

Panel 15

IVSA Conference 2009

Appreciating the views: How we're looking at the social and visual landscape

Panel Title	
Mapping the New Visual Landscapes	
Description	
<p>Technological innovations continue to expand previously uncharted and unexplored possibilities for data collection, analysis and dissemination in visual research. This panel will offer an attempt at mapping these new visual landscapes for social scientists, by focusing on the emergent opportunities for research available through advances in technology and its increasing accessibility. Researchers engaged in projects utilizing cell phone data collection, citizen journalists/bloggers, web 2.0 collaborations, 3D shared spaces, GPS, or other technology based platforms as well as scholars working with new software possibilities for archiving, organizing, and coding new forms of data would be especially appropriate for this panel. Presenters are encouraged to take a reflexive and considered approach to evaluating these evolving research strategies and their inherent ethical implications.</p>	
Panel Chair Name:	Tracy Xavia Karner, University of Houston
E-mail address:	txkarner@uh.edu

Final Selected Papers

Name:	Ann Kroon, Uppsala University
E-mail address:	ann.kroon@soc.uu.se
Paper Title	'Managua isn't dead – she's sleeping': A photographic examination of the social and material remains after the 1972 earthquake in Managua, Nicaragua
Description	<p>This paper is a presentation of an ongoing "photographic examination" (Suchar 2004) of Managua's old down-town, which was largely destroyed in the massive 1972 earthquake. The title above is my translation of the slogan "Managua no ha muerto - está durmiendo", which was introduced in an attempt to provoke a sense of hope and reconstruction after the earthquake. Due to many reasons, this reconstruction only took place very partially. Living in Nicaragua while carrying out my post-doctoral project, this work stems from my hobby of visually exploring the Managuan urban landscape as it has been created during the past three decades midst the ruins that still stand from the earthquake.</p> <p>Deploying Charles Suchar's methodological technique of "shooting scripts" (Suchar 1997), this work will use visual materials, self-created and archival, for enquiries into both the past and the present. Instead of doing a comparative analysis between two cities, as does Suchar, I will attempt to use his method in order to historically compare the Managua of today with the old Managua, as the city appears in e.g. old photos and postcards. Through sets of "now & then" photographs I am interested in visually examine the invisible, that which is no longer there, but nevertheless keeps on forming the perceptions of the city. I intend to create various sets of joint pictures of places "then" and "now", comparing old photos with newly taken pictures of the same location.</p> <p>Guiding research questions focus on the interlinking between now and then: How have visual representations of old and new Managua been used in various political and social contexts? How are the visual and material memories of the city long absent carried through and forming the city as we know it today? How does that which is no longer there keep on forming the collective identity of today's Managuans, both inside and outside of Nicaragua? How can material remnants after the earthquake of 1972 be visually "examined for patterns of social, political, economic and cultural meaning" (Suchar 2004:151)?</p>

Name:	Maciej Frąckowiak & Łukasz Rogowski, the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
E-mail address:	lukasz.rogowski@gmail.com
Paper Title	
The Invisible City – the concept and the possible directions of analysis	
Description	
<p>The basis of the presented project is the open visual data base, which is accessible via Internet (www.niewidzialnemiasto.pl, check the english version of the site). The photographs collected on the www archives were made by the groups of several researchers, such as: sociologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, who acted in the biggest Polish cities. The aim of our project is the visual documentation of what we have called The Invisible City. This term refers to an antynomy, which puts an emphasis – on the one hand – the perfect visibility of objects/ phenomena, which are being photographed – on the other – the fact, that during an everyday social praxis we rarely do perceive them in terms of civil activity, or significant for the city being processes. Invisible does not therefore mean unperceived, more likely - rarely seen in the non-habit perspective – outside the mainstream categories of planned, modern city, touristic and economic centre, as which in our daily routine we would like to see / think about / present. The Invisible City is adapting the space for personal (citizens’) needs, in example: meeting clubs arranged by them, in the near wood or in the yards of old tenement-houses; the gardens placed where institutionally it is not possible and planned, trampled paths, decorations of bloc balconies, hand-made advertisements or correction of inefficient institutions (patching wholes in streets with used tires or spontaneously created playground set up in spaces, which are not designed for it). Our presentation will be based upon the photographs (taken in Poznań, Poland) illustrating the chosen classification categories of the images in the data base.</p>	

Name:	Andriko J. Lozowy, University of Alberta
E-mail address:	alozowy@ualberta.ca
Paper Title	
Reading the Visual: Social Landscapes of Fort McMurray (Alberta, Canada).	
Description	
<p>Fort McMurray has hit the world stage in the last few years, most recently being marked by 'dirty oil.'</p> <p>Fort McMurray is a town that a few short years ago hosted a population under 20,000 - at peak (oil) production moments - this number reaches 100,000+. Under the ubiquitous provincial governance of Neo-Liberalism and (Post)Democracy Fort McMurray has experienced hyper-growth with a particular emphasis on mobile communities and transnational labor.</p> <p>My project is a specific case study, a kind of photo-voice (Digital SLR's) project that asks youth (14-18) to engage in the process of, and respond to questions of home, community, belonging/not-belonging. The purpose of the project is to employ a collaborative approach to youth leadership and empowerment within a space and place that first and foremost serves to facilitate the exploitation and extraction of the worlds largest mining and energy intensive energy extraction process.</p> <p>My presentation would give an account of the theoretical underpinnings of the project as well as speak to the iterative process and eventual outcome.</p>	

Name:	Pablo Hermansen & Roberto Fernandez, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile
E-mail address:	phermans@uc.cl / rfd@gmail.com
Paper Title	
Self-Representation at Public Space: Photographic Dimension of Collective Identity	
Description	
<p>In this paper we analyze three different photographic discourses, each of them representing one alternative way of collective identity construction: (1) the institutional representation of Santiago's downtown through photographs made available by the Government to facilitate the dissemination of Chile in the global media, (2) pictures of the Gay Parade as a public performance, and (3) photos taken at the ritual Mapuche commemoration of October 12th, the day Colon arrive our continent. Both, Mapuche and Gay demonstrations are realized in the same area of the city center than the institutional representation.</p> <p>The institutional images that represents the Public Space at Santiago Centro makes it look like a place with few people, aseptic, without conflicts. On the other hand, photographs of the demonstrations reviewed in this paper, show a different city, far from the institutional image: strongly populated, marked by everyday practices, and where the social conflict is the engine of life. In the institutional images and in the photos of the events in question, there are two ways of constructing an identity of who we are as a society.</p> <p>The public demonstrations discussed in this work, are commemorative events conducted by marginalized social sectors, such as homosexuals and Mapuches, in which they temporarily conquer the public space to present their demands and positions, and to affirm their own identity against themselves and rest of society. Delgado (2007) understands the commemorative events as "a kind of dramaturgic monument where a group assembled arrogates representing a human community victim of historic grievance that, because has not been repaired, requires remembered each year their situation. The participants evoke a wound inflicted, an unjust defeat, a chronic offence, but they don't present themselves only as a particular community, but as the epiphany of a public sector usually invisible in their identity and having something else in common that their claims" (Delgado, 2007, p. 171). Because they are visual representation of collectives' identities in the public space, both commemorative events defy the hegemony of the city's official photographic narrative.</p>	

Name:	Rory Crath, University of Toronto
E-mail address:	Rory.crath@utoronto.ca
Paper Title	
Awash in the Visual: the Aesthetic Regime of Social Work and the Potential of its Political Practice. Snapshots from the Field.	
Description	
<p>Stuart Hall, in his essay "The after-life of Frantz Fanon: Why Fanon? Why Now? Why Black Skin, White Masks" suggests a particularly insidious association between classificatory systems of racialised difference and the "scopic drive", a socially constructed, erotically charged means of visualizing otherness (Hall, 1996).</p> <p>Given Social Work's protracted involvement working with and within racialised communities, much of what the profession negotiates, practices and presents of itself is articulated within and through, or at least on the contours of, this scopic regime that Hall suggests. We might think then of the website designs that social service agencies employ to visualize their services. Or the advertisements that are created to solicit funds and to advocate for need; the fields of media representations that frame clients'/ workers'/ funders' bodies and identities and contribute to an understanding of social work practice with otherness. And finally, we may think of a somewhat recent trend to employ visual mediums (photovoice; video projects; poetry/creative writing exercises) as both a tool of advocacy and to retell the truths of our clients' difference and the environments in which they inhabit and lay claim to. In other words, the practice of social work is awash in the visual, and yet as a profession we lack the conceptual tools to think through the political implications and manifestations of what might be called our aesthetic practices.</p> <p>The proposed paper draws upon Jacques Ranciere's concepts of the aesthetic, politics and political subjectivity, and distribution of the sensible* to help map the visual terrain in which Social Work practices and might yet practice. Two youth video projects and an advertising campaign by a transnational service agency will serve as a type of case study for these explorations. Finally, and specifically, the context of exploration is the urban landscape.</p>	