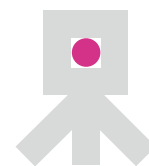


PhotoResearcher



ESHP European Society for the History of Photography

Photographs in Motion. Circulating Images of Asia around 1900

Guest Editor: Sophie Junge



- 6 Eva Ehninger
Group Formation. Queen Victoria in India

- 19 Natasha Eaton
**Camera Indentica.
Photographic Rattan and Vagabondage
in Nineteenth-Century Mauritius**

- 33 Stella Jungmann
**Imaging Japan in Illustrated Newspapers:
The Role of Photography in Visualizing the
Japanese Embassy in the United States, 1860**

- 48 Sophie Junge
**Old Soerabaja – New Soerabaja?
Circulating the Emptiness of the Colonial City**

- 63 Jung Joon Lee
**Traveling Images, Traveling Bodies:
Korean War Orphans in Hollywood
and the Rhetoric of Interracial Adoption**

- 78 Taous R. Dahmani
**Bharti Parmar's *True Stories*:
Against the grain of Sir Benjamin Stone's
Photographic Collection**

- 96 Sean Willcock
**The Aesthetics of the Negative:
Orientalist Portraiture in the Digitised
Collodion Plates of John Thomson (1837-1921)**

Editorial

Because the analysis of circulation constantly and necessarily exceeds the description of material, spatial movements, or transmissions of singular images, circulation stands to become, ultimately, another name for history.¹



Figure 1
Picture postcard Soerabaja. *Chinesche Kerk*,
after 1913, half-tone reproduction,
published by H. van Ingen, Soerabaja.
Private collection.

Each and every photograph undertakes a journey during its lifetime; it leaves the place it was created in, is reproduced or digitised, retouched, cut or given a caption. As objects and representations, photographs circulate through various times, spaces and media. As individual images, collected in albums, printed on postcards or in travel guides, they reached a broad audience in the years around and after 1900 (fig. 1). They continue to circulate today in exhibitions, archives and publications; they have left their mark on our perception of the former colonies of India and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) and created an image of the relationship between the USA and Japan, and the USA and Korea. This number of *PhotoResearcher* investigates the complex travels made by photographs from India and Indonesia, from Japan and Korea.

However, the geographical and historical limitation of this volume can only be regarded as the largest common denominator: Circulating images cannot be limited to the border demarcations of colonial empires and nation states. Their production, representation and reception are, much more, characterized by transnational networks. The temporal focus on the period around 1900 is also a loose one. Although the turn of the century was characterized by the wide use of photo-mechanical printing processes such as collotype and half-tone printing that resulted in a massive increase in image production in Europe, the USA and Asia, the circulation of photographs cannot be limited in terms of time – it continues to this day. Correspondingly, the contributions presented here investigate their political and historical significance from the 19th into the 21st century.

The mobility of images represents a challenge facing research into photographs as they leave the safe ground of academic art history, blur canonical qualities such as authorship, originality and singularity, go beyond the scope of the original production context and question the self-referential significance of the art work. Instead, as François Brunet formulated in contrast to the autonomous concept of modernist art history, the circulation of photographs

1. François Brunet, 'Introduction. No Representation without Circulation', in: François Brunet (ed.), *Circulation*. Terra Foundation Essays, vol. 3, Chicago 2017, 10-39, here 37.



Figure 2
Alexander Gardner and Mathew B. Brady,
*Member of the First Japanese Diplomatic Mission to
the United States (Naruse Gensiru)*, about 1860,
salted paper print, 41.3 × 28.1 cm. The J. Paul
Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

focuses on their historicity and social biography as material object.² According to Geoffrey Batchen when he made his case for the relevance of photographic reproductions, their movement creates complex relationships between “real and copy, here and there, us and them, time and space.”³

Circulation therefore stands for the simultaneity of images, the mobility of their significances and contexts. Present-day research regards it as a critical category of analysis: the most recent example is the volume *Circulation* that François Brunet edited for the Terra Foundation in 2017. In the introduction, Brunet questions the relevance of internationally travelling images “for making American art by circulation.”⁴ Patricia Spyer and Mary Margaret Steedly also set out in search of the “place of images that move” and ask which conflicts arise when images come into movement both physically and conceptually.⁵ Thy Phu and Matthew Brower dealt with the fluidity of significance in their editorial for *History of Photography* in 2008 when they challenged “the primacy of photography’s original context or [on] the primacy of artistic agency when determining the meaning of images.”⁶

This volume also creates a connection between the circulation of photographic images and their “visual economies” and focuses on the materials and media, the national and professional contexts, that are responsible for the production, representation and consumption of images (fig. 2).⁷ The seven micro-historical contributions present the mobility of images from and to India and Indonesia, Japan and Korea, in the context of colonial and power constellations dominated by the west, and provide a wide methodical exploration of circulation. Reproductions, translations and reinterpretations of photographs in various media and publication contexts – combined with other images, decorations or texts, retouched, coloured or mounted – stand in the centre of this publication. Following the images’ journeys across media contexts proves how their meaning can be formalized icon-like over the years or remain permanently negotiable.⁸

Eva Ehniger traces the geographic and medial journey made by a portrait photograph of Queen Victoria from the year 1877 that, as a *carte-de-visite*, acted as the model for a bronze sculpture of the Empress of India in Kolkata (completed in 1920) and also circulated between the metropolis and colony in an album published by the Poona Photography Company. Depending on the context, the Queen was presented as an “icon of motherly love and moral stability” in Great Britain or as a symbol of power and the continuation of the Empire in India. In its album, the Indian photographic studio combines the royal portrait with those of Indian

2. Brunet 2017 (reference 1), 14.

3. Geoffrey Batchen, ‘Double Displacement. Photography and Dissemination’, in: Thierry Gervais (ed.), *The ‘Public’ Life of Images*, Cambridge 2016, 51-85, here 76.

4. Brunet 2017 (reference 1), 31.

5. Patricia Spyer, Mary Margaret Steedly, ‘Introduction. Images that Move’, in: Patricia Spyer, Mary Margaret Steedly (eds.), *Images That Move*, Santa Fe 2013, 3-39, here, 6-8, 15.

6. Thy Phu, Matthew Brower, ‘Editorial’, in: *History of Photography*, vol. 32/2, Summer 2008, 105-109, here 105.

7. Brunet 2017 (reference 1), 34. Deborah Poole describes “visual economies” as the organization of people, ideas and objects comprised of the production, circulation and consumption of images. Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity. A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*, Princeton 1997, 8-10.

8. Brian Larkin, ‘Making Equivalence Happen. Commensuration and the Architecture of Circulation’, in: Patricia Spyer, Mary Margaret Steedly (eds.), *Images That Move*, Santa Fe 2013, 237-256, here 238-241.

and European individuals that are all printed at an equal distance from the image of the monarch in its central position. Ehniger reveals how this depiction dissolves colonial hierarchies in the image and can be interpreted as a destabilization of the colonial power relationships on the page of the album.

Natasha Eaton sets out in search of photographs from Aapravasi Ghat, in Port Louis, Mauritius. In the 19th century, Aapravasi Ghat was an immigration depot that marked a crossing point for manpower from Africa, Asia, Australia and South America. In her literary essay, Eaton follows the thesis that the photographs of the workers in Aapravasi Ghat challenge the idea of the civil contract of photography (Azoulay) and the studio as a chamber of dreams (Pinney). Photographs of old immigrants were often taken under compulsion and could put the photographed workers in danger of being convicted or fined. She approaches her complex object of study with an associative style of writing to fully unfold the photographic representation's power to mark, blur or punish identities.

Sophie Junge devotes herself to the continued use of photographs in the context of the colony of the Dutch East Indies (today, Indonesia). She shows how the reproduction of photographic views of Soerabaja from the years around 1900 determined the city's place-image for decades. The circulation of these unchanging – seemingly empty – pictures erased the local population and blanketed the political present of the period around 1930 with its multitude of conflicts. In this way, the photographs became invested with political significance as the never-changing representation blocked all other, non-western, views of the contemporary city in order to preserve the status quo of the late-colonial power relations.⁹

The combination of image and text is of central importance for the essay by **Stella Jungmann**. She investigates the American press reports on the visit of a Japanese delegation to Washington D.C. in the year 1860 and concentrates on the medial translation of individual photographs to montages that were described and printed in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* as wood engravings. These image-text representations show the Japanese guests, their clothing and presents, as well as their encounters with American politicians and the photographer Mathew Brady who prepared the portrait photographs of the delegation. The depiction of the photographic act not only provided the American public with an idea of Japan, but served principally for the self-presentation of the USA as a technologically-advanced and globally-linked nation.

9. The circulation of images is always connected with the rejection of other images. See, Brunet 2017 (reference 1) and Larkin 2013 (reference 8), 241.



Figure 3

(...) Dressed in typical Korean clothing, two youngsters stand together on the open field and watch the warm-up of the Army helicopter that was used for communication and transportation between the location site and near-by Fort Huachaus [sic], 1956, gelatin silver print. Photograph No. PS-57-4811; Record Group 306; National Archives at College Park, MD.

The contributions by Taous R. Dahmani and Jung Joon Lee deal with the “afterlife” of historical photographs in archives where they “continue to ‘perform’ and ‘provoke.’”¹⁰ The two authoresses deconstruct supposedly objective categorizations and the privilege of interpretation associated with national archives. **Taous R. Dahmani** probes the artistic reorganization of picture holdings from the Birmingham Central Library. She describes the appropriation of the anthropological photographs from the collection of Sir Benjamin Stone (1838–1914) by the Anglo-Indian artist Bharti Parmar (born 1966). In her text-image series from 2005, *True Stories*, Parmar makes Stone’s historical photographs her own: She subjectivizes the supposedly objective pictures, explains them with captions and positions them in new theoretical and material contexts. Parmar creates a critical decolonization of the colonial picture archive through the circulation of this historical photo material.

Jung Joon Lee focuses on photographs of Korean war orphans that were shot in the USA on the set of the Hollywood picture *Battle Hymn* (1957). They acted as promotional pictures for the film that tells of the glorious rescue of Korean children by American soldiers during the Korea War. The “real-life orphans” needed for the film were flown in from Korea to play themselves (fig. 3). While it is no longer possible to reconstruct the traces of their journey after the production of the film, the photographs can still be found in the National Archives today. They are stored there together with photographs of Korean War orphans taken by American military photographers during and after the war. Both the military documentation and the fictional film images were used in the 1950s and ‘60s to promote interracial adoption in the USA and propagate the USA’s image of itself as a “global family” combatting the Communist threat in the Cold War.

Finally, **Sean Willcock** deals with the reception of the historical photographs taken in Asia by John Thomson (1837–1921): Proceeding from the exhibition *Through the Lens of John Thomson* (touring since 2009), his contribution follows the question of whether “Orientalist images” always (have to) remain linked to the ideologies of Imperialism. In the show Thomson’s glass negatives are presented as new digital prints. These are not merely reproductions of the historical negatives as the digital positives show more than the illustration Thomson used for his publications: While the photographic prints with his text and captions were defined by their anthropological message, the digital positives in the exhibition show us something of the situation in the photo studio and bring the encounter between Thomson and the Chinese protagonists into the foreground. Precisely the aestheticizing presentation of Thomson’s Orientalist images in the exhibition is capable of opening up ideologically constricted interpretations and awarding the illustrated “others” more agency.

10. Liam Buckley, ‘Objects of Love and Decay. Colonial Photographs in a Postcolonial Archive’, in: *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 20/2, 2005, 249-270, here 249-250.

In all of the contributions to this number of *PhotoResearcher*, circulation is clearly shown to be a productive category for photographic history. The movement of photographs across borders ultimately also leads to a transnational perspective on the former colonies of India and the Dutch East Indies and the complex relationship between the USA and Korea, as well as Japan, in the 19th and 20th centuries. As a collection of essays, this number makes a relevant contribution to the transnational and transcultural research approaches of New Imperial History: The mobility of photographs brought together here confirms the pleas being made to rethink European colonialism in a way that is not limited to the relationship between the colony and metropolis, and which can hardly be differentiated nationally with regard to its ideologies and practices.¹¹

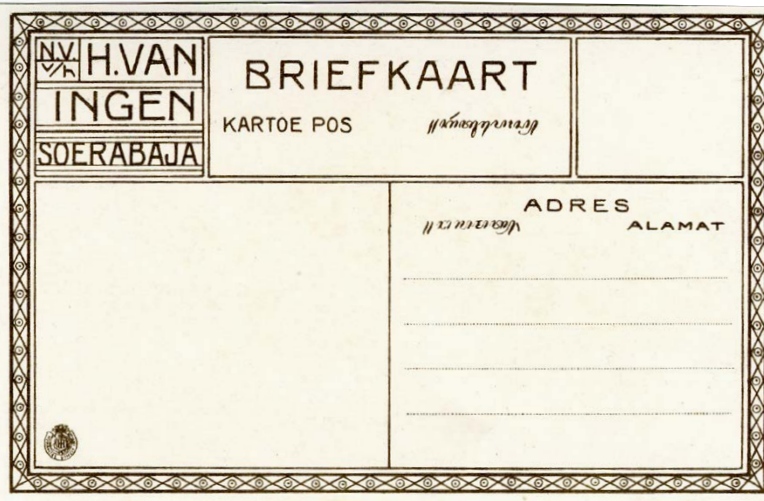


Figure 4
Picture postcard (backside) Soerabaja.
Chineesche Kerk, after 1913, half-tone
reproduction, published by H. van Ingen,
Soerabaja. Private collection.

These approaches are relevant theoretical references for the transnational and trans-colonial movements of people and concepts.¹² However, so far, photographs have hardly been considered in this research discourse – a gap that this volume aims at bridging. Focusing on knowledge networks, in which actors and money, commodities and technology, moved transnationally¹³ also makes it possible to differentiate supposedly fixed representations of “the others,” to lay open national contents, and demonstrate encounters between images and their producers and recipients (fig. 4). This compendium represents a globally-conceived photographic history that is devoted to material located medially and geographically beyond the borders of the canon of a western history of art and photography and, in this way, productively expands these academic disciplines. With its transnational access to the visual material, this volume not only transcends the border demarcations of the former colonial powers and national states but also those determined so far by nationally-oriented research.

Sophie Junge, Ulla Fischer-Westhauser, Uwe Schögl
Vienna, October 2018

11. Susan Legêne, Martijn Eickhoff, 'Postwar Europe and the Colonial Past in Photographs', in: Chiara De Cesari, Ann Rigney (eds.), *Transnational Memory. Circulation, Articulation, Scales, Media and Cultural Memory*, vol. 19, Berlin, Boston 2014, 287-311, here 294. See also Jörn Leonhard, Ulrike von Hirschhausen (eds.), *Comparing Empires. Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Göttingen 2011; and Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after Empire. Decolonization, Society and Culture*, Cambridge 2016.

12. Chiara De Cesari, Ann Rigney, (eds.), *Transnational Memory. Circulation, Articulation, Scales, Media and Cultural Memory*, vol. 19, Berlin, Boston 2014.

13. Tony Ballantyne, Antoinette Burton, *Empires and the Reach of the Global 1870-1945*, Cambridge 2012, 13.