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Images in the Post-truth Era

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Telling (his)stories through photographs in times of duress: A Cameroonian case study

Photographs constitute one of the social repertoires in Cameroon, and especially in the Grassfields this is intriguing. This paper explores the role of private and family photographs in creating and telling the story of a mobile family living in Cameroon and in the diaspora. Their mobility relates back to the parents’ itineraries between the 1960s and 1980s.

The family has kept a rich photographic archive that tells the story of how they represent themselves, construct identity, create a sense of belonging, and are connected in a society in which they live under duress. Some family members have actively been, and are still, fighting for social and political change against an oppressive regime. However, the photographs show a façade, where behind we can find a complex story of striving to change their situation.

Starting with analogue photographs the different generations have continued making and collecting photographs in the digital era. Nowadays various members of the family share and store digital as well as digitalized analogue photographs on their mobile devices and social media. Interacting with the old and new photographs show how memory and history is constructed and created through these photographs, and how the photographs play a role in inter-generational relations in this part of Cameroon and beyond, as the images keep them connected with themselves and others. It is in the performative aspects of photography that we can see how this family constructs their visual autobiography.

Karsten Bruno Rose
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Post-factual photography

Post-factual politics which bombards us deliberately with untruths has reached Germany with the right-wing populist AFD party. The Brexit in Great Britain was substantiated with false figures; the election of Donald Trump in the USA was based on lies. Putin, Erdogan, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, these governments do not work with facts. They work with emotions, feelings, ignorance and stupidity.

This gives rise to alternative facts. But what do “facts” look like in digital photography and Photoshop? Photography is a lie right from the start. Photography is subjective. Our own emotions turn things upside down. Light, shadow, contrast, where and how the shot is taken. Aperture, time and focal length change the same scene.

If I take photos of everything, I would have to create a 360 degree spherical panorama, or just a section. What do I take photos for, is it advertisements or journalism? If I am right-wing or left-wing, then I am likely to see and perceive an event in a different way. Do I perceive a city with a lot of traffic and many people as a moloch, with dark corners, foreigners, traffic and dirt? Or is it a great opportunity for meeting people, experiencing their culture, sharing theatre, concerts, cinema and other events with different people? But what happens if I use Photoshop? Can I develop a picture in Photoshop so it’s right? Is every photo that has been digitally manipulated a lie and false? But what about the analog darkroom? Can even a digitally manipulated picture show the truth?

Cathrine Bublatzky
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Contested photographic regimes. A controversy in the field of Iranian photo-journalistic documentation and its becoming global

The international World Press Photo 2017 awarded the second place in the long-term project category to the Iranian photographer Hossein Fatemi and his project An Iranian Journey. The nomination sparked a controversy among professional photo-journalists when an external report revealed some photographs of the documentary series as being staged. While discussions critically questioned the ethics of both, the profession of photo-journalism as well as of international photo award committees, the notion of ‘self-Orientalist’ imagery became a serious issue that several respondents in the field of photo-journalism indicated throughout this controversy. Whereas the journalism industry can be accused for supporting self-oriental
38 years ago, when I was emerging from such a space of denial and deflection. Only now, using analytical photo-therapy writing of Bessel van der Kolk, Rosy Martin & Jo Spence, presents a re-reading of a collection of 35mm negatives taken by me. The photo-theory research that I engage in, usually explores the found images of others, however this paper, informed by the assigned to Trump, finds itself first within the family home, as a parenting device of denial and deflection at the kitchen table.

Post-truth and domestic space: From photo-theory to photo-therapy

Andrew Dearman
Adelaide Central School of Art, Australia

Post-truth and domestic space: From photo-theory to photo-therapy

Although Post-truth has recently been defined through the example of Trump's Administration as a power dynamic relying on the misrepresentation of fact—between events, how they are described, documented, and remembered—it is a phenomenon that has been around for quite some time. Post-truth is usually discussed in its public form; however it also operates in everyday space in the form of ‘gas lighting’, which refers to how a person within a relationship convinces their partner that this or that has been around for quite some time. Post-truth is usually discussed in its public form; however it also operates in everyday space in the form of ‘gas lighting’, which refers to how a person within a relationship convinces their partner that this or that didn’t happen, or that it was otherwise to how it has been remembered. The sociopathic behaviour of misrepresentation assigned to Trump, finds itself first within the family home, as a parenting device of denial and deflection at the kitchen table.

The photo-theory research that I engage in, usually explores the found images of others, however this paper, informed by the writing of Bessel van der Kolk, Rosy Martin & Jo Spence, presents a re-reading of a collection of 35mm negatives taken by me 38 years ago, when I was emerging from such a space of denial and deflection. Only now, using analytical photo-therapy strategies am I able to comprehend what happened. As a medium through which the relationships between people and space
are documented and performed, family photographs can sometimes be used to expose the fraught play between reality and representation. Viewed long after the fact, photographs have a capacity to make evident that which couldn't be seen at the time, due to the post-truth fog of denial and deflection.

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Reflections on family photography from the Anglo-Boer War period 1899-1902

The visual representation of South African society during the time of the Anglo-Boer War (ABW) (1899-1902) is polarised and does not adequately reflect the societal complexities of the interpersonal relationships during the aforementioned period.

This paper examines family photographs from the ABW period. This study considers the manner in which the photographers and the families embraced the photographic convention as well as how the families chose to represent themselves in the photographs.

The paper took recourse to Gillian Rose’s (2016) theoretical image analysis framework to explore and uncover new and hitherto overlooked connotations in the sampled photographs. The original sample consisted of 124 family images, purposefully selected from a population of 26,585 photographs. For the purpose of this paper, I will interrogate and perform an analysis on four family photographs.

Some exceptions aside, ABW photographers followed the practice and convention of the Victorian era photography. The photographs furthermore revealed the apparent significance afforded to as well as the importance of impression management. The families in the photographs reflect a sense of pride and display proxemics and kinesics elements in a deliberate attempt to convey real or sometimes simulated status and to gain acceptance from their intended viewers.

The individual family members portrayed in the selection of family photographs, were silent for more than a hundred years. In a manner of speaking this paper affords those photographed a renewed opportunity to engage in the process of being photographed and to again express themselves; even now they are presented as dignified, unmarred and almost unaffected by the war. Even though experiences of hardship, pain, disappointment and sadness are visible, the family members presented themselves in a self-respecting manner and maintained the observed convention associated with family photography.

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Dead Facts and Live Fictions: Reinventing Documentary in the Skeptical 1970s

With the recent cultural anxiety over "alternative facts" and the attendant claims of a rising, "post-truth" society, art historians have begun questioning the relation between photographic truth and fiction with renewed energy. While much attention has been given to our present conjuncture, my project contends that an unrecognized history of these debates existed among American photographers of the 1970s. I focus on a group of four San Diego-based photographers (Fred Lonidier, Martha Rosler, Allan Sekula, and Phel Steinmetz) who, in a similar moment of widespread cultural skepticism, developed a paradoxical version of documentary photography: one in which visual facts were enlivened through a variety of fictionalizing strategies, from restaging prior events to fabricating imagined experiences. Sekula notably disparaged conventional documentary as "dead facts, reified objects torn from their social origins." (Sekula, 1984). Through a series of case studies, my dissertation identifies fiction as the means by which these figures sought to reanimate documentary's "dead facts," inserting them back into their livelier social origins. My work broadly contends that moments of cultural skepticism and insecurity tend to spur in artists a complicated interrogation of documentary as a site for producing fact, truth, and fiction. At the colloquium, I will present material related to Sekula's School is a Factory project, which, I argue, recasts documentary as an "anti-specialist" pedagogy, situating the dead facts of liberal education's emancipatory promise within a more complex historical field.

Carole Edrich
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Visualising the agency of dance as an agency of beneficial social change

Dance in its myriad forms has a range of applications and uses. Framed by context or societal perspectives, it can be a powerful root to nonverbal communication, a source of somatic or kinaesthetic learning, of somatic empathy and of social cohesion. It can express the drive to create the perfect moment. It is social and selfish, grasping and gregarious. Dance can exercise intellect and intuition, describe fantasy and fulfilment, express social purpose and more.
Using a combination of live dance, still image, anecdotes and personal qualitative findings I will illustrate this argument in the following ways:

- By demonstrating the success of still and moving images of dance in breaking through the social media ‘echo chamber’ effect and how this is recognised with current heuristic models.
- By discussing and demonstrating the impact of dance on Empathy Gap, Choice Architecture, Diagnosis and Inter Group Bias.
- By describing how these things are born out through reactions of dancers and live audience, explaining the qualitative assumptions I have made through observation of image development of some well known brands.

I will then summarise the place of image making and sharing in the dissemination of dance with particular reference to the sharing economy and describe how I am working to apply it in the cause of social utility.

Sabine El Chamaa
Lebanon
Re-memory 2006

April of 2006: I had just finished editing a documentary about the memory of the siege of Sarajevo that I had filmed in Bosnia & Herzegovina and edited in New York City where I resided at the time, when I decided to move back to Lebanon. A month later, I returned to Beirut. Within a month, a 33 day Israeli siege of Lebanon followed. I filmed in the streets, all through the siege. Throughout, and within these four months, I kept my analogue camera with me taking landscape, and portrait photographs. Looking back at the negatives the trajectory of time appears to move on a timeline, not of events, but of sensations that are pertinent to place and time.

This visual essay/presentation probes the ways in which my personal archive of photographs taken in these different cities probes my memory (from Sarajevo, to New York, through the South of France, to Fårö, and then to Beirut) evading the ‘event of war as news’ revealing instead a multiplicity of sense memories that are only communicable through a combination of presence, imagination, dissimulation, and performativity. In other words, a process which reveals that every photographic trace goes through a process of rememory after a certain period of time. How is the elusiveness of memory reconstructed as it confronts its material photographic traces? This is the question I seek to answer through my presentation/visual essay.

Parnian Ferdossi
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Visualising Freedom: Turning the Invisible into Photographic Publicness

In a recent conference on the epistemologies of the photographic image in the post-truth era, Barbie Zelizer (2018) argued that news images in the US contribute to the invisibility of the problematic issues of the Trump’s regime. This is because the country’s media refuse to visualise the biased, abusive and anti-democratic nature of Trump’s governing style. Zelizer, furthermore, argued that photography can challenge the structural and institutional invisibility as it compensates for the absence of visual knowledge in the media outlets and substantiates critical counter-knowledge. Zelizer, in parallel with contemporary scholarships on photography, calls for the investigation of the impact of photography in the process of establishing democracy and the making of invisible visible. For 35 years the state in Iran ignored and concealed the resentment of a great population of women against compulsory hijab. In my presentation I consider the ways in which photography propelled the resentment to the forefront of public debates, focusing on My Stealthy Freedom, a photography community platform. I demonstrate that the community (despite its problematic issues) has given voice to the dissent women and enabled them to mobilise their protest from social media to urban environment. The circulation of the photographs eventually paved the way for a series of protests called the Girls of Enghelab Street which took place in winter 2018. By drawing on this case study, I argue that photographic publicness engender visibility, gives social power and thereby counter hegemonic powers.

Agnese Ghezzi
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Delegate gaze: photographers, ethnographers and otherness in Italy between the XIX and XX century

By looking at the use of ethnographic photography between the XIX and the XX century in Italy, this paper intends to offer a historical perspective on issues that are central to the present-day debate on visual culture, such as image construction and staging, the complex power relationship between photographers and photographed, the documentary function of pictures, their
If the link between anthropology and photography in the late XIX century has been the subject of a number of studies in the last decades, this contribution wants, in particular, to investigate the connection between pictures and the discourses on observation and representation of cultures. Through the analysis of instruction for travellers and other written sources, the research wants to unveil the process of creation of a delegate gaze and to see how this influenced the production of photography. In fact, the coexistence of experts, amateurs, travellers, and photographers led to the need for the emerging ethnographic community to dictate specific rule for the production of visual documentation, which should have ensured the objectivity and the scientific validity of the image as evidence.

A look at the widespread and rising process of exchanges and circulation of images (fostered by societies, museums, archives, specialized and vernacular journals) should show the social value of photography and its transformation of meaning from producer of knowledge, to creator of prestige, to disseminator of wonder.

Ya’ara Gil-Glazer
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The Photo-Monologue: Critical Device and Political Practice

The proposed article defines the photo-monologue: a combination of documentary still image of underprivileged subjects – usually the face or full body – with their own words. It describes and discusses its phenomenology in current social documentary photography as a critical rhetorical device as well as humanistic political practice. In addition, it discusses display venues of photo-monologues as sites of dialogic potential that is realized under certain conditions and dissipates in others.

The photo-monologue originated in critical documentary photobooks from the Depression era in the U.S. Throughout the years since, and on a massive scale most recently, the photo-monologue has offered an alternative to numerous images, mostly in the popular press and in art museums, which present their subjects in situations of marginalization, exploitation or victimhood, reduced to laconic captions that tag them as “refugees”, “homeless people”, or “sex slaves” and deny their individual voice. Even when described in detail, their description is second-hand, by the photographer or a third party.

Photo-monologues – usually made by activist photographers and displayed in photobooks or alternative exhibitions – give voice and present their subjects to a broad audience able to continue the chain of critical discourse around the abuse and oppression they embody – the chain that begins with the encounter with the photographer. Recent examples include Raised by Wolves (Jim Goldberg, 2005); Not Natasha (Dana Popa, 2009); and Citizens without an Address (Adi Segal, 2017).

Liz Hingley
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Shanghai Sacred: A photographic insight into the religious landscape of a global Chinese city

Based on four years visual ethnography in Shanghai, this paper reveals the spaces, rituals, and daily practices embedded in the fabric of today’s cosmopolitan megalopolis. Shanghai is home to a multitude of religions from Buddhism and Islam, to Christianity and Baha’ism, to Hinduism and Daoism, and many more. In this city of 24 million inhabitants, new religious groups and older faiths together claim and reclaim spiritual space. Evocative images present a new paradigm for the study of Chinese spirituality that reflects the political powers and global trends shaping Chinese culture and civil society today.

This project presents an innovative methodology developed by it’s multidisciplinary team; Professor Benoît Vermander of the Xu-Ricci Dialogue Center at Fudan University, British photographer and anthropologist Liz Hingley and Zhang Liang 张靓, of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. This paper reflects on some of the strategies and tactics developed by a foreign ethnographer when exchanging with and photographing religious communities. Shanghai Sacred exemplifies the rich potential for collaborative work and the myriad of ways to incorporate visual practice into research methods and products.

Vedrana Ikalovic
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Tokyo Encounters: (con)temporary and (un)intentional fragments of the city

“Fake” roofs, pillars and columns; air conditioners, long pipes and interlaced cables; folded ladders and hanging brooms; blue baskets, blue buckets, orange, yellow and red traffic cones; transparent umbrellas, thriving flower pots etc. Some of these elements are signs or symbols that help us navigate through complex multi-layered and multi-levelled realm, some of them are
On the one hand these urban artefacts are a consequence of cultural milieu, planning legislation and specific spatial conditions. On the other hand, they stand for individuals’ activities and actions and the abundance of personal belongings exposed to our sight reflects strong presence of Tokyoites’ personalities. At the same time, photographed and extrapolated from their surroundings, they become a piece of art; they become real installations in real space and real time.

This photo essay frames (con)temporary and (un)intentional cityscape of a metropolis; a transformed, adjusted and lived cityscape with its own aesthetics that emerges from order and habituality. With the use of photography and visual methods, the intangible qualities and visual appeal of places with meanings are addressed and open for further discussion with the intention of their integration into planning practices.

Marina K. Kryshtaleva
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Urban history in black and white: travel photography in context

The present paper investigates the practical use of photographical archives for research in the area of urban history and focuses on the methodological validity of such endeavour. It uses as example the case study of Western photographs of Greece and in particular of the northern city of Thessaloniki in the early twentieth century. Such photographs are of different types (aerial, landscapes, street scenes etc) and were later publicized in various fora in the western world to inform those audiences. Photography of the city architecture and of the landscape conveys social, cultural and often political implications regarding the perceptions produced for the photographic object. The city travelers saw it through their cultural looking glass and eventually projected their stereotypes upon the urban and country landscape and its inhabitants. The visual discourses have their own ways of grasping, understanding and preserving the memory of the place. The images under study can exhibit hesitant attitudes towards the place. On the one hand, the photographers chose to portray what impressed them through their predetermined notions about this part of the world and, on the other, they re-invented the space and its people based on their own lived experiences. The city at the time becomes the canvas on which these two major trends are entwined. It was an ambivalent era after all; a city in transition between East and West. The photographs examined often reveal a rather colonial gaze into the so thought ‘exotic’ allure of the city and its people.

David Kendall
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Disappearing into Night

Disappearing into Night explores how infrastructural transformation, energy generation and consumption in Doha, Qatar effects acoustic and ocular landscapes, thus uncovering and modifying past and present connections between people, architecture and digital infrastructure in the city.

In Gulf cities the rapid development of urban infrastructures, transforms the built environment. At night in Doha (Qatar) artificial light and buildings fuse together to form fresh visual landscapes. In these settings electrical light sculpts new architectural backdrops, reorganises boundaries and visually erodes soon-to-be forgotten neighbourhoods, erased by structural change. Moreover, if an entire city is imagined as an archive, the buildings in Doha are not only sites of infrastructural order, but become politically and socially active through destruction and reconstruction. Overlaid by an assemblage of digital signals produced by communal activities, and a multitude of events created by inhabitants in particular places and moments in time. These ever-shifting edge conditions create fertile ground from which the urban imaginary can arise from the Anthropocene. Furthermore, the project explores how the electromagnetic spectrum seen by human eyes and image sensors merges with radiant flux, the unseen light-energy emitted and received by Information and Communication Technologies. ‘Temporality’ is conceptually important in practice development and the perceptual experiments analyse how sound effects vision, and ‘listening’ exposes and transmits unseen audible phenomena to form new temporal objects - an afterimage of a spatial experience or atmosphere in the sky glow enveloping the biosphere. As a result, recording both the audio and visual elements observed on journeys made on foot fuses the acoustic and ocular landscapes thus uncovering new connections between people, architecture and digital infrastructure in the built environment.
Uschi Klein
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The agent in the image-making process: the photographic practices of young male adults with ASD

A cropped part of the façade of a high-rise building; a woman in a red coat running down the street; a profile of an owl sitting on a branch; a cloud formation on a sunny day. These are examples of photographic images taken by four young male adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the sphere of their everyday lives. Their photographs indicate there is a wide range of activities designated as photo-worthy, but what is not evident by merely looking at the photographs is the photographers’ experience and perception of objects in the process their image production.

Photography involves decisions, interventions, negotiations and actions that the photographer makes to convey a particular message. The image-maker guides the viewer to focus on some features rather than on others to tell a story from a particular vantage point. These stories are people’s personal encounters and depict ephemeral moments lifted out of ordinary time; they illustrate the ‘being there’ and the ‘having-been-there’.

Drawing on my qualitative research into the everyday photographic practices of young male adults with ASD, this paper discusses their ways of seeing and being-in-the-world as expressed through their photographic image-making. By grounding their perception in their experiencing body, the four participants make their presence felt through the entry into the domain of photography. After all, for James it is not just a photograph of a sky formation; for him, “it looks like snow but it’s sky from a different angle”.

Ikuru Kuwajima
Russia/Japan

Portrayal of Indigenous People in the Media

The project “Tundra Kids” was made in Vorkuta, Russia in 2014. The arctic region is home to the Nenets people, some of whom still keep nomadic lifestyle in the tundra. In the media, the Nenets people are widely portrayed as “noble savages” of the tundra. Yet, their identity is more complex in reality: more and more Nenets have been adapting to settlers’ lifestyle. In this sense, the popular portrayal of the Nenets people is rather one-sided, but this portrayal has been reproduced over and over, as it is photogenic, and there are demands for such representations.

To show the different side of the story, I made a project in the boarding school, where Nenets children study and live to get adapted to settlers’ lifestyle. Yet, the school also demonstrated children’s strong ties to their traditional identity, as the interior of the school was decorated with their ethnic-themed materials and Children’s drawings of the tundra and figures of reindeer. In other words, their collective identity is in transition.

It is difficult to publish non-exotic photographs of presumably “exotic” people. And, I’d like to discuss the importance of the efforts to show different sides and promote the discussion of problems with colonizers’ views still rampant in the media. The visual representation of the Nenets people is a subtle example, but there is a parallel with many other problems related to representations of the “Others” around the world.

Ivy Lam
Singapore

Should We Picture a Genocide? Exploring Photojournalism’s Place as Public Art in the Understanding of the Conflicts in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan

Since 1979, photojournalistic narratives of the conflicts in the Middle East -- in particular, those concerning countries that have since imposed strict barriers to entry for tourists -- have shaped international understanding of the region. As these countries are not easily accessible, it is through these narratives that life in the region is understood. For nations contributing huge expenditure towards counterinsurgency efforts to the Middle East, these images serve as photographic evidence of their defence expenditure. Although images are never entirely truthful, the ability of the camera to immediately capture an event could create the perception of unbiased reality. It is thus only with close reading of the image that the viewer sees that the photograph is also a representation of the photographer’s craft and aesthetic biases, which then obscure any clear distinction between art and documentary. Recognising this representation bias, Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites explain how documentary, particularly photojournalistic works can be public artworks for the democratic citizen to participate in social thought and contemplate the problems of collective living. Thus, in the process of documenting what the photographer has witnessed, the image also surfaces as an art to be read and considered by a civic audience. This paper recognises the subjective framing of photojournalism, and examines how select Middle Eastern photojournalists produced these photojournalistic “public artworks” through images of the vulnerability of women, ruins, and significant political events.
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Framing the Vernacular: Snapshot Photography in the Art Museum

The snapshot is generally understood as a photographic product created by nonprofessional photographers to capture personally significant moments. As a vernacular object, the snapshot photograph has largely been neglected in art historical narratives and denied representation in the art gallery and museum. However, since 2000, a multitude of internationally recognised art museums and galleries have held exhibitions of snapshot photography. A critical engagement with the interpretation and presentation of snapshots in an exhibition context demonstrates the art museum’s contribution to framing understandings of snapshot photography. In the exhibition context, the snapshot is commonly displayed as an aesthetic, art object, created by unknown artists. Presenting the snapshot through this lens ignores its materiality and historical, social and cultural significance. Through engaging with the snapshot’s unique social and communicative functions, in addition to its aesthetic value, this can promote a more comprehensive understanding of the snapshot and its role within the history of photography. As art museums move towards exhibiting more diverse types of photography, the snapshot provides an important case study of how these objects can be successfully integrated into an exhibition context.

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Accessing the field with a camera: the transformative process of an ethnographer conducting fieldwork with Mexican artists and political activists in Brussels

Photography is a transformative tool for ethnographers whose impact can be summarised in three points. First, it can be used as a tool to construct social relationships with people in the fieldwork. Second, it alters the power relationships between the ethnographer and the people observed in the fieldwork. Finally, photography transforms the ethnographer by stimulating self-reflection on its positionality in the field and on its role as an observant through a lens.

This paper explores the role of photography in an ethnography conducted among Mexican artists and political activists in Belgium. Specifically, it is argued that for this research project, photography was used as a tool to negotiate the access to the field and to establish rapport with artists and activists of the Mexican community in Brussels. Second, this paper recognises the importance of images for the Mexican migrants who were interested in having a record of their own artistic work and political activism. Indeed, both artists and political activists value images since they use them to diffuse their work through their own networks. Finally, this paper recognises the relevance of the camera as an object that creates distance and stimulates auto-reflection for the ethnographer on its positionality in the field.

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Contemporary Photography in Taiwan: It’s Political Imagination and Quest for Identity

This paper aims to discuss how artists in Taiwan have been dealing with issues of political identity, and how they explore and engage with the social milieu under a changing political context. Specifically this paper will focus on contemporary photographic works after the 1980s. The recent history of photography in Taiwan is characterised by the expansion of a photographic language and the division, and merge between photography, and contemporary art. There have been several stages of artists applying photographic images to tackle issues of identity, such as; recognizing and emphasizing on the local environment, subverting historical authority discourses, emphasising ‘Taiwan subjectivity’, and establish ‘truth’ by collecting ‘facts’ with archival images and ethnographic methods.

In this paper I will examine further the historical context and the transitions in concepts of photography by analyzing several noted photographic projects in Taiwan. This paper will also explores how contemporary photography in Taiwan has become the way it is today, and argues that the notions of ‘Taiwan subjectivity’ and ‘political identity’ are crucial along the way of its development.
Image re-enactions in the Arhuaco self-representation practices

When Gustaf Bolinder, a Swedish ethnographer, conducted his fieldwork in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in the early 20th century, he thought he was documenting disappearing cultures inhabiting that picturesque part of Colombia. A century later, a group of prolific indigenous communicators from the region used Bolinder’s images as an inspiration to re-enact their traumatic history. The Zhigoneshi collective, led by the Arhuaco Amado Villafaña, became the voice of the region and role model spokespeople for many indigenous communities of Latin America. Taken out of the original contexts, Bolinder’s images acquired more flexible meaning than initially intended. To add to the complexity of the re-appropriation of meaning, Villafaña bases his filmmaking on the idea of creating a dialogue with more contemporary (mis-)representations of his culture. As a result, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta became a battleground for interpretation and meaning of the images taken in the Sierra by different authors. How far could we trust in the research value of images which are constantly taken out of the context and re-appropriated? The power struggle between the photographer and the photographed is only an interlude to the complexity of the situation when it is no longer guaranteed who can be the author and who is the target audience and meaning-making force. In the face of that, can a photograph be trusted as a social research tool to represent social reality? Finally, who wins the battle over the image meaning - does the internal point of view have more value than the trained eye of the outsider? And can a photograph serve a double role of art and social science? With all these questions in mind, perhaps Bolinder’s prophecy was not about disappearance but transcending the old meaning and gaining agency.

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For Those Who Are Alive and Cities Which Are Habitable: A study of Bahman Jalali’s photographs of the Iran-Iraq War

This paper intends to discuss the photographic representation of war and violence, and examine the complexities surrounding this issue through Bahman Jalali’s photographs. One of the most important contemporary photographers in Iran, Jalali bears witness to some essential parts of Iran’s recent history such as the 1979 Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, and the post-war era. Jalali’s independence and his decision not to cooperate with newspapers or news agencies is an active and conscious one that makes him an appealing and distinctive figure among his contemporaries.

By viewing his photographs of the Iran-Iraq War in the context of the art about the war in Iran, known as the “Sacred Defense Art,” it can be noted that unlike others, Jalali did not intend to provide supernatural, dreamlike or heroic images from the battlefield. Despite his unwillingness to sacrifice his vision to editorial control, complicated questions arise concerning his images. The powers’ actions resulted in violence to soldiers and glorified war. However, do Jalali’s photographs reinforce the ideology of the states? Alternatively, is he resisting these institutions of power? What is the duty of the viewer as spectator to images of violence, death, and destruction, for instance, the ones of the shattered faces of dead soldiers? In trying to answer these questions, this paper considers recent contributions to photographic literature such as “The Civil Contract of Photography” by Ariella Azoulay and “The Cruel Radiance” by Susie Linfield.

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3 judicial snapshots

Take 3 photographs: Snapshot 1 - Judges on the crossing (researcher as photographer); Snapshot 2 - The official judicial photograph (found objects and empirical research); Snapshot 3 - judicial carte de visites (first photographic encounters).

Photography has been an important dimension of my research on the judiciary. This paper offers three short reflections on my encounters with photography. The first focuses upon making photographic images of the judiciary as a part of my research and their use as data in my research. The second highlights an empirical aspect of my research into judicial photographs and is based upon interviews with a judges, court communications staff and photographers involved in the process of making photographic images of judges. The third flows from my encounter with carte de visite portraits of judges in the archive of one of the Inns of Court in London. These objects are one of the first and now largely forgotten encounters between the judiciary as an institution and photography. They will be used to explore questions about ‘the people formerly known as the audience’.
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Photographing London’s Logistical Space: The Political Meaning of Images in a City of Secured Circulation

This paper employs the interrelated concepts of the ‘logistics city’ (Cowen, 2014), ‘logistical life’ (Reid, 2006) and the ‘logistical image’ (Toscano, 2015), to explore the difficulty of finding alternative political meaning by photographing urban spaces dedicated to flow, and secured against unexpected events which threaten disruption.

Referring to the case of London’s civil transport infrastructure, I put forward the argument that such spaces are designed to be seen, understood, and responded to, but, emphatically, not to be thought. They communicate their proper function directly and immediately, minimising the potential for contestation inherent to representation. In many ways, the meaning of such spaces is all-too-easily captured in the photographic process, displacing any arguments over truth or untruth which could be had.

This corresponds to the problem of mobility versus stasis, but not in the ways we might expect. For the images emanating from logistical space urge onward movement: the imperative to maintain circulation, no matter the unexpected disruption being faced. They are designed not to be misconstrued, according to the notion that, the faster we comprehend, the faster we respond; react; move on.

Furthermore, photography risks excluding other sensuous elements – texture, smell, light, sound, etc. – which, just as much as visual spectacle, are governed to encourage logistical awareness among citizens, and thereby to minimise the volley of urban disruptions which arise out of forms of friction, including hesitation and deliberation.

Therefore, the paper seeks to eke out ways in which photographic research methods might adapt to this difficult (or rather, all-too-easy) space of images in ways that problematize the flat and smooth functionality of logistical urbanism.

Thomas Nicolaou  
School of Arts, Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment  
Oxford Brookes University

’Seymour’ had worked as an MA Visual anthropology intern at the Pitt Rivers Museum.

Seymour had been convinced that the contemporary socio-political situation in Cyprus could have been foreseen within Buxton’s photographic collection through the surrealist trope of montage. Some of the photographs within the collection had been taken during the start of Surrealism. Therefore, some of these negatives had been suppressed for decades through various hands and institutions only to resurface in recent years through archival and collections management.

To illustrate his point, Seymour left one print of his digital collage left hanging in a corner of the photographic collections store. This print had only been previously disclosed and discussed with the then photographic collections curatorial assistant.

Oyedepo Olukotun  
De Montfort University, Leicester

Inter-visuality: The symbiosis of still and moving images in Yoruba visual economies.

Focusing on the theme of “contested relationships between still and moving images” this paper presents an investigation of the business and practice of photographers turned videographers and photographers who also double as videographers in the Yoruba culture of southwestern Nigeria. The paper will present variations on this permutation of photographers versus videographers, which began in the 1980s with the advent of VHS technology.

The paper’s focus is the vernacular visual practice of celebratory social photography and videography in the southwestern Nigerian metropolis of Ibadan. Highlighting the visual technologies of photography and videography simultaneously as parallels to and extensions of each other, the paper takes them out of the discipline of anthropology and presents them as entrepreneurial phenomena within indigenous economies.

The discourse of the paper will draw on Walter Benjamin’s “The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility” and its understanding of still and moving image technologies as related and hence equally viable as agents of mass communication. Presenting Yoruba visual culture within its geopolitical context of West Africa the paper will draw on Liam Buckley’s (2014) view of West African visual cultures as embracing of new visual technologies in the bid to be seen as socially modern and upwardly mobile. The paper will also build on Francesca Bayre and Alba Valenciano-Mañé’s (2014) example of a West African visual culture that appreciates cine and still film equally and the idea that these media need to be assessed, beyond cultural anthropology and within the context of “production and consumption”.

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2nd International Conference  
Photography and Academic Research  
Images in the Post-Truth Era  

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Royal Anthropological Institute  
Birkbeck University of London  
Photography+(Con)Text
Thomas Örn Karlsson
Sweden

Representations of Tolkien's Middle-earth

You rarely talk about how important it is with good pictures in literary contexts what I try to show in my work if there are exhibitions, lectures, interviews, I always try to emphasize the importance of a good picture, say more than words, and how the pictures can enhance the reader's experience in the text.

When I create my pictures in the field, I see many links to books, movies, and how I talk about it, I usually mention links between picture and text where I can see clear influences in my work, such as Fjodor Dostoevsky, Ingmar Bergman, Tolkien, Stephen King, Guillermo del Toro.

In today's society, it's important to be innovative when it comes to photography and even bookmaking, readers need to get a new experience and that's what I'm trying to create in my work, both in script collaboration and my other environmental projects where I slow but certainly for the more artistic photography that has emerged thanks to my work together with Dr Martin Simonsson

So I will show a slide show that discusses around photography and how it works with text, will also bring me prints that the audience can check on forever easier to hold an image and create a feeling!

Where I also talk about our latest book project that goes against print (Dr Martin Simonsson and Per Johansson a Swedish Author on Nordstedts) how the job has been done with 2 different texts from 2 different individuals have format the pictures.

Andreas Panagidis
Cyprus

The Urban-Rural Continuum of Nicosia, Cyprus

When trying to determine the processes that led to urbanisation in Cyprus, it is important to keep in mind that for all previous centuries of the island's habitation, until the 20th, “ruralism” was the predominant characteristic that expressed the way of life of most families and not the processes of industrialisation that were well underway in europe and other parts of the world. Literally meaning “friendliness to the city”, asty lia is the Greek term for urbanisation, which suggests the process of becoming accustomed to or in favour of the new way of life in a city. In other words, befriending the urban.

From the invasion of turkey in 1974 onward, the rural environment would begin to symbolise the romantic ideals of the displaced rural dweller. In other words, the rural way of life of pre-war times became associated with a sense of security and prosperity which naturally, connected people with their land both physically and politically.

The function of the residential garden became a simulation of the lemon orchard, the olive grove, or simply, the rural setting that was left behind. Likewise, the planting of fruit-bearing trees became an expression, whether consciously or not, of the home owner’s hands-on, DIY and often functional approach to gardening, instead of an aesthetic appreciation which could be commonly found for example, in the formal English garden.

Piyarat Panlee
Social Anthropology, School of Global Studies, University of Sussex, UK

The socio-political life of photographs in the period of Thai nation mourning

This paper took the subdued atmosphere of the late Thai King funeral as the basis for an examination of the connection between photographs, emotion and politics tracing paths across these three overlapping domains: first, photographs and emotion; second, emotion and internet, and finally, emotion and violence. It arose from an interest in the relationship between emotion and material culture within the context of a contemporary capitalist society, and sets out to explore how emotions are manipulated and consumed in large national events. By using ‘photographs’ as a key material to capture these political-cultural phenomena, this paper focused on how ‘mourning photographs’ impact on people’s memories, experiences and their social relationships.

One of the paper’s central concerns is material objects have the ability to convey conflicting symbolic messages to different people. Drawing on the images, particularly photographs appeared on all the social media platforms in Thailand during a one-year mourning period, it illustrated the ways in which shared images leads to a consideration of the meaning and impact of
Photographers and photographed: An unequal power relationship in visual representation of illness since the beginning of photography till the post-truth era

Medical images, photojournalism, artistic images and other visual narratives related to illness are clear examples of the power that struggles between the photographer and the photographed, and how this relationship has been evolving through recent history. Specifically doctors and photojournalists have been responsible of the creation of an stigmatized image of certain illnesses as mental disorders or AIDS for years. This iconography was built through images of the worst medical cases and the most dramatic or violent patients in the newspapers, tv or cinema. It's paradoxical that a more realistic image of the patients and their caregivers is arising in the post-truth era.

Only in a world where these two roles (photographer and photographed) are constantly interchangeable this power relationship seems to be changing roles empowering those that used to be the passive subjects of photography and couldn't access the public representation of their own situation: patients and caregivers.

With the omnipresence of smartphones and social networks (or even blogs), common users are taking pictures about their normal life with illness (selfies, family images...) and sharing them claiming for awareness and de-stigmatization. There is also a new wave of photojournalists and visual artists that generate self-referential or autobiographical reportages or artworks about themselves or their relatives with some kind of illnesses. Some of those projects are winning international prizes or being exposed, contributing to give visualization to this more humanized and normalized iconography of contemporary illnesses in an also changed socio-political context.

Requiem for the 'Truth'? Mapping the Un-Real Reality of Migrants in Pictures

What is the role that photography may play in asserting a highly contested reality? As Hannah Arendt puts it, "an image, unlike an old-fashioned portrait, is supposed not to flatter reality but to offer a full-fledged substitute of it". In the case of the representation of social issues such as that of migration, images play a key role in orienting public opinion. The very process of opinion formation in our post-truth world is strictly connected to feelings and beliefs that are somehow held as facts: what is true and what truth is made to be do no longer seem to need to converge. While facts have always been socially constructed, the production of new narratives and discourses mediated by new media hybrid logics of sharing have raised some concerns about the integrity of images. As citizens themselves seem to be more in charge with the trade of image-making, visual representations are undergoing a substantial re-qualification. The status of images, and the authority that they possess in informing our reality, are being increasingly politicised. In the case of migration, how migrants are portrayed, and how their stories are being shared in social media, are often the result of what Chomsky calls 'manufacturing consent' that goes beyond the search for the assessment of their own 'truth'. In so doing, the chances of 'factual truth' to survive through photographs is questioned from within the space of post-truth production, that is the construction of knowledge despite facts.

Environmental educational research through photography based methodologies: challenges and paradoxes in achieving the SDG's in indigenous contexts in Mexico, India and Nepal

This paper shows preliminary results of an ongoing images-based research with ethnographic approach. This research consists of two phases. In the first phase, an ethnographic photo essay (completed) was carried out on the challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) in indigenous contexts in Mexico, India and Nepal. The selection of these three countries to carry out the photographic essay was based on the significant presence of indigenous populations in developing countries and because they are located at a similar distance from the equator and also because they have similar climates and ecosystems. In the second phase, this photo essay has been used as an educational material in some academic contexts in Mexico and will also be used in academic spaces in India and Nepal in order to reflect on the challenges in achieving the SDGs in indigenous contexts of these three countries and to reflect on the evocative use of images in environmental education research. The methodological strategy to evoke reflections among the spectators is through the method of photographic
elicitation. The preliminary results show the relevance of the use of evocative images in academic contexts to move towards alternative academic narratives that allow bringing non-academic audiences to debates of global relevance and on the epistemological potential of the use of images in environmental educational research.

Deborah Schultz
Art History and Visual Culture, Regent’s University London

Archival photographs and image circulation in Rosângela Rennó’s installation Rio-Montevideo (2016)

As mobile objects, photographs often change their physical location over time, transported through time and space to various commercial, artistic, social, academic and scientific locations. The place of a photograph relates not only to its physical location but also its value or significance as a method of viewing and conceiving of the world.

In her installation Rio-Montevideo at The Photographers’ Gallery, London, in 2016, Brazilian artist Rosângela Rennó re-viewed photographs by the Uruguayan photojournalist Aurelio Gonzalez taken between 1957 and 1973. While the structure of the exhibition highlighted the role of the viewer, the content of the photographs focused on the ‘overlooked narratives of everyday protagonists’ during a time of immense social and political upheaval in Uruguay and throughout Latin America. The installation effectively challenged conventional boundaries between art and documentary photography.

This paper addresses key questions raised by Rennó’s practice to examine the ways in which artists have dealt with the relationship between their own work and past images. How have images produced as documents been re-viewed within visual projects? What kinds of new concerns are raised? How are the original images revalued?

Using Rennó’s Rio-Montevideo as a case study, this paper explores the ways in which photographs may productively be rediscovered, re-viewed and revalued, engendering new readings and understandings of both the images and the contexts in which they were produced.

Isabel Stein
Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The man transcends: a face of ashes in the streets of Saigon

This paper intends to analyze the trajectory of the photograph The Burning Monk, made in 1963 reflect this status. Rather, the statues were shot from a range of unsympathetic angles and overshadowed by the commercial architecture of their respective locations. This gesture has been read in a number of ways: first, as a call to preserve national monuments and, secondly, as a challenge to overly elaborate forms of memorialization. Both of these readings, however, ignore one of the book’s central ambiguities – namely, its attempt to question the nature of the American monument. Whilst it might be tempting to suggest that Friedlander’s title refers to the statues depicted within his images, it could also be read as a reference to the architecture which surrounds them or even the photobook itself. Indeed, the volume’s textured cover and embossed letters bear more than a passing resemblance to a plaque. As such, it will be my claim that the book alternates between critique and the creation of a new form of monument; one suspended between the architectural and the photographic. But how might this combination of architecture and photography function as a monument? What circumstances led to the transformation of the American monument? And what type of politics does Friedlander’s work bring to the fore?

Sarah Turnbull
Dept of Criminology, School of Law, Birkbeck College

The uses and limits of visual methodologies in research on British immigration detention and deportation

As Eamonn Carrabine has recently observed, criminologists are increasingly considering the visual and the power of photographic images within criminological and sociolegal research, both as objects of study and through the use of visual methodologies in social research. This shift towards the examination, as well as integration, of images raises a number of important methodological, ethical, and political questions. This paper critically reflects on the author’s failed attempt to incorporate visual methods in follow-up research on immigration detention and deportation in the United Kingdom (UK). In particular, it considers the uses and limits participant-generated visuals, and the method of ‘photo-voice,’ which were originally conceived as alternative means to explore themes of home, identity, and belonging in and through practices of detention and release or expulsion. In so doing, the paper offers critical reflections on some of the methodological, ethical, and political implications of using photographs in social research and writing.
Nicola Ughi
Pisa, Italy

One day for the birth, one day to die. The rest they call it life

When you’re out you can’t imagine. Life also includes death, and whoever is here will pass through it gradually, while some “angels” take care of their “end of life”.

The hospice marks you, for better or for worse: life is fragmented in moments, as if someone says, “still one please” knowing that this is the last chocolate he keeps it in his mouth, calmly, to melt.

Hundreds of stories pass inside here. The first is Anna’s, the engine of everything: Mrs. Mancini started in 1988 in her garage, after the death of her husband, Dr. Alberto Rizzotti, to whom this whole enterprise is dedicated.

She was 40 years old. Now is 70. Since that day she has never ceased to dedicate herself to cancer patients, with extraordinary passion as a true entrepreneur of welfare.

The “Casa dei Gelsi” is just the tip of the iceberg of a branched activity not only in Treviso, but also throughout the province, where a team of volunteers, doctors, social workers, represent the home army, with all that follows.

Now everyone knows that the man with a camera in his hand wants to tell a story. They understood that there is no desire to show off, to amaze. The project is not to make public their suffering, but to pay tribute to human dignity and to the wonderful people involved in the structure: let people know what is going on inside here.

The purpose of the project, started in October 2017, is to describe the dignity of death inside the hospices. I’ll work for one year in hospices in Italy (Treviso – Rome – Florence). The language I decided to use is portrait, because people in front of the camera gives the best of themselves, and I think it’s the best way to make them dignified even in the disease.

Christian Vium
Dept of Anthropology, Aarhus University, Denmark

The aesthetics of vernacular photography: researching Siberian family archives

In this paper, I present and discuss findings from my recent four-year comparative anthropological research project ‘Temporal Dialogues’

The project is based on the repatriation of ‘colonial’ photographic archive material to indigenous peoples in Central Australia (2014), the Brazilian Amazon (2015) and northeast Siberia (2017). In each place, I conduct in-depth photo-elicitation interviews with descendants of the people portrayed in the archival photographs. Our conversations serve as templates or scripts for subsequent collaborative photographic ‘re-enactments’ and mises-en-scènes, in which we reframe the original material through an embodied dialogue. The material (old and new photographs, video, audio, and text) is subsequently analytically juxtaposed and exhibited in three dimensions in various forms of montages.

With a point of departure in empirical material from my work with Yukaghir and Yakut people in the remote settlement of Nelemnoye in northeast Siberia, I discuss how the dialogical space we established through photography – in particular portraiture - opened up to fundamental discussions about cosmology, identity, and politics that ultimately challenges dominant historical and anthropological narratives, and how I have attempted to reflect this in a series of aesthetic strategies both during fieldwork and in subsequent exhibition-making. Central to this discussion is the discovery of a vast collection of private, vernacular photographic archives that document everyday life in Nelemnoye over a turbulent century from the revolution in 1917 to the establishment of the Soviet Union, it’s collapse in 1989 and the post-socialist era.

Erika Zerwes
The Museum of Contemporary Arts of the University of São Paulo, Brazil

The CMF archive and the notion of Latin American photography in Europe during the early 1980s

This presentation intends to discuss the first two Latin American Colloquia of Photography held in Mexico City in 1978 and 1981 in its political dimensions through some of the photographs shown at the exhibitions that were held during the colloquia and published in the correspondent catalogues.
These two events made possible the creation of bridges between Brazilian and Latin American photographers and photographic institutions. The colloquia also made possible that European and North American institutional initiatives concerning photography were brought to and discussed in Latin America.

Moreover, as they kept the photographs that were sent as an answer to the open call for participation as well as the images that were exhibited during the events, the organising committee – the Consejo Mexicano de Fotografía – was able to collected and preserve photographs from all over Latin America. The CMF holds arguably one of the most important Latin-American photo archives from the period, which is still today a reference for international researchers.

Our research points out that this archive was a starting point for many exhibitions and publications about Latin-American photography in Europe during the first half of the 1980s. Thus, the CMF archive, formed during the 1978 and 1981 Latin American Colloquia of Photography, helped to disseminate in Europe the version of Latin American photography established at that moment.