

window of cultural convergence for Navajo women working in healthcare and education. Traditional matriarchal Navajo society connects women's lives in many ways. But the bi-cultural window is a small portal that admits only a few dimensions of Yolanda and Dorey's life together in the interstices of a grinding cultural interface.

Thus *Sun Kissed* provides respectful and nuanced insights into the complexity of modern Navajo lives in marriages, households, schools, religions, generations, traditional culture, cross-cultural contexts, and even across history. It is beautifully shot and well edited, letting the story and themes emerge seamlessly, honouring all the voices. Maya Stark and Adi Lavy are next in line for major awards.

Pedagogical uses of *Sun Kissed* are both challenging and potentially rewarding for teachers and students. For the past 25 years I have taught college students about child development in the Navajo Nation, drawing upon organised educational exchanges with Navajo colleagues and my own work as program evaluator and consultant for STAR School (starschool.org), serving Navajo families in northern AZ. Two print sources (e.g., Alvord and Van Pelt 1999; Chisholm 1996) have been especially valuable cultural bridges for my students.

Even with such systematic cultural preparation, my current students at first found *Sun Kissed* difficult to discuss. The emotional power and complexity of this film can overwhelm reflective and analytic thought. My students could not discuss the film immediately after our viewing, instead sitting in stunned silence as they pieced together the elements of the film and their experiences of them. I adjourned class. Two days later the students were surprisingly animated and nuanced in their inquiries and analyses of *Sun Kissed*. They considered various perspectives on episodes, issues, and people, and integrated the film with their other Navajo sources, enriching our shared understanding of the complex cultural dimensions of child development.

## REFERENCES

- Alvord, L., and E. Van Pelt. 1999. *The Scalpel and the Silver Bear*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Chisholm, J. 1996. "Learning 'Respect for Everything': Navajo Images of Development." In *Images of Childhood*, edited by C. Hwang, M. Lamb, and I. Sigel, 167–183. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

## *Images in spite of all: Four photographs from Auschwitz*

by Georges Didi-Huberman, translated by Shane B. Lillis  
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008, 232 pages  
ISBN: 9-780-2261-4817-5; ISBN-10: 0-226-14817-3  
(paperback) Price: \$20.00

Reviewed by Mafalda Dâmaso, Goldsmiths, University of London

*Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz* is a two-part book. It begins with a text that was published in 2001 in the context of 'Photographies des camps de concentration et d'extermination Nazi (1933–1999)', Paris – an exhibition of photographs of the concentration camps. In it, the author engages thoroughly with four photographs taken in clandestine circumstances by an Auschwitz prisoner in 1943–1944 (the only surviving images representing the process of mass killing) and discusses them as an act of resistance. In the second part of the book, Didi-Huberman responds in detail to the criticism by Gérard Wajcman and Elisabeth Pagnoux, among others, that followed the initial publication of the text.

Central to this book is the author's highly pertinent suggestion that rather than focusing on how images might fail us, one should pay attention to what they reveal. Indeed, instead of evaluating the photographs as historical evidence, the art historian and curator stresses their singularity and proposes to view them as a form of testimony. This idea is associated with the refutation of Auschwitz as unthinkable or unsayable, which Didi-Huberman shares with Hannah Arendt and Primo Levi, respectively. In this context, the author suggests an innovative methodology of engagement with the visual that takes into account what he refers to as the 'dual system of all images' (32). Composed of fragments of truth and of obscurity, images are in a 'lacunary relation to the truth to which they bear witness' (32) and demand a combination of formal and phenomenological approaches in their analysis.

This interesting attitude is further detailed in Didi-Huberman's response to his critics. The author writes that the sceptical denial of the pertinence of the four photographs results from 'a dual intellectual operation' that 'makes the real absolute ... in order to better claim it' and then 'makes the image absolute ... to better revoke it' (59). On the contrary, drawing from Lacanian theory, he stresses that images are neither 'absolute speech' (91) nor 'pure silence' (104); they 'tell in spite of all that which is impossible to tell entirely' (105). The result is an unequivocal opposition to viewing images as mere illustrations of broader arguments or theories. Instead, they successfully

emerge in this book as an alternative point of departure to an historical inquiry into the Holocaust, which can undoubtedly be extended to other topics and disciplines.

Combining a meticulous, generous engagement with the four photographs with an extensive discussion connecting ongoing debates in the fields of philosophy, visual cultures, Holocaust studies and others, *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz* is a fundamental contribution to the existing literature on the ethics and the politics of the image. Furthermore, the book moves the discussion away from the alleged flaws of images and toward the complex ways in which they work, thereby exemplifying how a focus on the visual may allow for a reframing of seemingly unresolvable dualisms and paradoxes. The result is a tour de force that will interest all scholars dealing with complex, elusive, challenging visual documents.

© 2013 Mafalda Dâmaso  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1472586X.2013.830011>

***Visuality/materiality: Images, objects and practices***

edited by Gillian Rose and Divya P. Tolia-Kelly  
 Farnham: Ashgate, 2012, 195 pages  
 ISBN: 9-781-4094-1222-9 (hardback) Price: £55.00  
 Reviewed by Penelope Pitt, Deakin University

The cover image of *Visuality/Materiality* is striking. An enlarged QR code in white and navy sits atop a paler blue background, giving the appearance of a digital patchwork quilt square. The enlargement of the QR code to many times its original size invites the viewer to take in the complexity of detail in a digital pattern that would usually be overlooked in a phone user's rush to scan the QR code and connect to a website. This is a very fitting cover image for a book which explores the interrelationship of visuality and materiality.

*Visuality/Materiality* is a collection of essays edited by cultural geographers Gillian Rose and Divya P. Tolia-Kelly who in the opening chapter introduce visuality/materiality as a 'manifesto for practice' (1) and as a conceptual framework for carrying out research at the intersection of the visual and the material. In their previous work, Rose and Tolia-Kelly have each traversed this intersection; Rose (2010) in her research of what women do with their family photographs, and Tolia-Kelly (2010) in her research involving the material and visual cultures of South Asian migrant women in Britain.

With this book, Rose and Tolia-Kelly join forces to argue in favour of understanding the visual and the

material as 'in continual dialogue and co-constitution' (4) rather than as separate fields of research. They mark out a space for work that embraces a move beyond the disciplinary boundaries and intellectual limits of visual culture or material culture respectively. They argue in favour of 'not thinking "visuality" as simply observation, nor considering the "material" purely as solid matter' (4).

The nine chapters following the editors' manifesto report on an eclectic assortment of empirical studies that reflect the interdisciplinary ethos of visuality/materiality as research approach and practice. The authors' work spans diverse fields including architecture, cultural studies, sociology, geography, art history, and media studies. Rose and Tolia-Kelly state that these nine essays have been included because they explore the interrelationship between materiality and visuality, and further comment that each chapter involves 'research practices which ... hav[e] at their heart political integrity and innovation' (3). Key themes explored are consumption, translation, practice and ethics.

The visuality/materiality approach is realised in the chapters through a rich variety of practices, images, materials. For example, in Chapter 8, Jacobs, Cairns and Strebel materialise vision through a focus on the active seeing happening around the site of the windows of a high-rise housing development. This chapter includes photographs and sketches, and other chapters incorporate black and white reproductions of images such as oil paintings, speculative and representational drawings, photographs of installation art, advertisements and Google images of large structures, and focus on a variety of materials including aluminium, algae, walls and steel.

The chapters that are most ground-breaking are those in which examination of the multi-layered entanglement of the visual and the material combines with sharp political engagement. A compelling example is Mimi Sheller's sophisticated chapter on the history of aluminium which takes in aluminium's modes of visualisation, the interrelation of visual and political economies, its production through mining and its consumption. Sheller details how a mobile modern USA and a backward Caribbean are co-constituted through the continuation and 'redeployment of colonial visual tropes ... within a modernizing material culture' (13), and how modernity is being reinvented through the Caribbean people's creative reconfiguring of these visualities and materialities.

Whilst an engagement with ethical practice runs throughout the book, the final two chapters in particular provide a welcome contribution in