



Harvard University
Department of
History of Art + Architecture
presents

Andrés Mario Zervigón

"Photo Profusion and
Walter Benjamin's Optical
Unconscious in the Weimar Era"

Sponsored by the department's Graduate Student Lecture Series, Andrés Mario Zervigón (Rutgers University) will present a talk that discusses the multi-faceted concern around 1931 that photography had broken its modernist and populist promise to reveal unseen worlds for the good, teach rational modes of perception and operate as a straightforward means of enlightenment. Instead, photographic images in these years seemed fundamentally flawed by their great profusion, the commercial and political conditions that generated this flood, and the very contingency of any one image. Zervigón proposes that Walter Benjamin responded to these shortcomings with his theory of an optical unconscious, assigning the medium's revelatory agency to a highly subjective realm where contingency played the most important role in perception.

Monday, April 13, 2015
5:30 p.m. at Sackler Museum,
Room 318