AESTHETIC OTHERING
The Case of Photographic Representation

An Annotated Bibliography

SYNOPSIS

Photography, famously described as the “pencil of nature” and the “writing with light,” is a particularly important visual technology and art for understanding how visuality—the complexes of information, images and ideas employed for social ordering—serves to undermine those considered “other” given their social location, be it race, sex, class gender, sexuality, ability, or nationality. Photographic technologies and images are thus inextricably tied to practices of “othering.” From its inception when photographic techniques were used for the purposes of “scientifically” indexing and classifying racial and so-called deviant “others” to contemporary understandings of photography as art, photographic practices remain tied to forms of violence against subjects deemed different.

The overall aim of this project is consequently to help teachers, students and lovers of photography, to engage with the various ways in which photography and photographic technologies are complicit with practices of “othering.” An attunement to the essential link between photography and these practices allows for a complex reading of photographic techniques, art, and criticism that not only discloses the collusion of photography with violence against those deemed different, but that also provides possibilities for “countervisuality” or practices that resist dominant, violent photographic technologies and representation.

Importantly, any analysis regarding “the other” and practices of “othering” needs to recognize that the notion of “the other” has itself become homogenized. That is, in the context of U.S. scholarship, it is common for the “other” to be interpreted, as Coco Fusco has noted, as “everybody else but the U.S.” (See Fusco 1995, Module VIII). It is thus necessary to note that the notion of the “other” is a heterogeneous one. Photography remains connected to a range of “othering” practices that continues to construct multiple “others.”

Some of the images shown here are examples of different ways of “othering” that perpetuate various kinds of violence on their subjects. As in any photographic project, it is important to provide images. Yet, it is clear that displaying certain examples of photographic “othering” is itself complicit with practices of “othering”—this is itself one of the difficult but key issues that needs to be addressed in this project, as is the construction and use of the very notion of the “other.”

Adolph F. Muhr (American, died 1913), Frank A. Rinehart (American, 1861 - 1928) Yellow Feather, Maricopa, 1899, Platinum print 23.7 x 18.1 cm (9 5/16 x 7 1/8 in.) The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles
• The introduction of the question of difference and the practices of “othering” as integral to the study of the aesthetic in general. That is, while this project highlights such practices in the context of photographic representation, it shows that they are not simply the result of photographic practices but are interwoven in various artistic investigations, notably in discussions of notions of taste, beauty, and the sublime. The project thus invites a comparative approach between “othering” practices related to photography and those related to aesthetic theory.

• The centering of texts that highlight the question of difference within an aesthetic context in general and photography in particular. While it is of the utmost importance that students be introduced to canonical texts in aesthetics, it is also key to introduce readings that have not received appropriate attention due to their critical assessment of standard interpretations of aesthetic theories and practices.

• The positioning of texts by members of underrepresented groups as key to the study of the aesthetic. Such positioning discloses various “othering” practices about which prominent art commentators have remained silent. Regarding texts by members of underrepresented groups as central to the study of aesthetics promises not only to problematize current accepted interpretations but also to bring to light new approaches to the study of the aesthetic.

• The introduction of artistic production by members of underrepresented groups that illustrates various “othering” practices. A consideration of such production provides a number of possibilities for both comparative studies with material that is usually highlighted in courses and for expanding the body of readings.

The texts suggested have been chosen in order to engage seven particular themes that are important when thinking about the relationship between photography and practices of “othering.” Modules for seven specific themes are provided; they highlight the theme in terms of its connection to practices of photographic “othering.” While the main purpose of all the modules is to disclose these practices within photography, readings may also engage traditional questions in photography studies in order to highlight shifts of content and practices. Readings from other disciplines are also included when they are helpful in conceptualizing and illustrating important issues about each particular theme.

In addition, particular modules on the specific themes propose readings aimed at destabilizing canonical or standard photographic interpretations, representations, theories and techniques. Given the scope of this project, each module is limited to a series of readings that provides a basis for engaging the theme fruitfully and that suggests further issues of research. While the modules can be taught as interdependent, they can be used on their own. Each module is not meant to provide comprehensive literature on each theme but presents readings with various levels of difficulty that raise important issues and questions regarding the chosen themes.

At the end of each module, there is a suggested exhibit catalogue or photography book that can be used in connection with the module. These suggested art books are meant to enhance the teaching and learning experience by prompting analyses of specific photographic projects that have some connection to the theme or that will be useful in problematizing issues within a theme.
The notion of the aesthetic has a particularly rich history and set of issues, ranging from 18th century theoretical analyses of the nature of taste and disinterestedness as a mark of the aesthetic, to different understandings of the notions of beauty and sublimity, to contemporary debates regarding the origin of aesthetic experience. This module presents readings that engage with canonical understandings of the notions of taste, sublimity, and beauty. However, it highlights the key notion of the sublime—first attributed to Longinus and famously elaborated by Burke and expanded by Reid, Alison, Kant and others. The reason for this emphasis stems from the fact that even a cursory look at this notion reveals the inextricable connection between aesthetics and practices of “othering.” As the readings will show, the sublime, notably understood in terms of the astonishment prompted by nature, is also connected to gendered and racialized conceptions of otherness. Readers will have the opportunity to learn about alternative understandings of the sublime that discuss the feminine sublime as well as the photographic sublime.

Secondly, the module lists a number of contemporary texts that develop alternative aesthetics that do not undermine or make invisible otherness but affirm the ways in which gendered and racialized subjects can enrich the study of aesthetics. While the texts presented here are not explicitly connected to photography, they are important in so far as they help the reader understand the necessity for alternative visions of aesthetics in general and of specific aesthetic notions. The study of photographic aesthetic “othering” is itself enhanced by a clear understanding of the way that aesthetics as such is complicit with the violence—epistemic, visual or cultural—that arises from the field’s most esteemed theories.


**READINGS FOR MODULE I**

**Taste, The Sublime, and Beauty: Critiques of the Canon**


  Korsmeyer critically reads Hume’s standard of taste as being a “gendered concept” despite the claim to its neutrality. In Hume’s analysis the subject who has aesthetic merit and should be emulated is male. Females are implied as being outside the domain of human nature. Korsmeyer suggests that Hume’s notion of taste should not be jettisoned but recommends a repairing of the notion.


  Key article that points out how the 18th notion of the sublime denotes not merely a subject’s disposition to make an esthetic judgment but also an object that inspires terror. Armstrong takes up the theme of the connection between so-called “exotic” bodies and the aesthetic, and shows how in Burke the terror-inspiring object is associated with the black female, thus pointing to the complicity of early notions of aesthetics with the undermining of racialized, gendered difference.


  Noted analysis in which Freeman points the connection between the notion of the sublime and misogynistic constructions of the feminine in the context of women’s literature. The tradition of writing on the sublime emphasizes the patriarchal subject that undermines difference and appropriates otherness. Each chapter engages a particular historical view of the sublime.


  Liu presents an interesting reading of Lee Miller’s photographs of the London Blitz as well as of soldiers and victims of the Holocaust. Informed by Freeman’s notion of the feminine sublime and French feminism, Liu portrays Miller’s photographs as a new aesthetics and ethics of the feminine sublime that creates a distance-in-proximity relationship, allowing the spectator an experience of war that fluctuates between empathy and detachment. This reading counters Burke’s view of the sublime that calls for a protective distance from the source of the sublime.


Noted discussion in which Battersby argues against ahistorical readings of the sublime. She traces the development of the sublime and describes Kant’s view of the notion as excluding women and certain races as well as bodily, historical, and cultural differences. While she appeals to Nietzsche’s idea of the sublime because his notion does not transcend the limits of the senses, she still argues against this view as it does not adequately capture the female subject position. Ultimately, Battersby suggests a notion of the sublime that calls for an engagement with multiple cross-cultural narratives that can problematize what has become the everyday “shock and awe” of contemporary violence. For a short selection, see Chapters 1-2 that engage the connection between the sublime and Chapter 2 for an analysis of Kant.


In this original work, Frankowski, discusses the intertwining of the aesthetic, the political and practices of memory. He shows the failure of memorialization under post-racial practices that in effect silence anti-black racism while at the same time call for memorialization. He makes his case by analyzing various memorials, including The Stone of Hope, The African American Family Monument, and the Jim Crow Museum, as well as DuBois’s analysis of the sorrow songs and Billie Holiday’s “Strange Fruit.” Frankowski engages the notion of the Kantian sublime in order to show how Kant’s aesthetic points to a limit or breaking point in cognition’s ability to represent. Ultimately Frankowski calls for a political sense of mourning or a mourning as a practice that allows for the possibility of a remembering that is not tied to the forgetting of contemporary anti-black violence. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the sublime and a political sense of mourning.


Important discussion in which Cheng explores the notion of beauty at the intersection between race and gender. The difficult question of what it means for a woman of color to possess beauty is at the heart of her analysis. Cheng discloses the difficult, if not impossible, location that the woman of color stands in relation to beauty, given the feminist critique of feminine beauty and the racial denial of nonwhite beauty. Significantly Cheng is interested in what makes beauty a “likely excuse, false witness, or alibi” for talking about race, gender, power, etc. (196)

**Aesthetics Reframed**


In this important comprehensive study of Chicana art, Pérez illustrates how Chicana artists present, offer (as in an altar offering) a cultural, spiritual hybridity and mestizaje that allows both for self-transformation and the problematization and resistance to institutionalized, dominant conceptions of race, gender, sexuality and of art itself. By invoking and re-framing cultural symbols, these artists show art’s power of healing and transformation. They also show the powerful way in which artistic production both materializes the spiritual and reclaims a space marked by cultural dispossession and fragmentation. See Chapter 2 for an analysis of the gendered and racialized body as social sign.

Elam critically assesses various artistic media, including novels, comics, television and programs, that engage black-white mixed-race in order to critique standard cliché understanding of mixed-race and to show art as political change. She engages in a critique of mixed race studies in order to clear space for alternative, more politically complex understandings of mixed race. Importantly, Elam’s project counters the call of mixed race in scholarship and media that in effect support an overly individualistic, consumerist, and post-racial politics. See the Introduction and Chapter 2 for a discussion of mixed-race identity in comics.


In this original multifaceted study of aesthetics, Roelofs provides a multilayered aesthetic attuned to various modes of address, promises, and a web of historical, social, and cultural relations that discloses the important link between the aesthetic, politics and morality. From analyses of canonical figures in aesthetics such as Addison, Baumgarten, Kant and others, to interpretations of contemporary poetry, literature, artworks, and film, Roelofs shows how the aesthetic in its various modalities carries promises as well as threats but can serve as a ground for “aesthetic community formation.” This is a especially important discussion for a reframing of the aesthetic that is fully committed to the analysis of the question of difference. See Chapter 1 for an introduction to the project and Chapter 2 for an analysis of race as aesthetic production.


Taylor presents a comprehensive philosophy of black aesthetics, an aesthetics that is informed by assembly or gathering together of analyses, expressive objects, and practices aimed at the maintenance of black life-worlds. In addition to descriptive and normative claims regarding black aesthetics, Taylor includes comparative meta-aesthetic analyses that allow for an investigation of how black aesthetics provides new resources to analyze familiar questions in mainstream analytic aesthetics. He also appeals to phenomenology in order to show the relationship between aesthetic racialization and the lived experience of blackness. See Chapter 1 for an introduction to the project and Chapter 2 for a discussion of Black invisibility.


Davalos provides a critical examination of 50 years of Chicana/o art production in Los Angeles. Her analysis allows for a new reading of Chicana/o art that goes beyond traditional binaries such as political versus commercial, realist versus conceptual. She provides an important approach on the study of art that is not only based on artistic production but also on exhibits, curators, collectors and art critics.

**Exhibit Catalogue/Photography Book:**


II. PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE “SCIENCE” OF OTHERING

This module highlights readings that disclose photography’s connection with scientific projects given its evidentiary status as representing the truth of nature. These readings discuss the use of photography in support of projects aiming at typing and classifying humans, especially those considered deviant or those who were racially other. The first texts provide general historical analyses of the use of photography in scientific or pseudoscientific projects aimed at providing evidence for the inferiority of non-Europeans. The remaining texts analyze specific projects such as Louis Agassiz’s, that are clear examples of the collusion between photography and science for the purposes not of neutral classification of human types but of intentional, racist practices of creating “inferior” others.

READINGS FOR MODULE II:


In this classic piece, Edwards explains the importance of typing or the visual classification of features of racial groups in the field of anthropology, particularly in the 1860’s and early 1970’s.


Kemp provides a general and introductory discussion of the impact of photography in science, including anthropology and “pseudo-sciences” such as physiognomy and phrenology. He shows how photography’s rise coincided with the demand of emerging sciences for “neutral” representation. Kemp’s analysis is also attuned to various social, cultural, and historical practices informing the use of photography in the name of science.


Maxwell provides a historical survey of the use of photography for the purposes of supporting theories of eugenics. She also discusses the production of “counter images.” In particular see chapters 2 and 3 for an introduction of early photography and typing. See chapter 5 for a discussion of the eugenics movement in the U.S.

In this recent study, Morris-Reich provides an in-depth analysis of the use of photography in the construction of the category of race. He traces the historical development of racial photography in connection to scientific practices. Some of the issues raised include the epistemological status of photographic practices, the influence on photography in racial studies and prominent features and purposes of racial photography. See especially the first chapter for an explanation of key moments in the late 19th and early 20th century history of racial photography.


By taking Louis Agassiz’s slave daguerreotypes as a particularly important case to understand the relationship between the categories of race, science, photography, and the museum, Wallis presents a historically rich reading of Agassiz’s project as an early attempt to construct a coherent photographic archive based on a hierarchical ordering of subjects. He also notes the work of Carrie Mae Weems in recontextualizing the slave daguerreotypes.


Rogers presents a narrative history of Agassiz’s slave daguerreotypes that he ordered to illustrate the difference of Africans and thus support the theory of polygenesis or the view that each race originated and developed separately. An interesting but also controversial aspect of the text is Rogers’s construction of narratives of each of the subjects in the photographs in order to bring them to light. Rather than relying on historical documents she constructs a fictional narrative. Such a narrative can be critically assessed in order to raise questions not only about the use of photography in scientific practices undermining otherness but contemporary approaches to “give a voice” and to represent historically oppressed subjects.


Smith discusses Du Bois’s portraits of African Americans order to undermine racist biological assumptions of eugenicists at the turn of the century. In this analysis, Du Bois can be seen as appealing to class to contest scientific claims about race.


Schneider re-frames Agassiz’s slave daguerreotypes in order to show Agassiz’s homoerotic desire for the male black body. This problematizes Agassiz’s claims of neutral scientific interest in the subjects. She consequently shows the pornographic nature of the images and his erotic investment in them.

Poole provides an important discussion that ties scientific discourses and practices to the “visual economy” of representations of Andean peoples in the late 18th to early 20th centuries. Poole shows how photographic practices are implicated in the construction of the modern notion of racial difference. Through this analysis, she discloses the reorganization of vision in European society. See Chapters 1-3.

**Exhibit Catalogue/Photography Book:**


In conjunction with the exhibit *Hidden Witness* (Feb 28 to June 18 1995) Carrie Mae Weems was invited to produce her own installation, “From Here I Saw What Happened and I cried.” See her website: http://carriemaeweems.net/galleries/from-here.html

### III. THE PRODUCTION OF AESTHETIC IGNORANCE: NOT-KNOWING/SEEING OTHERS

After Charles Mills’ analysis of contract theory that showed how the Western liberal tradition has produced ignorance regarding racial others, there has been a growing field on the epistemology of ignorance, the view that recognizes how intentional and unintentional epistemic practices create ignorance regarding marginalized groups. This module presents some key texts on the epistemology of ignorance, followed by readings that illustrate how “aesthetic” ignorance is constructed via photographic representation while at the same time creating an official “archive” of these groups that is influenced by the “colonial” gaze. Finally, the module also presents readings on how photographic representation can be used to counter the dominant archive and how marginalized others have represented themselves.

**READINGS FOR MODULE III**


Influential discussion on the political workings of white supremacy, a system that has effectively denied freedom and equality to racialized subjects. Mill illustrates how the social contract is indeed a racial contract protecting white privilege and power.


In this collection, various philosophers analyze different ways in which ignorance regarding race is produced. They describe ignorance regarding race as an active production connected to domination. While this ignorance is used for the purposes of oppression, it can also be wielded for acts of resistance. In particular, see Section II, Theorizing ignorance that includes essays by noted philosophers Paul C. Taylor, Shannon Sullivan, Lucius T. Outlaw and Lorraine Code on topics such as race, colonial oppression, white ignorance and social ordering.

Smith discusses the way in which photographic archives changed the 19th century vision Americans had of themselves. She traces how scientific and commercial photography converged to constitute and transform racialized middle class 19th century American identity. See the introduction and Chapters One for analysis concerning race, as well as the Epilogue for a discussion on the archive.


In addition to considering the visible and present in the photograph, Smith analyzes the invisible and hidden or that which remains beyond the frame. Intentional and unintentional acts of covering subjects as well as historical and social circumstances are at the heart of her analysis. In particular see chapter One that discusses the question of race within the context of Barthes’s *Camera Lucida*. This text presents a great opportunity for the reader to understand how photographic content and processes produce various kinds of ignorance.


This important anthology presents analyses of photographic production and consumption by Europeans and Americas of colonized peoples in Asia, Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, Oceania, Australia and Hawaii. It shows the constructions of racial, cultural and geographic difference. A variety of photographic projects are discussed including scientific, anthropological methods, cartes-de-visite, tourist postcards, photograph albums, illustrated books and magazine advertisements.


Important collection of essays analyzing various aspects of the intersection between race and photography. The following essays in this collection are helpful in understanding different ways in which photographic technologies and practices create knowledge and ignorance about othered subjects. They also point to the way in which photography can be used to correct such knowledge and ignorance. See the following articles:


  Sekula calls for a practical, critical theory of photography. He discusses the contradictory role that photography had for the industrial bourgeoisie in that it served as a scientific medium and an art.

  o Mirzoeff, Nicholas. 2003 “The Shadow and the Substance, Race, Photography and the Index.”

  Mirzoeff discusses the photograph as a “prime locus” for the performance of the racialized index. Included in his analysis is the introduction of a “hooded archive” of lynching photographs. He also analyzes the way in which contemporary photographers of race such as Carrie Mae Weems attempt to problematize the indexicality of race.
Firstenberg, Lauri. 2003. “Autonomy and the Archive in America, Reexamining the Intersection of Photography and Stereotype.” Through an analysis of contemporary photographers that incorporate the photographic archive in order to undermine it or problematize it, Firstenberg introduces the possibility of postarchival photography.

Vercoe, Caroline. “Where Truth Ends and Fantasy Begins: Postcards from the South Pacific.” Vercoe’s analysis aims at showing how photographs taken by U.S. troops and war workers stationed in the Pacific mythologized “Paradise.” In particular, Vercoe discusses the “hula girl” or archetypal native that continue to be part of the American popular imagination.

Pinney, Christopher, and Peterson, Nicolas. 2003. Photography’s Other Histories. Durham: Duke University Press. Rather than concentrating on the familiar themes and characters of the history of photography, Pinney and Peterson present a collection of writings intended to broaden the scope of discussions related to the history of photography. The aim of the collection is to show “a radically different account of a globally disseminated and locally appropriated medium.” As such the essays aim to raise new questions regarding photographic practice, dissemination, and its use for self-fashioning. Practices of photography in the context of various cultures, including Australian aborigines and South American native peoples are discussed. All of the essays in this collection will be of interest for those concerned in aesthetic othering connected to the colonial gaze and ignorance, as well as to countervisuality.


Zamir, Shamoon. 2014. The Gift of the Face: Portraiture and Time in Edward S. Curtis’s the North American Indian. Chapel Hill: The University of North Caroline Press. Shammon analyzes the famous and controversial photographs of Native Americans by Edward S. Curtis published between 1907-1930. Having been accused of perpetuating “colonial violence” Curtis is a controversial figure. Shammon, however, re-reads the photographs and suggests that Native Americans should be understood as co-authors of the works, thus lessening the violence inflicted by Curtis’s photographs. This essay opens various possibilities for a critical reading of Curtis’s work but also of Shammon’s view on Curtis. See Chapters 1-3.

Exhibit Catalogue/Photography Book:

IV. PHOTOGRAPHY, POWER AND COUNTERVISUALITY

The photograph as well as the act of photographing wields power in various ways. The first part of this module presents influential readings of photography as complicit with power and violence against subjects. The second part of the module includes readings that illustrate “countervisuality,” different photographic practices aimed at resisting the injurious use photography.

READINGS FOR MODULE IV

Power

• Tagg, John. 1988. The Burden of Representation, Essays on Photographies and Histories. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Important analysis of how photographs have been employed by various institutions in order to exert power over citizens. Tagg shows how photography becomes implicated in practices of power and surveillance.


Influential essay in which Sontag defines photography in terms of its power to appropriate the world. Picture-taking is understood as an event complicit with violence.


Sontag revisits her early criticisms of photography and provides a moving analysis of photographs of atrocities. Such photographs are understood as either calls for peace or calls for revenge. Sontag asks us to let atrocious images “haunt” us so as to prompt us to react ethically to the events they portray.


Influential discussion of the shift that happens in visuality with the advent of photography and film. Benjamin points to the loss of the work’s aura or its originality and authenticity. In the new mode of perception, the subject and subjectivity are undermined.


While this text does not engage photographic representation, the first chapter offers an excellent example of the way that power can be exerted visually. Mirzoeff understands visuality as having various operations that include classification and naming of the visible, segregation of groups, and using the aesthetic in order to normalize authority, to make authority self-evident. This chapter explains the visual technologies deployed by slave owners in order to map space and impose authority over slaves.

Classic discussion of the advent of photography and institutional practices aimed at classifying and undermining difference. Such practices were implemental in the production of a colonized and colonizing visual archive.


Analysis of cartes-de-visite in the context of Venezuelan culture. González-Stephan points how such cartes were used, just like all over Europe, to illustrate the respectability of the higher classes. However, she also points to what is invisible in the cartes, the figures of the dark “others” taking care of the children. In this analysis González-Stephan reveals the racial and social anxieties of white colonized subjects.

**Counterviewuality**


Davis ponders on how she became “the Afro” given the numerous photographic representations of her wearing her hair natural. She questions how historical politics is conflated with contemporary fashion.


In this moving essay which is part of an anthology featuring intersectional, critical readings of photographic images by women of color, Akiko writes about the haunting experience of missing her grandfather who died a month later after the atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima. Her grandfather becomes the “ghost” of the photo taken on the day of her shrine visit for her newborn baby in 1972.


Blackwell analyzes an iconic photograph of a soldadera to explain how Chicanas used visual imagery to recast themselves within a masculinist Chicano Nationalist movement.

Through analyses of the photographs from the anti-lynching, Civil Rights and Black Power movement, Raiford brings to light the resistant possibilities of photography for these groups. Raiford, however, also discusses the problems and contradictions that arise in the use photographic media for liberatory movements. The complete text serves as an excellent illustration of countervisuality, although Chapter one on lynching can be highlighted.


In her continued quest to place photographic representations of Black Americans in the archive, Willis, along with Krauthamer, traces the numerous ways in which photographs of Blacks (from the 1850’s to the 1930’s) were received by Blacks and Whites. The project not only engages the connection between photography, slavery, and memory but also presents photographs of Black Americans as important historical documents.


Explains Frederick Douglass’s views on the use of photography for social and political change. Specifically, Dinius discusses Douglass’s understanding of daguerreotypes and how this understanding helped him elaborate a theory of personhood and democracy.


Gunckel discusses the central “photographic impulse” within the early Chicano/a art movement that served as inspiration to produce works across media and that reveal Chicano/a artistic production as both visual and social. He discusses alternative press, muralism, rasquachismo, and the Asco group.

**Exhibit Catalogue/Photography Book:**


V. RACE AS PHOTOGRAPHIC SPECTACLE

Readings in this module emphasize the reception of difference and otherness as spectacle. From theoretical observations of the rise of a society of the spectacle to analyses of lynching as spectacle, to contemporary instantiations of the spectacle of race, these readings show how photography has been and continues to support violent practices of “othering” by way of the commodification of the images of otherness as entertainment.

READINGS FOR MODULE V


Focusing on commodity fetishism and mass media, Debord’s highly influential text introduces the spectacle as a social relation mediated by images. Modern societal conditions of production and communication result in a false representation of reality.


Key collection of writings by hooks on race and the gaze. Essays such as “Eating the Other,” “Selling Hot Pussy..” and “The Oppositional Gaze” offer critical discussions on colonization, the visual, and racial otherness.


In this noted piece, Hall analyzes answers to the question as to why otherness is a compelling object of representation. He provides linguistic, anthropological, and psychoanalytic reasons. In addition, he discusses the notions of stereotyping and representational practices.


Along with Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Fusco did an interactive performance in which both lived in a cage for three days and presented themselves as “undiscovered Amerindians.” While documenting her experience of the performance and the viewers’ response, Fusco reveals the racist, colonialis gaz that is still very much part of the contemporary viewer.
Maxwell provides a wide-ranging analysis of how exhibits in various parts of the world, including the U.S, Australia, and New Zealand were key in constructing a European identity. She appeals to the postcolonial work of Franz Fanon and Homi Bhabha to support her analysis. In particular, see Chapter 2 that provides an analysis of the use of photographs of indigenous people in the rise of ethology and anthropology.


In this introduction to the relationship between science and aesthetics in the 18th century, Bindman provides a discussion of beauty as reflective of morality and thus a medium through which differentiate those “civilized” versus the non-civilized.


Raiford shows the interrelation between emerging systems of communication, photographic technological developments, the birth of consumer culture, and the fear of whites during the post-Emancipation period that led to the rise of lynching as a spectacle that could be represented and commodified through postcards. Raiford importantly points out that these lynching spectacles were meant to solidify white identity.


While most studies on lynching center on the lynching of African Americans in the South, artist Gonzales-Day introduces the reader to the little known and discussed fact that there were lynchings of Native Americans, Chinese, and Latinos of Mexican and Latin American descent in California. His aim is to provide an account of the trans-racial nature of lynching and to investigate the factors that have led to the erasure of these lynchings from national consciousness. He documents 350 such lynchings. Through the use of photographs, newspaper accounts, souvenir cards, postcards, sketches, and scrapbooks he wishes to capture the history of these lynchings and the “racial pleasure” they provided whites as they sought to solidify their national identity.


An analysis of visual representations of hurricane Katrina is provided with the aim of showing a contemporary example of how photography perpetuates the racial spectacle. Additionally, the visual is discussed as informed by a black and white binary that fails to do justice to U.S demographics.

Exhibit Catalogue/Photography Book:


VI. THE GAZE AND GENDER

The camera has often been described as having a “phallic gaze.” Readings in this module present the masculine and masculinist gaze of the camera, one that turns female bodies, in particular racialized female bodies, into erotic and exotic objects to be consumed. Readings in this module can be paired with those from module V on the spectacle and race, especially those pertaining to the ocular obsession with Sarah Baartman or the “Black Venus” who is a paradigmatic case of the workings of the colonialist, imperialist, masculinist gaze. The last readings in this module emphasize “the use of the visual in order to counter the masculinist gaze.

READINGS FOR MODULE VI


Influential psychoanalytical approach showing that images of women are constructed as objects for the pleasure of the male gaze. The framing of the image through the camera allows for this objectification. In the cinema viewers identify with the perspective of the male gaze.


In this interview, Sassatelli provides a historical reconstruction of Mulvey’s work and engages the notion of the “gendered scopic regime.”


Burgin presents an important discussion of the photographic “look” of the viewer that “roams” all over the image of a still photograph.


Williams offers a short meditation on a 1850’s daguerreotype of a nude woman of color that illustrates the dichotomous stance of the colonial gaze at the sight of the erotic woman of color. Such a meditation points to Williams’s own self-discovery.


Ringlero discusses the colonial erotic gaze by way of an analysis of photographs of Indian women.
Hobson engages in an analysis that questions the possibilities of black female beauty and that traces the violent gaze directed toward Black women. She thus revisits the treatment and reception of “Hottentot Venus.”


Important collection of essays on various facets of the treatment of Sarah Baartman that was mediated by an imperial, colonizing, and masculine gaze. Essays also discuss the influence of Sarah Baartman’s story in various Black artists and performers.


Willis and Williams provide a survey of art, poetry and writings about Baartman from 1810 to 1815.


Céspedes-Cortés and Taylor focus on a “somatic aesthetics” that centers on the female posterior by way of an analysis of the Cuban model Vida Guerra. In so doing, they engage important questions regarding the burden of looking, the promise of beauty, and the ethics behind the one who controls the gaze.


By discussing works by Iranian artist Soddy Shariff, Freeland discloses a journey of photographic self-exploration that counters the orientalist gaze.


Discussion of the work of Delilah Montoya’s portraiture that counters the dominant gaze. Montoya uses religious iconography and the 18th century casta painting tradition to reconfigure the archive.


Davidson analyzes the way in which Walker’s images, in particular images of the black female body, become a form of resistance. Moreover, she explains how these images are didactic in that they instruct viewers on how not to treat black bodies.

Exhibit Catalogue/Photography Book:


VII. QUEERING THE IMAGE AND MELANCHOLIA

READINGS FOR MODULE VII

The representation of sexual desire within photography has been dominated by the white gaze. Readings in this module illustrate the different ways in which the queer white gaze has played a role in representing desire. Analyses of queer of color desire are also provided. In addition, this module engages questions of queer melancholia and longing in both photographs of the body as well as of objects.


Important collection of readings on the intersection between photography and sexuality. See the following articles:

- Deitcher, David. “Looking at a Photograph, Looking for a history.”

Moving discussion in which Deitcher attempts to find a history of gay love when looking at an old photograph of two seated men.

- Smalls, James, “Public face, private thoughts: Fetish, Interracialism, and the homoerotic in Carl Van Vechten’s Photographs.”

  Discussion of Van Vechten’s photos of “fetish and fantasy” of Black bodies that, according to Smalls, point to ambivalent interracial relations.

- Durant, Mark Alice. “Lost (and found) in a Masquerade: The Photographs of Pierre Molinier.”

  Interpretation of Molinier’s photographs that centered androgyny, fetishism and autoeroticism. Durant looks at how Molinier’s work is informed by French Symbolism.

- Reid, Mark A. “Postnegritude Reappropriation and the Black Male Nude: The Photography of Rotimi Fani-Kayode.”

  Reid points out how Rotimi’s photographs that illustrate racial and sexual politics of identity portray the Black male body in his totality rather than as a fetishized object as portrayed by Mapplethorpe.

- Franklin, Paul B. “Orienting the Asian Male Body in the Photography of Yasumasa Morimura.”

  Franklin reads Morimura’s photography as a clear case of “queer-cut case of narcissistic homosexuality.” This reading can itself be critically assessed in terms of standard problematic characterizations of gays as narcissistic.

Yarbro-Bejarano discusses the photography of Laura Aguilar as introducing a Chicana lesbian aesthetic that problematizes standard readings of Chicana/o identity.


Important discussion of two “structures of feeling,” melancholia and ambivalence, which Muñoz interprets as being central in the life of queers of color. He analyzes Isaac Julien’s film *Looking for Langston* as a film of mourning. As opposed to the Freudian reading of melancholia as pathological, Muñoz theorizes melancholia as a means to reconstruct identity and to honor the so many queer of color whose lives are no longer.


Mapplethorpe’s photographs of male nudes serve as the main basis for Mercer’s analysis of ambivalence in the photograph, an ambivalence that arises due to the various contexts from which the viewer can access the image. Mercer also discusses the fetishism connected to the erotic visible difference of the black male.


Seitler looks at Carland’s and Opie’s photography in order to answer the difficult question, “Can aesthetics be queer?” To answer this question Setler surprisingly turns to Kant and follows his lead to focus on the formal organization of an artwork and its sensorial effects.


Cvetkovich aims at understanding the photographer’s role in the creation of counterarchives that themselves questions the very notion of the archive. To this end, she analyzes photography by Tammy Rae Carland and Zoe Leonard whose subject is objects that bring forth queer affectivity.


Important discussion of photography in Latin American with attention to gendered cultural production within specific Latin American socio-political contexts. Forster provides analyses that include how Graciela Iturbide queers gender (Ch. 8) and the homosocialism in photographs by Marcos López (Ch. 10). The entire text, however, provides a rich engagement with the Latin American Photographer’s keen photographic take on gender, sexuality in the context of difficult socio-political environments.
VIII. DECOLONIZING THE IMAGE

An important recent development within Latin American philosophy is the elaboration of a decolonial stance that questions the universalist claims in Western European thought. The readings in this module present a key reading on the decolonial project as well as readings that directly engage with ways of decolonizing images. Importantly, art critic Coco Fusco reminds us that we have to recognize the ways in which the very notion of “the other” has been homogenized in the U.S. context. It is thus key to realize the heterogeneity of ways in which the notion of the “other” as well as practices of “othering” work in transnational contexts.

READINGS FOR MODULE VIII


Key discussion that calls for an epistemic shift that foregrounds alternative epistemologies, economies, politics and ethics instead of the dominant, capitalist, colonialist European epistemology. Mignolo sees the need for a de-linking from what he considers the most fundamental belief in modernity, the belief in abstract universalism. He thus calls for “pluri-versality” or an entanglement of different cosmologies and epistemologies, away from the logic of coloniality connected to modernity.


Interview with noted decolonial theorist Walter Mignolo. Mignolo discusses various options available to artist who wish to produce decolonial work informed by alternative conceptions of sensory experience and epistemologies. Calls for the centrality of indigenous visions of creativity in quest for healing from the coloniality of power.
Vallega, Alejandro. 2011. “Displacements—Beyond the Coloniality of Images.” Research in Phenomenology 41: 206-227. Vallega discusses the image in its possibility for providing a sense of being. He foregrounds the difficulty of colonized consciousness being dependent on images that are not its own, for example the case of Latin America. By way of an analysis of work by Alfredo Jaar, Vallega shows the possibility of critically dismantling Eurocentric images.


In this intimate narrative regarding the relationship between her father and her, hooks also points to the centrality of the photograph for any theoretical discussion of the relationship of black life to the visual. In a decolonial move, here hooks “re-members,” puts together severed parts that link the present to the past as a way to reclaim life-affirming bonds.


Discussion of Tsinhnahjinnie’s contemporary photography of Native Americans in terms of its movement away from colonialisct representation. Doubt analyzes how the use of archival photography allows for visual sovereignty.


Fusco comments on what she sees as the strong impulse in the art world not to recognize the complexity and heterogeneity of difference of what is regarded as “other.” Otherness is simply understood as “most of the rest of the world,” without attunement to power relations that define otherness. She points out that colonial histories of the northern and southern halves of the Americas have led to different interpretations of otherness. She thus analyzes the work of three well-known Mexican photographers, Graciela Iturbide, Lourdes Grobet, and Yolanda Andrade, in which the race and gender are not separated from class. Their work addresses difference within the same culture but do not foreground ethnic and cultural otherness in the way that would be done in the U.S. This is a particularly important commentary for anyone interested in investigations of otherness.


Analysis of the photograph “Ixta Ponders Leverage Buyout” by Robert Buitrón. Rueda Esquivel points out the manner in which this photograph brings to light the viewer’s fantasies about Native American women, in particular the way in which the fantasy works within and outside a Mexican American context.


Analysis of photographic representations of Afro-Mexicans. The major question guiding the analysis is whether bodies of color can be represented without perpetuating racist, colonialisct desires. The work of Mexican photographer Maya Goded is analyzed.
Discussion of photography by contemporary Chicanas Laura Aguilar, Kathy Vargas, and Delilah Montoya in terms of the way in which they engage the notion or identity and its relationship to location. The analysis of space is informed by theoretical work by Lucy Lippard and Michel de Certeau.

**Exhibit Catalogue/Photography Book:**


**AUTHOR BIO**

Mariana Ortega is Professor of Philosophy at John Carroll University. She works on Phenomenology (Heidegger), Latina Feminisms, Woman of Color Feminisms, Philosophy of Race and Aesthetics. Her research focuses on questions of selfhood, sociality, identity, as well as visual representations of race, gender, and sexuality. She is co-editor with Linda Martin-Alcoff of *Constructing the Nation: A Race and Nationalism Reader* (SUNY, 2009). In *In-Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity, and the Self* (SUNY, 2016), she introduces the notion of multiplicitous, in-between selves in light of Latina feminisms and existential phenomenology. Her current research centers on photographic representations of queer Latinidad and the intersection between photography, race, exile, migration, and the epistemology of ignorance.

G. H. (French, active Paris, France 1870s - 1880s), Léon & Lévy (French), J. Kuhn (French, active Paris, France 1860s - 1870s), et al [Amateur World Tour Album, taken with a Kodak Bulls-Eye camera, plus purchased travel photographs by various photographers], 1880s - 1890s, Albumen silver print
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

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