

Survey Style: Landscape photography across the globe

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In the second half of the 19th century, photographic processes and the popularity of landscape representations evolved simultaneously. It is, therefore, not surprising that a shared pictorial language used for topographical views developed during this time period. Such practices not only shaped Euro-American territorial expansion, but also legitimated non-Western politics in the name of (proto-)national identity (Kelsey, 2007). As an international photographic survey movement, this trend gestured in many directions. It visualised the 19th-century desire to control, own, map, as well as render and reproduce, both the diversity and familiarity of the landscape (Edwards, 2012). Recent scholarship has treated survey images as cultural 'portraits', which embody political ideologies and act as agents of power (Smith, 2009; Mitchell 1994). In light of recent debates regarding travel bans, the tenets of citizenship and migration, and the context, content and collection of such projects warrants renewed attention, especially their status as relics of the colonial enterprise.

This session seeks to expand the field of landscape photography and understand how the temporal and historical dynamics of place materialise through survey documentation. How do photographic conceptualisations of landscape from different locations relate to one another? By what means were scientific discourses on geography and anthropology entwined with imperialist ideologies, and in what ways do they manifest in photographs, exhibitions and archives? How do land surveys relate to conventions of portraiture, and fashion both individual and collective selfhood? Panelists will offer a fresh approach to the material, applying transnational methodologies to landscape photography from across the globe.

Speakers and Abstracts

Antiquarian Imaginations: Photography and cultural nationalism in Thomas Johnson Westropp surveys of Ireland

Justin Carville (Art and Creative Technologies, IADT, Dun Laoghaire)

In the reception foyer of the Burren Centre in County Clare, is a display case exhibiting the original camera owned by the Irish antiquarian Thomas Johnson Westropp (1860–1922). Described in the exhibit as the 'father of Irish Archaeology', Westropp's career as an antiquarian is well established in Irish cultural history. However, the significance of his relationship to the photographic documentation of Ireland's cultural heritage remains underexplored as a dimension to his celebrated association with survey culture in Ireland. Influenced by Lord Dunraven's illustrated two-volume *Notes on Irish Architecture* (1875), which contained over 100 albumen prints taken by William Mercer, Westropp took photographs during his first excursion to the Aran Islands in 1878 in addition to drawings taken with what he called a 'a small sketching camera'. Examining Westropp's establishment of the first institutional survey of Irish Archaeology and Antiquaries under the auspices of the Royal Society of Irish Antiquaries, this paper explores Westropp's photographic survey through what it identifies as the Antiquarian imaginations (a discursive practice of temporalising and spatialising landscape) of Irish cultural nationalism. Discussing Westropp's vast personal contribution to the photographic survey established under the auspices of the Royal Society of Irish Antiquities, the paper argues that the antiquarian imagination mobilised photography to envision historical topographies which projected emerging sentiments of Anglo-Irish cultural nationalism as bound to the cultural heritage of a Celtic past scattered across the landscape.

Survey Photography as International ‘Best Practice’ and the Continuation of Colonial Territorial Politics in the Southern Cone

Matthias Pfaller (Folkwang Universität der Künste, Essen, Germany)

Photographic surveys play an important role in the exploration of South America in the 19th century. Not only science, but also the recently independent nation states profited from its capacity to claim sovereignty and create history. Yet, I argue, these surveys were in a first instance directed towards an international rather than local audience, and followed the colonial logic of the time.

In the Cordillera of the Andes Boundary Case of 1898–1902, Chile and Argentina re-negotiated their southern border, which was previously determined to be both the Pacific/Atlantic watershed and the line of highest elevations. Since in Patagonia these lines diverge considerably, they brought their case to the English king for arbitration instead of going to war. (International) scientists from both sides compiled reports, maps, and first-time photographs of these regions, providing proof for each country’s interpretation of the border. The English judges of this case based their decisions on their own value system, which meant Chile and Argentina having to adjust their argumentation accordingly, i.e. for the eyes of a coloniser. The results are images made in ‘best practice’ with internationally intelligible aesthetics. They depict waterways, fertile plains, and white/criollo settlements or, in short, the maximum potential for exploitation, rather than pure geographical facts.

Based on the thesis that photography begins in 1492 with the rise of imperialism (Azolay, 2018), this paper investigates photography as a continuation of colonial territorial politics and discusses the international audience these photographs were made for, and demanded by in the first place.

A Great Future Destined or Beckoned? Legacies of nationhood and settlement in Canadian survey photographs

Elizabeth Anne Cavaliere (Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec)

In the conclusion to his 1873 publication *Ocean to Ocean: Sanford Fleming’s Expedition through Canada in 1872*, George Monroe Grant writes: ‘A great future beckons us as a people onward. To reach it, God grant to us purity and faith, deliverance from the lust of personal aggrandisement, unity, and invincible steadfastness of purpose.’ *Ocean to Ocean*, which was widely circulated and quickly re-edited, is a polished version of Grant’s diary and notes, kept while on expedition with Sir Sanford Fleming during his trip to the Peace River region of British Columbia, Canada, and contains reproductions of 11 photographs by Charles Horetzky. The survey’s purpose was to gather information in preparation for the selection of a route for the Canadian Pacific Railway, soon to be Canada’s first transcontinental railroad. This paper examines the changing uses and readings of Horetzky’s photographs – from the original contexts of their production under the pretence of science, to their inclusion and circulation in *Ocean to Ocean*, and lastly to their current archival and musicological circulations. In doing so, this paper proposes a distinctiveness in Canadian attitudes towards settlement in the face of more prevailing attitudes of American Manifest Destiny as the photographs were made to express the expansionist outlooks of both Fleming and Grant. By tracing the changes made to the photographs, this paper will engage with photography as a tool for settlement and its enduring role in the shaping and challenging perceptions and attitudes towards the Canadian West.

A Woman’s Archive? Preserving ruins in the Mediterranean then and now

Martina Caruso (Art, Architecture and the Creative Industries at the British School at Rome)

In this presentation, I examine survey photography conducted by women in the Mediterranean from the late 1800s to the early 1900s in relation to contemporary art practices in similar landscapes. Looking at the intersection of patriarchy and colonialism, I ask what role did the (very few) women who led their own surveys play within the imperialist project? And how do these photographs relate to contemporary photography and video works of Mediterranean landscapes?

The link between colonialism and landscape photography, first made by W.J.T. Mitchell in *Landscape and Power* (1994), has since grown with the expanding field of postcolonial studies. Generally associated with ideas of empire-building, patriarchy and military power as well as 'soft power' in the form of disciplines such as archaeology, geography or anthropology, the role of women within this scenario tends to be understudied.

I examine the work of three women: that of pioneering American photo-archaeologist Esther Van Deman, who photographed in Algeria, Greece, France Italy, Malta and Tunisia, and that of the less well-known British Bulwer sisters, Dora and Agnes, who took photographs in France, Greece, Italy and Malta. Are there points of contact between their different missions and photographic visions? How has their work been studied so far? And what connection do contemporary works such as Jananne Al-Ani's video and photographic series *Shadowsites II* (2011), Mariele Neudecker's video *The Land of the Dead* (2001) and Ursula Schulz-Dornburg's photographic series *Palmyra. Necropolis* (2010) bear in relation to the colonial legacy of survey photography?