

Editorial

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Welcome to the first issue of *Visual Methodologies*, a new on-line visual studies journal which will critically engage with the development, utilisation and influence of visual experience in the production and consumption of knowledge of contemporary social and material conditions. *Visual Methodologies* provides a forum for debating emerging visual research methods across a constellation of visual domains and fields of enquiry, embracing perspectives beyond the bounded parameters of disciplinary tradition and towards hybridity, mobility and postdisciplinarity.

In the last few decades and particularly since the advent of digital imaging/visualisation, we have witnessed the exponential growth of visual communication of all kinds and the indications are that the rise of 'the visual' will continue into an even more diverse future. Images surround our private and public practice and scholars across the sciences continue to contemplate the interwoven complexity of this globalised visual topography through an amalgamation of technologies, economic relations and social formations. The transformations in material performance and practice associated with the globalisation of visual culture extend well beyond traditional conceptual tools and disciplinary boundaries. From its origins in visual anthropology and visual sociology, visual studies has moved out of the rather insular institutional context of

early work, to explorations of everyday visualities through what may be regarded as a postdisciplinary formation embracing subjectivity and reflexivity. As Sadywell and Haywood (2012:4) have pointed out, "critical reflection within visual studies has moved from *inter*-disciplinary to *multi*-disciplinary and finally to *trans*-disciplinary—and perhaps *in*-disciplinary and *post*-disciplinary—research and theorising".

Today visual experience is embodied in hybridized and diasporic cultural practice. The proliferation of visual technologies in both the private and public spheres necessitate the development of 'visual literacy' (Brumberger 2011) if individuals (including researchers) are to participate effectively in, and respond to, meaning making and knowledge production. The recent *turn to the visual* has unearthed a multiplicity of new problems, research questions and agendas and scholars have begun to deploy innovative methodologies in attempting to generate new (perhaps multiple) meanings associated with the colonisation of everyday life by the visual. As a result, the analysis of visual culture in all its forms is expanding rapidly while established practices and methods of analysis are increasingly being complemented by innovation in visual methods. This awakening to the ubiquity of imagery and visual culture has in turn spawned the development of

visually orientated theoretical frameworks and complementary visual research methods.

Achieving a better understanding of 'the visual' in society is crucial to an appreciation of the cultural significances, social practices and power relationships associated with ways of seeing and imaging. In this context *Visual Methodologies* provides a space of convergence, as well as a forum for debate, through the dissemination of critical understandings emerging from all aspects of visual research harnessing knowledge drawn from the full breadth of trans-disciplinary/post-disciplinary approaches.

Visual Methodologies welcomes contributions from scholars across the social sciences and beyond. No restriction will be placed on authors other than the need to demonstrate a potential to contribute to knowledge and to inform the academy and society. As visually oriented enquiry continues to witness a period of rapid development and begins to be regarded as a unifying force through the smudging of disciplinary boundaries I look forward to your continued support in establishing *Visual Methodologies* as a source of high quality innovative research on all aspects of 'the visual'.

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Editor-in-Chief

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References

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