

First RAI Photo Salon

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On December 8, 2016, the Photography Committee of the Royal Anthropological Institute convened its first Photo Salon. A meeting of minds for those interested in the intersections of anthropology and photography, a group of photographers and researchers (and photographer-researchers, and researcher-photographers) convened, with wine, to show images, and talk. Taking a Pecha Kucha format, each participant was asked to bring one image and speak for just three minutes. Below is a smattering, a smorgasbord, of some of the images that were presented, short statements by the researcher/photographers can be accessed by entering slide show mode.

We hope to hold the salon as a yearly event and also look forward to publishing some of these images in expanded essay forms in our online journal, [Anthropology and Photography](#). For enquiries, please contact [Haidy Geismar](#)



My research Media Temporality and the Persistence of Polaroid practice in the digital age looks into the current Polaroid revival and what does this say about media's temporality and obsolescence processes. By looking at the interaction between practitioners and digital platforms (social media, digital movements for saving formats and media recirculation platforms), I seek to address the notion technological progress and media's life span and propose a different possibility

while thinking about media's time. Also, I set up a blog to work as an outlet of my research project. In it, I write some thoughts and questions that arise from my fieldwork, so I will be really grateful if the link is also there: <https://analoguerecursion.com>. Andrea Lathrop, UCL Anthropology



I have been photographing in Spiti since 1993. I am currently interested in modified vernacular photography: painted or hand coloured black and white photographs, digital portraits pasted on to computer generated landscapes or montages of multiple portraits. On the left is a portrait of the current Lochen Tulku, spiritual head of Key monastery. Surrounding the central figure are the eighteen previous incarnations of this lineage reproduced from thangkas in the monastery. These images have been scanned in from Roberto Vitali and Tashi Tsering's black and white book on the history of Key monastery, where their reproduction in monochrome was probably a question of limited budget. But in this composite image, the monochrome introduces an extra sense of the historical. The upper right image is a colour enprint from Key monastery. It depicts a much younger Lochen Tulku with Kyabje Tsenshap Rinpoche, one of his gurus and the former debating partner and religious assistant to the Dalai Lama. Mounted on card, it is now cracked in two. A hand coloured, monochrome passport sized image of the 10th Panchen Lama, its surface also cracked, has been pasted on, montaged using pre-Photoshop technology. The lineages and monastic seats of the Panchen Lama and Lochen Tulku are intertwined. Geopolitics precluded their actual meeting, but in the photograph they have been brought together. On the lower right another image containing a photograph of the Lochen Tulku: It's a complex family portrait of Dorje Phuntsog with his son, taken from his house in Mud. Above them the late Dudjom Rinpoche, head of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) and again the Lochen Tulku. These are all layered on to a photograph of Kungri monastery. These modifications seem to express a local dissatisfaction with the limitations of straight photography: specifically its ability to articulate complex ideas about identity. They circumvent the restrictions of time and geo-political circumstance and allow for the manifestation of actual, perceived or proposed connections, genealogies and lineages. But I am a practitioner, a photographer, and my main interest is in making visual work. I am planning to experiment within this territory of manipulation. To return to Spiti taking a scanner, digital camera, portable colour printer and an archive of photographs: a kind of portable digital studio I will bring to the theatre performers I work with. I plan to make portraits in collaboration with them to discover what they choose to bring within the overall frame, where they place these disparate elements and how they articulate their rationale. Patrick Sutherland, School of Media, LCC.



The research *Photography and Social Life: An Ethnography of Chinese Amateur Photography Online* aims to develop an anthropological framework in studying material and visual culture through an ethnographic study of “British Rain”, an overseas Chinese amateur photographer group. Having once lived or still living abroad, most of its group members are economically related to China and are generally considered to be the next elite generation of the country. By studying the production (What cameras do they use? How do they organize a photographic event?), circulation (China-based Internet platforms, involving institutional studies based on a fieldwork in China) and consumption (Which sort of photographs do they prefer? Why?) of photography, as well as their photographic aesthetic strategies, this research attempts to provide academic insights for some different but overlapping anthropological categories: self-identification and conspicuous consumption, the “flow” of digital photographs and the elite imagination, cosmopolitanism and social stratification of China, and ‘kitsch’ aesthetic as a means of acquiring social embeddedness. Yunchang Yung, UCL



Fabiola Iuvaro, Research project based at the Department of Anthropology at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. fabiola.iuvaro@gmail.com
My research interest is based on Dr. William Crocker’s archive of photos and film about the Canela (Central Brazilian Indians). Crocker began field research with the Canela (Gê-speaking Indians who live in Maranhão state, Brazil), in 1957 and continued to do so intermittently until 2011 – a total of more than 50 years. Importantly, he extensively prepared and used documentation,

such as taking notes, tape recording, photographing and filming the Canela way of life. Today these data are housed at the Smithsonian Institution and form one of the biggest collections of South-American native people at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution (Washington D.C.).



In the Forsaken Garden Time is a Thief is a subtle insight into a couple's daily life in contemporary Romania. The story is made in a tension between past and present. In examining their struggle to absorb and cope with some of the traumatic political and social shifts of the last 50 years their relationship becomes an analogy for the disillusionment and dissatisfaction that marked these decades. The context, the environment that my parents are in and the history that they have been subjected to is really important and the challenge was to tell that story that is simultaneously personal but also general in relation with the social and political context. <http://www.andreinacu.ro/>.
Andrei Nacu

My intent in pursuing this project was to highlight and celebrate contemporary urban youth culture in an African city. Beginning from a subcultural standpoint, I wanted to explore the subcultural

creative workspace of Nairobi's Matatu industry, its overall creative output and its influence on local youth culture. I wanted to show and tell a different story of Africa; an Africa of creative, "cool" and enterprising young people who live by an ethos of "embracing their limitations, doing things their way and operating by their own rules". The Matatu have allowed for an integration where the old and the new merge to capture a unique and temporal moment in the community in which it is situated. Reflecting and refracting the very community it caters for. The various outcomes of the project can only act as access points that illuminate some elements, perspectives and representations of the Matatu industry and the subcultural creative workspace they inhabit." Odira Mo , Central St Martins www.matatuism.com



King Tawhiao II by John Mayall/Josiah Martin (subject to scholarly debate), c.1884; M?ori themed photomontage by Josiah Martin, 1889. © Trustees of the British Museum [Oc,B52.9; Oc,A18.33], CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Anonymous. (1894). 'The Tawhiao Tangi', The New Zealand Observer, XV(822), p.13. Courtesy of the National Library of New Zealand, out of copyright. My interdisciplinary research spans museum studies, anthropology and photography. It focuses on commercial colonial-era photographs of M?ori (indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand) in British museums. This includes these photographs' persistence in the British and NZ visual economies since the 1860s. I have followed their temporal cycles of reuse across different contexts, including albums, publications and exhibitions. This is illustrated by a portrait of King Tawhiao II (c.1822-1894), an important M?ori leader during the latter half of the nineteenth century (top left). This photograph has been widely remediated, including as a photomontage (top right) and lithographic newspaper illustration (bottom). Natasha Barrett, De Montfort University



Knitted Poppet with Photograph. © Sara Hannant. *Of Shadows: One Hundred Objects From The Museum Of Witchcraft and Magic* (2016) The pin that pierces the woman's face in the photograph suggests a desire to cause her harm. Possibly this intention is also invested in the knitted body. It is thought that knitting is like ancient knot magic where magical will or force can be invested into each stitch. In witchcraft, magic is practiced to bring about transformation and sometimes objects are made or charged with magical intent for this purpose. Similarly, the photographic process can transform objects, images and ideas that contribute to their meaning. While artist-in-residence at the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic in Cornwall, I became fascinated to explore how light and darkness define and articulate our relationship to enchantment and if this mechanism can be employed to suggest narrative and significance. Sarah Hannant, Photographer, www.sarahannant.com



This photo is copyright Toussele Jacques, licensed for academic non commercial use. It was scanned as part of a British Library Endangered Archives Project eap.bl.uk/database/results.a4d?projID=EAP054 The archive contains several other images of the man depicted here who is well known in the place where it was taken. Although the damage to the negative is considerable and is sufficient to make it unusable for face recognition (so the damage is functionally equivalent to pixelation) it is still possible for a knowing eye to recognise who it is. I think this poses challenges to ethics codes and simplistic /automatable regimes of anonymisation, David Zeitlyn, Oxford University

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