Do We Look The Same?

I had a white skin, it is pink now. I had a white skin, it used to be brown. I had a white skin, that's what their theories said. I had a white skin, they didn't really care it wasn't mine. I had a white skin, all they saw is their concepts of it. I had a white skin, now it is real. I had a white skin, it is getting brown again. I had a white skin, but the sun is more lethal than their theories. I had a white skin, I'm covering it with sunscreen. I had a white skin, it covered my thoughts as well. I had a white skin, I saw it one day and got scared. I had a white skin, it's not transparent anymore. I had a white skin, did they hear what I said? I had a white skin, do we look the same?

How do we look at the world around us? How do we look at Visual Sociology? Sometimes it is easier to define something by its negation. Visual Sociology therefore is neither the 'visual' alone, nor 'sociology' alone. Together they form a unique sphere of social activity and tools of inquiry. What it means specifically is up to us to understand and create. It is both an honor and a pleasure to open the first issue of TG05's Newsletter, and to invite you all to take part in defining and pushing the boundaries of Visual Sociology.

Yours, Regev
Post World-Cup Inspiration: The Visual Sociology Goal

By Regev Nathansohn

We almost had to compete against the World Cup. Indeed, it was the day after Spain won the World Cup, but had it been the same day, I'm sure we would still find our Visual Sociology sessions packed. My confidence is not based on the assumption that scholars who are interested in Visual Sociology are by definition not interested in football. It is based on the fact that our sessions were indeed the best show in town.

What happened there, in room R6 at Gothenburg's Svenska Mässan during the four thematic sessions and one business meeting was scoring the goals of inspiration. And it was electrifying.

Being able to accept only a third of the proposals we received, our sessions hosted 20 top-level academic papers, 25 presenters (and discussants) from institutions from 14 countries (U.S.A., Italy, Poland, U.K., Russia, Canada, Belgium, Croatia, Turkey, Israel, Portugal, Germany, Sri Lanka and Sweden), and an engaged and curious audience.

The overall goal of the four sessions we held was to connect discussions on theoretical and practical aspects of the analysis of visual data. This was achieved by exploring how the visual is played out in different methodologies and in the possibilities of their integration: from semiotics to design theory, from participant observation to collaborative research, from walking and 'site-seeing' to working with Photo Maps using Mental Elicitation. Presenters explored the visual aspects of gender theories, political humor, iconoclasm, iconicity, violence, and identity formation. Overall, with discussions ranging from Barthes, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, to elaborating on different technical tools for collecting and analyzing visual data, we were exposed to new ways of thinking about the limits of the visual and pushing it further, sociologically.

We enjoyed exploring all these topics by traveling from Mexico to the U.K, from Israel to Palestine, from Germany to Iraq, from China to Sri Lanka, and from Italy to global cities. All these, including wildlife photography and YouTube clips, served as fields where cases for visual inquiry enriched us with a better...
Continued...

understanding about the ways we see the world, make it visible, and understand it.

We were also excited to host for the second time the Rachel Tanur Memorial Prize for students of Visual Sociology. Emilie Dubois, this year’s winner of the first prize, was there to accept the award from Judith Tanur, and to share with us her winning essay and image (reproduced in this newsletter). During the conference we also got the official announcement from ISA's Executive Committee that the Rachel Tanur Prize is now officially recognized as TG05’s prize, and we wish to thank Judy Tanur for her own efforts in making this happen and in cultivating the study of Visual Sociology.

I wish to thank all participants – presenters, discussants, chairs, and audience – for their contributions to inspiring discussions. I also wish to thank E-J Milne for masterfully coordinating our first elections for the Board (2010-2014), and Dennis Zuev for coordinating with me the long process of making these sessions happen.

The ISA Executive Committee has voted Buenos Aires, Argentina to host the next ISA Forum. The meeting, which will include a number of visual sociology panels organized by TG05, will be on the 1st-4th August 2012. Further details and a call for papers will follow in July’s newsletter and via our new listserve.

With great anticipation for our upcoming meetings,

Regev Nathansohn
President of TG05 2010-2014
Getting To Know You…Gabry Vanderveen

Psychologist and criminologist Gabry Vanderveen works at the Faculty of Law, Leiden University, The Netherlands. In her research she combines traditional, quantitative methods such as questionnaires and interviews with visual, qualitative methods. Gabry is a member of the executive board of the ISA Visual Sociology Thematic Group for 2010-2014.

1. If you could have any job what would it be? My job, but with more time to think, watch and learn.

2. What is your most treasured possession? I have so many; most of them mainly consisting of paper.


5. If you could change one thing what would it be? People (including me) being more sensitive towards others.

6. Do you see dreams in black and white or colour? Usually I dream colourfully and vividly; even the weirdest, absurd scenes and creatures appear real.

7. What is the most beautiful scene or image that you have seen? The first time I saw my daughter Rivka: the back of her head and her frog-like legs.

8. What is your favorite painting? “Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean Sea which at Twenty Meters becomes a Portrait of Abraham Lincoln (Hommage to Rothko)” by Salvador Dalí.

9. How old were you when you took your first photograph and what was it of? About 14; the audience listening to the school band.

10. What, if anything, is not visualizable? Everything can be visualized; though interpretation might be challenging.

11. How did you become interested in visual sociology? Trying to integrate visual hobbies with work led the way to visual data, visual methods and visual sociology.

12. What was the subject of your first visual study? Crime maps.

13. If you could undertake visual research on anything, what would it be on? The inner struggle of judges and lawyers in court.

14. What advice would you give someone starting out in visual research? Read some of the excellent books available and attend a summer school or course.

15. What was the most challenging thing you have experienced during your research or teaching career? Saying ‘no’.

16. What is the most important lesson your students have taught you? Less is more.


18. Which academic or activist would you most like to share coffee and cake with? Rosa Parks.

19. What would you like to do when you retire? Work, travel, read, write and create.

20. Who has been your biggest inspiration in the field of visual research? Edward Tufte’s The Visual Display of Quantitative Information has opened my eyes.
The Rachel Tanur Memorial Prize 2010

The Rachel Tanur Memorial Prize in Visual Sociology is intended to honor the memory of Rachel Tanur (who died in 2002 at age 43) and to encourage students to incorporate visual analysis into their study and understanding of social phenomena. The contest is held every two years (coinciding with the meetings of the ISA) and is open to undergraduate and graduate students majoring in any social science. Entrants are required to go to the contest website www.racheltanurememorialprize.com and choose one of Rachel’s photos on which to submit a social science comment. They are also required to post one of their own photos and make a social science comment on it.

The contest was held somewhat informally in 2008 with prizes awarded at the ISA Forum in Barcelona, but in 2010 TG05 officially set up a mechanism to choose the winners. We received 55 entries, which were judged by a jury chaired by Valentina Anzoise and consisting of Elisabeth-Jane ‘EJ’ Milne, Pavel Romanov, and Judith Tanur. The winning entries were shown at a TG05 session at Gothenburg and Emilie Anne Dubois presented her winning commentary in person. More details about the contest as well as the work of the prizewinners can be viewed at the contest website. Members are urged to encourage students to enter the 2012 contest – or if they are students, to enter themselves.

The 2010 Prize Winners:

1st Emilie Anne Dubois, graduate student at Boston College, for her photo and commentary "Girl on the M4 bus" and her commentary on Rachel's photo “Guatemalan peek-a-boo”.

2nd Josephine Barnett, graduate student Hunter College of the City University of New York, for her photo and commentary "Painting a Voice" and her commentary on Rachel's photo “Alaska railway”.

3rd Joan Michele Ryan, undergraduate student at Singapore Management University, for her photo and commentary "Man and modernization in an alley" and her commentary on Rachel's photo “Drag Queen 3”. 
Guatemalan Peek-a-boo
Prize Winning Commentary by Emilie Anne Dubois
Inspired by a photograph by Rachel Tanur

The young Guatemalan girl captured by Rachel Tanur’s lens sits in almost direct opposition to my photograph of a young American girl. Tanur frames this young girl with the tidy chaos of gloriously colorful yarn, perhaps, to draw attention to the strained and somewhat defensive posture of her subject. What this young girl does have in common with the young girl that I featured in my photograph is a relationship to set of overarching patriarchal power structures. This girl’s bodily posture, with tightly crossed legs, interlaced fingers used to shield half of her face, speaks back to the viewer, asking him politely but insistently to go away. At the very least, this image tells us that someone has educated this Guatemalan girl about her approaching womanhood through her appearance in proper and “womanly” conservative attire. In addition, her reclined, passively resistant posture shows some willingness to control her body to conform to cultural gendered norms. In this way, she shows some similarity to the woman depicted by Marianne Wex’s typical female subjects. Photographed “with arms close to the body, hands folded together in their laps, toes pointing straight ahead or turned inward, and legs pressed together … the women in these photographs make themselves seem small and narrow, harmless; they seem tense; they take up little space.” The young girl pictured here is almost a textbook example of one of Wex’s subjects. Her defiant gesture should not, however, go unnoticed. As she purposefully covers her face to block the camera’s line of sight while simultaneously peering out under her hand mask, this girl expresses a conflicted bodily discipline. Though she polices her body to conform to lady-like carriage and dress, she is seated, unconcerned for her clothing, with one eye winking at the camera. In closing, it should be considered that her resistant gesture could be partially related to an amplified sense of power she has experienced as the proprietor of the yarn in the marketplace. Mary Crain has argued that the increased earning power that the informal economy often times affords women in developing countries facilitates women’s redefinition of traditional gender roles. Participating in a public, fiscal, and historically male sphere, these “market women” speak and gesture in a far more “assertive and powerful manner” both in and outside the market.

References:


I swung off the curb and onto the M4 bus relieved to finally step out of the thick, simmering street air of a New York City late summer afternoon. I noticed the self-possessed girl pictured here even before the bus began its stuttering trip through borderlands of Morningside Heights where the Columbia’s irreverently shabby coffee houses and luxury hair salons eventually concede to Harlem’s brimming discount stores and fruit vendors.

She struck up easy conversation with me, asking first about my camera. Fifteen blocks, three stops and one extended honk passed as I learned that she was commuting home from school with her father, loved double chocolate ice cream, and was going roller skating at Riverbank State Park later that evening. Her father laughingly nodded his permission when I asked if I could take a photo of his daughter. Two stops later, they were gone. The memory of this girl and her indisputable conversational and physical confidence has, however, lingered with me for some time.

I marveled at her impervious sense of self as she stared squarely at my lens, poised in a faux bite of her snack, legs akimbo with her presence somehow filling an entire row of NYC bus seats. This snapshot captures a unique moment in this girl’s personal history before she has seriously taken up the endeavor of becoming a gendered body. Judith Butler writes that each of us “are born male or female, but not masculine or feminine … ‘femininity [on the contrary] is an artifice, an achievement, a mode of enacting and reenacting received gender norms which surface as so many styles of flesh.’” There was nothing in this young girl’s demeanor during the brief time I spent with her that hinted at the presence of this gendered production. The past fifty years have clearly witnessed a great widening of the professional horizons for women in the United States; however, the persistence of a wide variety of bodily-based gendering projects makes me puzzle at the conclusiveness of women’s progress. In 1998, Sandra Barky introduced Michel Foucault’s famous theory, which contends that micro-processes guarantee docile bodies, to the gendering process. Bartky argued that a specific repertoire of gestures, postures, and movements are daily socialized into the type femininity that women engaging in patriarchal body projects hold as a goal. Remembering my own experience when I was the age of this photograph’s subject, I can see how “the hidden school curriculum of disciplining [my] body” had specific gender goals and, in the end, produced me as a woman who is more physically docile than my male counterparts. The bodily and vocal deportment of this girl serve as a counterpoint to my own embodied experience. This difference is meaningful on several accounts: This young girl displayed an elevated, joyous conversational volume that is discouraged, especially in girls, in educational settings. She professed her “love” for a high-calorie indulgence as well as a hearty enjoyment of physical activity that some women more invested in disciplining their bodies might not proclaim. Third, the subject is shown here holding her body in a version of what Marianne Wex, who documented the differences between masculine and feminine body postures through a series of street photos, calls the “proffering position,” serving to maximize the space a, typically male, body takes up. Though our interaction was short and I can claim to know almost none of the
developmental and familial circumstances of her life, her seeming immunity to the micro-processes of patriarchal power described above has served as a reminder of their strength in my life ever since. If such an unusual absence is so starkly etched into my memory, then this image serves as a call for each of us to remain vigilant towards their usual presence and our participation in their mandates. For, as Bartky goads “women cannot begin the re-vision of our own bodies until we learn to read the cultural messages we inscribe upon them daily.”

References:


CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Inspired by reading Emilie Anne Dubois’ commentary?

Are you a budding photographer or do you know one?

Do you have a friend or know of a student whose work should be celebrated or may stimulate debate?

The board of TG05 is seeking submissions for future visual sociology newsletters. If you have either a photograph, an image with accompanying commentary or a photo essay you would like published in a future newsletter, please email EJ at elisabethmilne@hotmail.com. Please mark the subject box ‘Submission for TG05 Newsletter’. The next deadline is 1st June 2011. Images should be JPEG or Tiff files and as high a quality as possible. All images submitted must have the consent of the photographer and, if relevant, the subject(s) of the photograph.
**Teaching tips column: call for contributions**

The board of the Thematic Group on Visual Sociology is soliciting Teaching Tips for a future regular teaching tips column in the newsletter. We welcome ideas on the full range of topics relevant to teaching visual sociology at both undergraduate and graduate levels and on-line as well as traditional classroom teaching. Tips can consist of for example:

- Examples of assignments that help students understand methods, theories, concepts, and/or processes related to visual data, visual methods and visual sociology
- Pedagogical or curriculum resources (for example helpful books, websites)
- Descriptions of in-class, small and large group exercises
- Ideas for stimulating discussion on difficult or controversial topics
- Examples of criteria or checklists for assessing assignments incorporating a visual dimension (e.g. photo-essays).

Please send submissions for the Teaching Tips Column to Gabry Vanderveen at g.n.g.vanderveen@law.leidenuniv.nl. Submissions should be approximately 250-750 words, but can deviate from this guideline. The deadline to be included in the next edition of the newsletter is 1st June 2010.

**!CALL FOR CONTENT!**

**DO YOU HAVE A BOOK OR FILM COMING OUT?**

**ARE YOU BURNING TO WRITE A BOOK REVIEW?**

**ARE YOU ORGANISING A CONFERENCE OR DO YOU KNOW OF ANY THAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO OTHER VISUAL SOCIOLOGISTS?**

**HAVE YOU HEARD OF ANY COMPETITIONS, PRIZES AND AWARDS RELATED TO VISUAL SOCIOLOGY?**

**ARE YOU ORGANISING A SUMMER SCHOOL OR COURSE RELATED TO VISUAL SOCIOLOGY?**

The TG05 Board wishes to include a reviews and listings section in our future newsletters. If you would like to publicize a forthcoming book or film, or review one, please send details to EJ at elisabeth.milne@stir.ac.uk. Mark the subject of all emails 'Submission for TG05 Newsletter'. All listings and call for papers should be no longer than 250 words. Book reviews should be no longer than 750 words.
**TG05 Statement**

Visual Sociology is a diverse field of study which gathers sociologists and other social scientists involved in visual studies and studies of the visual. As a relatively new discipline and methodology within sociology, Visual Sociology attracts scholars and students who are using visual methods, and/or are interested in the production, use and dissemination of visual knowledge.

The overall goal of the thematic group in Visual Sociology is to bridge discussions on theoretical and practical aspects of the analysis of visual data. The thematic group also provides an opportunity to share, exchange and develop ideas relevant to Visual Sociology in the global arena. The focus of the thematic group is on developing theoretical perspectives as well as specific sociological methods, such as website analysis, photo elicitation interviews, sociological video and photo production and analysis.

The group aims to further discussions concerning the collection of visual data in the field (in archives, photo albums, media, websites etc.) as well as the production of visual materials by the researcher and/or participants (photography and documentaries) with an emphasis on methods of analysis of these data. Another objective is the contemporary and historical analysis of the socio-cultural locus of the visual. The key concern here is how the visual is produced, used and disseminated, and how it intersects with the verbal and other means of communication and sensual experiences.

Lastly, it is our goal to put to debate broader theoretical issues of the sociology of the visual sphere, and discuss the applicability of various sociological theories and methodologies in analysis of the visual data.

**MEMBERSHIP of The ISA Visual Sociology Thematic Group (TG05)**

We wish to extend a warm welcome to scholars and professionals of sociological teaching, researchers or practitioners and encourage you to join TG05. To join us you need to be a member of The International Sociological Association, which currently has 5,000 members from 167 countries. The benefits of joining include:

- Free subscription to ISA journals *Current Sociology* and *International Sociology*.
- Reception of *isagram*, an electronic newsletter containing announcements of the forthcoming conferences, calls for papers and manuscripts, prizes, competitions, etc & the TG05 Newsletter
- Free access to e-bulletin an ISA on-line publication.
- Free access to *sociopedia.isa* an online database with ‘state-of-the-art’ review articles in social sciences.
- Free Access to *SAGE Full-Text Collection* which includes 37 journals with more than 12,500 articles.
- 45% discount on SAGE Publications books.
- A reduction in registration fees at ISA World Congress of Sociology.
- Preferential consideration for papers submitted to TG05 conferences.
- Access to bursaries to enable members to attend TG05 at the World Sociology Congress and Forum.
- Membership of TG05 Visual Sociology mailing list

ISA membership is for 4 years. It currently costs $225/105/35 for employed members (rated according to where you live); and $120/ 50/25 for students. TG05 membership is an additional $40/20/10. In many countries these fees can be exempted against tax as a professional membership, thus making membership free.

To join ISA and TG05 please apply online at [http://www.isa-sociology.org/memb_i/index.htm](http://www.isa-sociology.org/memb_i/index.htm)
New Publications

Claudia Mitchell: Doing Visual Research, Sage

http://www.uk.sagepub.com/books/Book231677

Information from the publishers on this new book.

Doing Visual Research offers an innovative introduction to the use of photography, collaborative video, drawing, objects, multimedia production and installation in research. Claudia Mitchell explains how visual methods can be used as modes of inquiry as well as modes of representation for social research.

The book looks at a range of conceptual and practical approaches to a range of tools and methods, whilst also highlighting the interpretive and ethical issues that arise when engaging in visual research. Claudia Mitchell draws on her own work in the field of visual research throughout to offer extensive examples from a variety of settings and with a variety of populations. Topics covered include:

- Photographs and memory work studies
- Drawing as participatory visual methodology
- Working with images/Writing about images
- Can visual methods make a difference? From practice to policy

Doing Visual Research takes an interdisciplinary approach to the subject of visual research, producing a practical introduction to the subject that will be of great use to students and researchers across the social sciences, and in particular in education, communication, sociology, gender, development, social work and public health.

Calls for Papers


The Committee invites proposals for papers, themed sessions, film/video screenings and exhibitions in the broad field of visual research methods. Please summarise your proposal in 200 words and send it by 1 March 2011 to IVM-Conference@open.ac.uk. We will let you know if your proposal has been accepted by 1 May 2011. To receive news on the conference as it develops, please sign up to the VM2011-NEWS list at http://jiscmail.ac.uk, or check the conference website at www.visualmethods.org

Conferences in 2011

International Visual Sociology Association July 6-8, 2011, Canada.

Traditionally, visual research has been framed as a representational practice, different from, but equally valid to other representational practices (scientific, literary, etc). IVSA 2011 is focused on visual research as a collaborative and participatory practice. Considering visual research as collaborative and participatory suggests new ways of working together and offers opportunities to think productively about alternative inquiry practices, analytical frames, and dissemination possibilities. Presenters will explore and theorize visual research as a collaborative and participatory practice and to consider the methodological and ethical challenges that collaboration and participation present. See http://www.visualsociology.org/conference.html
http://www.mcluhangalaxy.net/

Barcelona, May 2011, 23-25. Among the consecutive international events that are being organized to celebrate McLuhan’s centenary in Toronto, Berlin and Rome, is the International Conference “McLuhan Galaxy, Understanding Media, Today” that will take place in Barcelona, May 2011, 23-25, organized by the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3) / Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and the Faculty of Communication / Universitat Pompeu Fabra with the collaboration of CCCBLab.


Geography’s relationship with film, like anthropology, began in earnest in the 1920s when J.B. Noel filmed the Royal Geographical Society-sponsored 1922 ascent of Everest – the same year that anthropologist Robert Flaherty produced Nanook of the North in Canada. Yet while Flaherty’s study of Inuit culture spurred 80 years of anthropological film development into what we now know as the discipline of visual anthropology, the Everest footage was archived and geography instead turned its focus to cinematic analysis.

In recent years, however, partly helped by technological advances offering easier and more direct access to video and production software, geographers across the discipline are beginning to use audio-visual methods in greater numbers. Yet while it is claimed that the geographical analysis of film has ‘come of age’ (Aitken and Dixon 2006) the same cannot yet be said of geography’s theoretical engagement with their value as a research methodology.

This session will include contributions from geographers who use film and video as a research method and who are also beginning to critically theorise their contribution to this exciting field. We are interested in the use of video and film in any area of geography and for any reason, whether it is part of a participatory ethnography, a tool for data analysis, or a reflexive exploration of new and creative methodologies. For further information contact: Bradley Garrett: b.garrett@rhul.ac.uk

Visible Evidence 18, New York City, August 11-14, 2011

Visible Evidence, an international conference on documentary film and media, now in its 18th year, will convene August 11-14, 2011 in New York City, at Tisch School of the Arts, New York University, and other locations around the city. Visible Evidence 18 will feature the history, theory, and practice of documentary and non-fiction cinema, television, video, audio recording, digital media, photography, and performance, in a wide range of panels, workshops, plenary sessions, screenings, and special events.

Sign up at the VE18 conference website http://visibleevidence.org/18/ to register.

Questions? Email conference coordinator Jonathan Kahana, Department of Cinema Studies, NYU jonathan.kahana@nyu.edu subject line: VE18 question.

Visual Literacies 8th-10th July 2011 Mansfield College, Oxford; http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/at-the-interface/education/visual-literacies/details/

11th Diverse Annual Conference at Dublin City University (DCU); 28-30 June 2011 http://diverse2011.dcu.ie/welcome.html
SUMMER SCHOOLS & INTERNSHIPS
The Centre for the Study of Childhood and Youth 3rd International Postgraduate Summer School 5-6 July 2011

You are warmly invited to attend the above event to be held at The University of Sheffield, 219 Portobello, Sheffield, UK. This event is for postgraduates working in the area of childhood and youth. The workshops and networking sessions will be of interest for students about to embark on research and for those who are preparing their dissertations. Speakers include: Professor Cathy Nutbrown, "Using photographic data in research involving young children" and Professor Bren Neal, University of Leeds: "Thinking Qualitatively through Time: An Introduction to Qualitative Longitudinal Research"

ABSTRACTS/POSTERS:
We are inviting you to submit an abstract and/or poster.

Abstracts: We would like to ask students to present papers for the Summer School on the subject of methodologies - new and old. We welcome abstracts of up to 250 words by the end of April to be considered for the Summer School.

Posters: In addition, you are invited to present a poster around your individual area of study for the poster presentations which will be held at the end of the first day of the Summer School.

For further details about the event and to book your please, please go to our website http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/cscy. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Dawn Lessels at d.j.lessels@sheffield.ac.uk.

CAN YOU HELP…?

INTERNSHIP/ SKILL SHARING OPPORTUNITY SOUGHT

Hello visual sociologists worldwide,

My name is Lesley Frank and I am a Sociology PhD Candidate at the University of New Brunswick in Canada. I am hoping that someone might be able to provide some direction for my desire to explore visual methods. I plan on applying for post doctoral funding to explore visual methods in the context of an on-going participatory community food security project here in Nova Scotia. Yet while I have experience with participatory methods I have no experience in the practical aspects of visual methods.

Does anyone have any suggestions on where I might go to gain some experience? Due to teaching commitments I would not be able to travel until winter 2011-2012 when I would be available for up to three months. I am eligible for a travel award and can offer the skills that I do have in exchange for yours!

I returned to academia after many years working in community and university based research projects in the areas of food security/family poverty/health. Currently I am ABD status and I hold a Canadian Graduate Scholarship from SSHRC. I have also been teaching part time at Acadia University in Nova Scotia for 10 years in Qualitative Methods and The Sociology of Food.

If you have any suggestions or openings for me I would love to hear from you on lesley.frank@unb.ca.

Thanks,

Lesley.