

Summary

A characteristic feature of the preservation and the history of photography in Scandinavia in general and in Norway in particular, is that mainly photography has been regarded as historical "documents" or sources. That is to say, the documentary aspect has been prominent, whereas focus on the esthetical issues or technical history has been less dominant. Since the preservation of historical sources has been the main focus, this aim has naturally had implications on the planning and organising of the work.

In Sweden as well as Norway, there have been established institutions with clearly defined responsibilities within the field of photographic preservation; to develop new methods, direct and support this work. Even if Denmark does not have an institution with central responsibility towards the historic photographic material, the Royal Library, by virtue of its dominant position and size, has maintained a similar position.

Central tasks for these institutions have been to see to it that the collecting has satisfied certain professional and technical criteria. Equally important is the work to provide surveys of early photographers and existing photographic collections, and to provide easy access to them. Databases of early photographers are available for both Norway and Denmark, and databases of photographic collections are available for all the Scandinavian countries.

A very important task has been to establish a standard for photographic registration. The Norwegian Institute for Historic Photography, founded in 1977, early established a national registration standard. During the 80s the first electronic system for registration appeared, and in 1994, the first version to incorporate digitised images were put to use. Today about 200 institutions use this program.

In the other Scandinavian countries, the situation had been more complex. The efforts towards a Swedish national standard started in the early 80s, and during the late 90s, this has been developed to satisfaction. Since Denmark has no national institution with responsibility to develop national standards, the biggest institutions has developed their own systems.

There are institutions with national responsibility towards the history of photography in all Scandinavian countries: The Norwegian Museum for Photography – Preus Photographic Museum in Norway, The Museum of Modern Art in Sweden, and The Royal Library in Denmark.