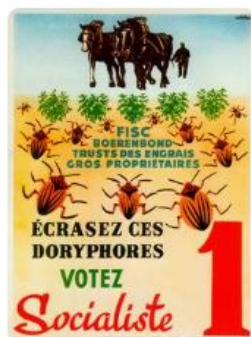
32 Pins · 4 followers

Your Pins

More ideas



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# Colorful socio-political posters

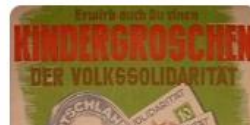
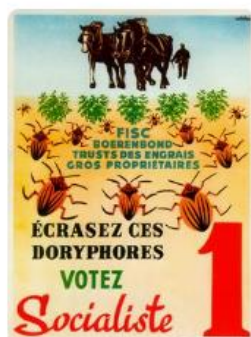
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# Body image

22 Pins • 4 followers

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Sophia Loren Beautiful and Sexy ... amazon.com

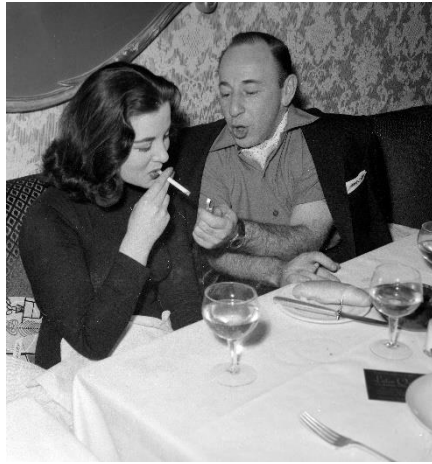
Timeless Beauty | Sophia... slavisselanidie.blogspot.co

Sophia Loren - Wikipedia en.wikipedia.org

Sophia Loren Was Beautif... izimila.com



# Influencers?







Analytics ▾

Ads ▾

🔍 Search



✚ Your Pins



## Concept - The male gaze



Invite







Invite

# Posters & ads (non-political)

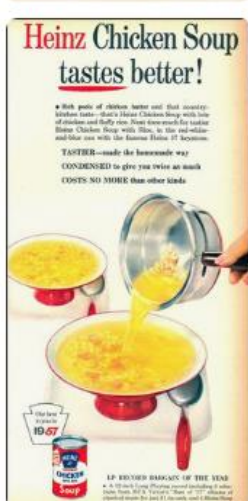
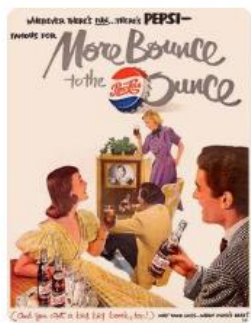
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More ideas



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# FIFTIES.WITHCULTURE.EU



On the dance floor at the Sunset Club, 1951  
Topfoto.co.uk. In Copyright





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