

# BARRIKADENWETTER

An exhibition at the  
**MOMUS**

Metropolitan Organisation of Museums of Visual Arts  
of Thessaloniki

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Arsenale Institute for Politics of Representation  
at the  
The Spectre of the People | Thessaloniki PhotoBiennale 2023  
October 20, 2023 – February 11, 2024

[www.photobiennale-greece.gr](http://www.photobiennale-greece.gr) • [www.arsenale.com](http://www.arsenale.com) • [frontdesk@arsenale.com](mailto:frontdesk@arsenale.com)

*conceived by Wolfgang Scheppe assisted by Sara Codutti and Eleonora Sovrani*





## CURATORIAL STATEMENT / E

concerning the exhibition *Barrikadenwetter – Image Acts of Insurrection*  
at the **MOMUS** — Thessaloniki PhotoBiennale 2023  
20 October 2023 – 11 February 2024

## THE SPECTRE OF THE PEOPLE

If once the spectre of communism haunted Europe, now the spectre of populism stalks the Earth. Artists have grappled with its myriad dimensions: how and if to represent *'the people'*, how to represent democratic power, the nature of charismatic leaders, and popular protest and insurgency. The media of the lens, long woven tightly around the history of mass politics, have been a natural field for this artistic exploration.

The main exhibition of the 2023 Thessaloniki Photobiennale, *The Spectre of the People*, explores populism through photography and video: who are *'the people'*, can they be grasped visually, are they the source of hope or dread, how are they condensed in the figures of their would-be leaders, and how do they assemble and act in political protest?

The artists shown here approach these issues in widely contrasting, if sometimes overlapping, ways: some document populist leaders and their followers, and by contrast those people declared enemies by populist movements; some offer satirical takes on the absurdities of authoritarian leaders and the political delirium that they create; others perform as populists or make activist work in solidarity with protest movements; others again offer conceptual works on populism, and the deep economic crisis from which it drew strength.

The exhibition is divided into four main parts. The first two are shown at the *MOMus-Thessaloniki Museum of Photography*: part one explores artistic responses to the fraught dilemma of how to represent mainstream democratic politics, especially as it falls into crisis. Part two looks at populist leaders and followers, along with the deadly consequences of their actions. The next two parts are shown at the *MOMus-Experimental Center for the Arts*: part three envisions those who are excluded from *'the people'* by populist movements, set alongside the very rich who do all they can to insulate themselves from the rest of us, and the means used to police the boundaries. Part four tracks the performative culture of insurgent protest movements of both the left and the right.

Like the phenomenon of populism, the exhibition has a global ambit. This scope makes the elusive concepts of *'the people'* and of populism harder to tie down, as they span continents, the left-right divide, and often tie together mass participation and authoritarian rule. Yet from the very diverse works on display, there emerges an image of the populist field as it oscillates between the poles of political antagonism and solidarity.

JULIAN STALLABRASS (*Curator*)

## BARRIKADEN MANIFEST / E

concerning the exhibition *Barrikadenwetter – Image Acts of Insurrection*  
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## ICONOGRAPHY OF THE BARRICADE

The term *'Barrikadenwetter'* (barricade weather) was coined by the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin: it denotes the moment of transition, as a revolutionary subject emerges in collective action, and reifies itself as an obstruction that stands in the way of the state forces of established order. As a former artillery officer, he knew in the revolutionary year of 1839, when he was tactically preparing the defence of Dresden against the onslaught of the Prussian army, alongside his bourgeois comrades-in-arms, the composer Richard Wagner and the architect Gottfried Semper, that the heroic phase of barricade building was long over. Mobile artillery had put an end to its former efficacy.

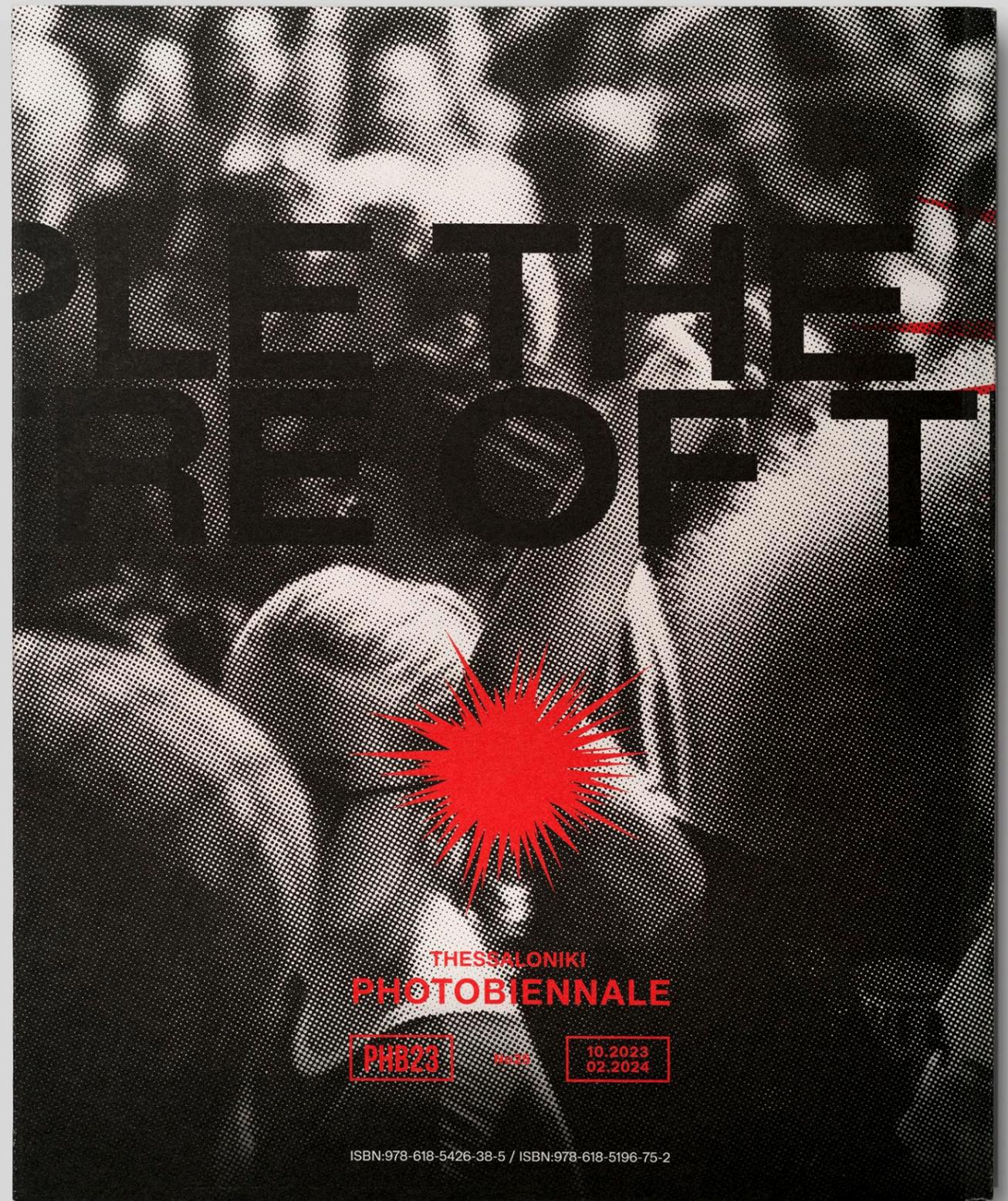
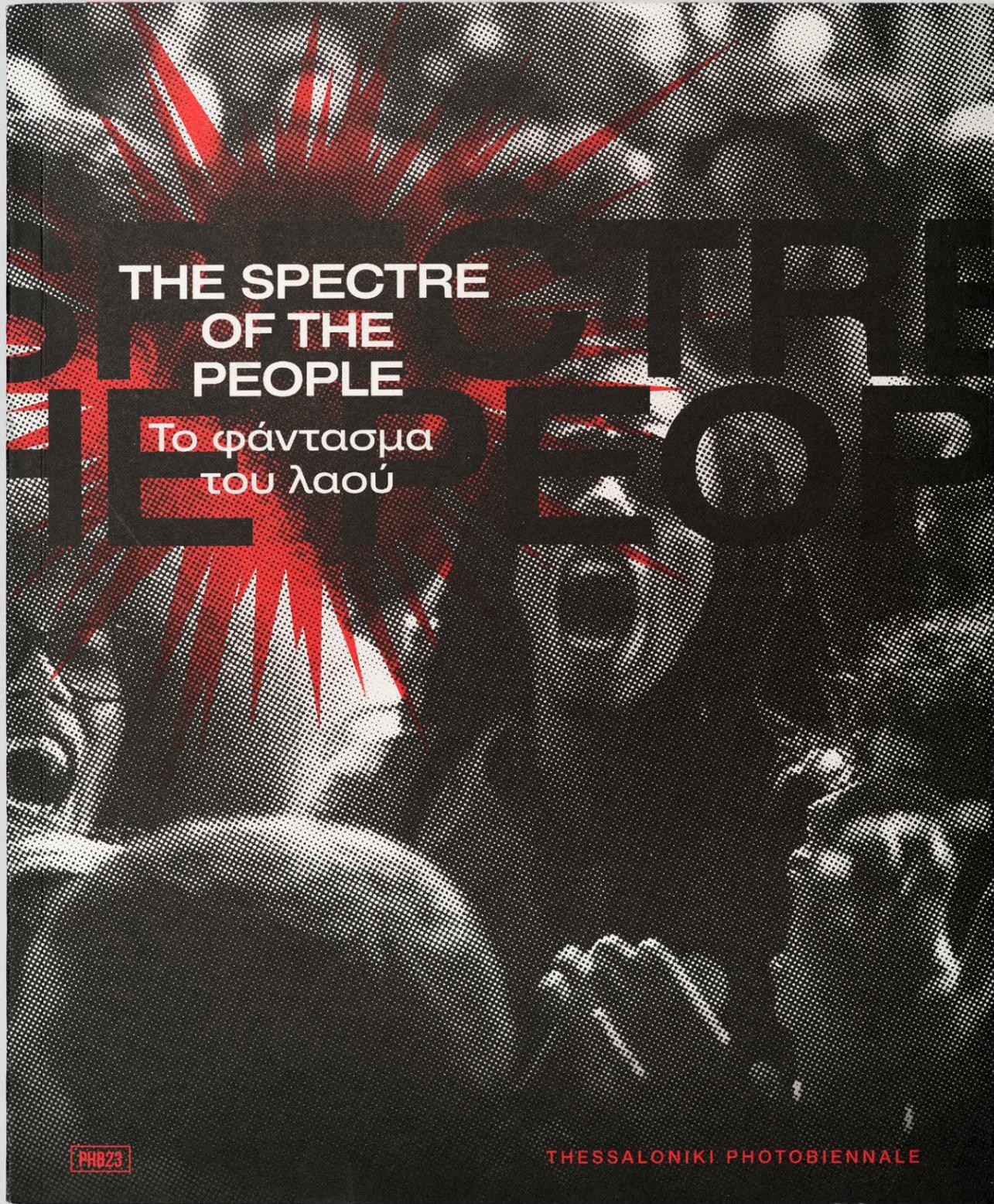
Conversely, however, Bakunin saw the metaphorical power that still resided in barricade-building, because it remained a dramatic sign of mass uprising and collective unity that instilled respect in the ruling class. In a tone of irony, he therefore suggested to his comrades that the famous painting of the *Sistine Madonna* by Raphael from the local museum be placed on the walls of the fortifications, since the classically educated Prussians were hardly likely to vandalise the most sublime art treasures of Western culture.

This project lays out an iconography of the barricade, which compares three different *image acts* of looking at the revolt in Paris in May 1968. While the left side shows the perspective of the rioters themselves, the deictic act of the press unfolds on the curtain in the middle, and surveillance by the state power on the right side. Although the imagery of this triptych has the same subject matter, protestors, the media and the police pursue their observations for different purposes and in their own characteristic way.

In the pictures of the insurgents, the actors are apparent as the general revolutionary collective, whose members faces have been wisely made unrecognisable. In the mediatization through photojournalism, they are recorded narratively, and moralised as individuals exposed to violence or perpetrating violence. In the view of the authorities, they are legal persons who are monitored under the aspect of securing evidence and identification, so that delinquency and property offences become visually verifiable in order to enforce the law.

WOLFGANG SCHEPPE

Venice June 19th, 2023



THESSALONIKI  
PHOTOBIENNALE  
2023

## Wolfgang Scheppe

Ο όρος "Barrikadenwetter" (καιρός των οδοφραγμάτων) ανήκει στον αναρχικό Μιχαήλ Μπακούιν: υποδηλώνει τη μεταβατική στιγμή κατά την οποία το επαναστατημένο υποκείμενο συγκροτείται σε συλλογική δράση και αυτοπροσδιορίζεται ως εμπόδιο απέναντι στις κρατικές δυνάμεις της κατεστημένης τάξης. Ως πρώην αξιωματικός του πυροβολικού ο Μπακούιν γνώριζε πολύ καλά κατά το επαναστατικό έτος 1839, όταν προετοίμαζε την άμυνα της Δρέσδης απέναντι στην επέλαση του πρωσικού στρατού μαζί με τους αστούς συμπολεμιστές του, τον συνθέτη Βάγκνερ και τον αρχιτέκτονα Σέμπερ, ότι η ηρωική εποχή της κατασκευής οδοφραγμάτων είχε προ πολλού παρέλθει.

Το μεταφερόμενο πλέον πυροβολικό είχε ακυρώσει την αποτελεσματικότητά τους. Από την άλλη μεριά ο Μπακούιν διείδε τη μεταφορική δύναμη που εξακολουθούσε να έχει η κατασκευή οδοφραγμάτων, καθώς παρέμεναν ένα πανίσχυρο σύμβολο μαζικής εξέγερσης και συλλογικής ενότητας, που ενέπνευσε σεβασμό στην άρχουσα τάξη. Με μια δόση ειρωνείας πρότεινε λοιπόν στους συντρόφους του να τοποθετήσουν στους τοίχους των οχυρώσεων τον περίφημο πίνακα της Παναγίας του Ραφαήλ στη Δρέσδη, θεωρώντας ότι οι Πρώσοι, δεδομημένοι της κλασικής της καλλιέργειας, πολύ δύσκολα θα κατέστρεφαν ένα από τα μεγαλύτερα αριστουργήματα του δυτικού πολιτισμού.

Το πρότζεκτ αυτό ξεδιπλώνει μια εικονογραφία του οδοφράγματος, όπου αντιπαραβάλλονται τρεις διαφορετικοί τρόποι θέασης της εξέγερσης του Μάη του '68 στο Παρίσι. Η αριστερή πλευρά παρουσιάζει την οπτική των ίδιων των εξεγερμένων, στη μεσαία κουρτίνα ξεδιπλώνεται η λειτουργία του φωτορεπορτάζ ως ενδείκτης, ενώ στη δεξιά πλευρά αποτυπώνεται η επιτήρηση από την κρατική εξουσία. Παρότι οι εικόνες αυτού του τρίπτυχου έχουν το ίδιο θέμα, οι διαδηλωτές, τα μέσα ενημέρωσης και η αστυνομία παρατηρούν με διαφορετικό σκοπό και με τον δικό τους ιδιαίτερο τρόπο. Στις φωτογραφίες των εξεγερμένων οι πρωταγωνιστές εμφανίζονται ως εκπρόσωποι της ευρύτερης επαναστατικής συλλογικότητας. Εύλογα, τα πρόσωπά τους δεν είναι αναγνωρίσιμα.

Στη διαμεσολάβηση μέσω του φωτορεπορτάζ τα υποκείμενα καταγράφονται αφηγηματικά και αναδεικνύεται η ηθική διάσταση των ατόμων που υφίστανται ή ασκούν βία. Από την οπτική γωνία των αρχών οι εξεγερμένοι είναι νομικές οντότητες που παρακολουθούνται με σκοπό τη διασφάλιση αποδεικτικών στοιχείων και ταυτοποίησης, προκειμένου η παραβατικότητα και τα αδικήματα κατά της περιουσίας να καταστούν στοιχικά οπτικά επαληθεύσιμα με στόχο την επιβολή του νόμου.

--W.S., Βενετία, 19 Ιουνίου 2023

Η Sara Codutti φωτογράφησε τις εφημερίδες και η Eleonora Sovrani επικοινωνήσε με την αστυνομία του Παρισιού.

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--W.S., Venice June 19, 2023

Sara Codutti photographed the newspapers, and Eleonora Sovrani communicated with the Police in Paris.

Καταλήψεις  
και διαδηλώσεις

Occupations and  
Demonstrations

Wolfgang Scheppe  
"Barrikadenwetter" (Καιρός των Οδοφραγμάτων), 2023  
Τρίπτυχο έργο

Wolfgang Scheppe  
"Barrikadenwetter" (Barricade Weather), 2023  
Triptych work



Wolfgang Scheppe

Wolfgang Scheppe  
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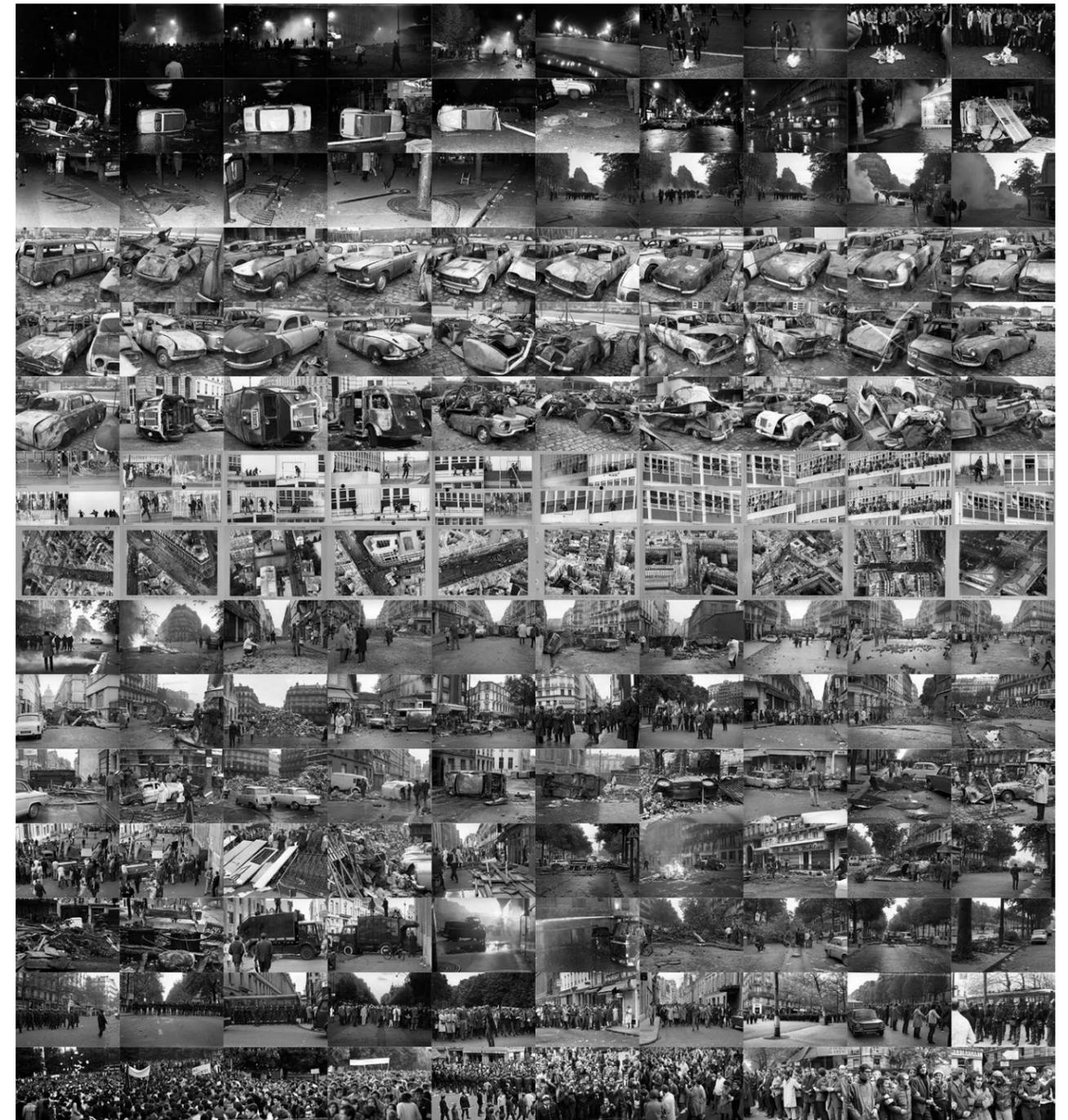
Καταλήψεις και διαδηλώσεις Occupations and Demonstrations







Left Wall: THE IMAGE ACT OF THE INSURGENTS



Right Wall: THE IMAGE ACT OF THE POLICE



Middle Curtain: THE IMAGE ACT OF THE MEDIA



Arsenale Institute for Politics of Representation • Castello 1430/A • Riva dei Sette Martiri • 30122 Venezia • Italia