

Workshop in Visual Ethnography

Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen, Germany
9-10 March 2017

by invitation only



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Overview

This workshop is an opportunity for participants to experiment with ways of seeing the social. It is aimed at researchers who are experienced in their own fields but who are new to doing visual ethnography. We will consider different approaches to visual ethnography with a focus on photography and film. Participants will undertake practical exercises and explore for themselves the challenges of doing visual ethnography. Whilst some of these challenges resonate with key concerns of all ethnographers - what to look *for* and what to look *at* – questions of *how* to look at as well as sense everyday life, and *how* to document as well as render spaces, things, events, interactions, and practices come to the fore for visual ethnographers. The workshop will be loosely structured to follow the interests and activities of participants but is intended to cover the following elements.

THURSDAY 9 MARCH

MORNING: 10am-1pm

- Introduction: what is visual ethnography?
- The practice of ethnography: seeing with and without the camera
- Active observation and incidental attention
- Looking *at* and looking *with*
- Making visual data
- Experiencing ourselves as seeing subjects
- Beyond words: seeing what can't be spoken
- An example: the embodied labour of fishmongers
- Going out into the field: using photography to explore the social



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11.15-11.30am Coffee break

1-1.50pm Lunch

AFTERNOON: 1.50-6pm

- Looking at what we see and seeing what we look at: participants present their images from the morning
- Seeing and feeling: atmosphere and affect at the edges of vision
- The significance of 'failed' images
- Immersion: using the visual to handle the sensory excess of being in the field
- Audio-visual combinations: the value of sound and silence
- An example: looking for rhythm (at a fish market)
- Going out into the field: using film to explore the social

4-4.15pm Coffee break

FRIDAY 10 MARCH

MORNING: 9am-12.30pm

- Participants present their images from the afternoon (yesterday)
- Representation and evocation: the vitality of the visual
- Making sense: the visual as a means of showing social life and as a tool for analysis
- Filming and editing as a 'creative-analytic process'
- An example: *The Passage of Fish*
- Visual ethnography: what is it good for?
- Conclusions: cultivating the ethnographer's 'skilled vision'

11-11.15am Coffee break

Equipment

Participants will need to bring a mobile phone which has a camera or a digital camera will be provided to take part in the activities. Please also bring anything you would need to upload your images to a computer!

Indicative readings

- Back, L (2007) *The Art of Listening*, Oxford: Berg.
- Back, I and N Puwar (eds) (2012) *Live Methods*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell/The Sociological Review.
- Bates, C (ed) (2015) *Video Methods, Social Science Research in Motion*, Abingdon: Routledge.
- Harper, D (2012) *Visual Sociology*, London: Routledge.
- Knowles, C and P Sweetman (eds.) (2004) *Picturing the Social Landscape*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Mitchell, C (2011) *Doing Visual Research*, London: Sage.
- Pink, S (2005) *The Future of Visual Anthropology: Engaging the Senses*, London: Routledge.
- Pink, S (ed) (2012) *Advances in Visual Sociology*, London: Sage.
- Pink, S (2014, 3rd edition) *Doing Visual Ethnography*, London: Sage.
- Pink, S (2015, 2nd edition) *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, London: Sage.

