

Photography, Women, and Global Encounters in the 20th Century

Deadline: Nov 15, 2020

Jordan Troeller

A Foreign Eye: Photography, Women, and Global Encounters in the Twentieth Century

Publication coedited by Jordan Troeller (University of Graz, Austria) and Hyewon Yoon (University of New Hampshire)

In the decades after the First World War, shaped by changing conceptions of gender and by the institutions and discourses of interwar photography, a new class of photographers emerged as key producers of images in the mass media and avant-garde. A remarkable proportion of these photographers were women, as the medium of photography (unlike painting and sculpture) granted them a newfound social and political mobility. Many of these women began working abroad, as photography enabled them to travel and to work around the world, producing reportages for illustrated magazines, experiencing emigration and exile, and responding to political upheavals. While scholarship has begun to address these remarkable careers, many of the central questions around this historical development and its consequences for a history of photography and the interwar avant-garde remain to be explored.

'A Foreign Eye' will bring together emerging research on women photographers who were trained in a European and American context and then worked abroad, largely between the 1920s and 1970s. Our goal is to explore the complex images produced by these practitioners as they navigated a doubled marginalization: first as women and then as foreigners, emigres, and exiles. Departing from previous studies of twentieth-century modernism, this volume emphasizes the dynamic exchange of this encounter with difference, as photographs trained in the West turned their camera onto subjects in Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Central and South America, and Asia.

We seek contributions on individual photographers, both well and lesser known, as well as thematically driven essays that focus on a specific region or topic within this historical development. What moved these artists to work abroad? How did they approach the picturing of subjects that were often radically different from their own patterns of identification? What role has the archive played in their reception? In what ways might this work complicate what we know about photography as "an especially potent purveyor of cultural ideology—particularly the ideology of gender" (Solomon-Godeau, 1995)? How did their "descriptions" of non-European subjects and cultures, to borrow Aijaz Ahmad's words, challenge or reinforce the colonial imagination and later the colonial legacies in European countries? Might some of these photographs enact what Ariella Azoulay has described as "unlearning" the imperialist knowledge that is endemic to the history of photogra-

phy? In considering such questions, the book will extend the history of modern photography geographically in order to illuminate its role in shaping discourses on race, ethnicity, gender, and cultural difference.

Possible topics might include:

- tracing how an artist trained in one context then went on to practice photography in another, such as: Ellen Auerbach in Palestine, Kati Horna in Mexico, Alice Schalek in interwar Japan, Thérèse Rivière and Germaine Tillion in North Africa, or Ilse Stienhoff in colonial Namibia
- photography's relationship to ethnography and journalism, as well as to avant-garde practices, such as Surrealism and the New Objectivity
- the technical aspects of picturing difference, such as the registration of race through photography
- psychoanalytic approaches to imaging the colonized and the colonizer
- artistic patronage and exile networks of photographers and photo agencies
- the relationship between representations of race and ethnicity abroad and struggles with discrimination and marginalization at home
- how practitioners grappled with the exoticism of travel reportages and tourist photography
- the capacity of the visual languages of the New Objectivity and the New Vision to speak to the possibilities and problems of the new global era after the Second World War

Although we are primarily interested in photographers that identified as women, we are also open to scholarship on male photographers if the author can demonstrate that they were engaged with questions of gender and sexuality abroad.

Proposals of up to 500 words accompanied by a one- to two-page CV should be submitted to the editors by November 15, 2020: Dr. Jordan Troeller (jordan.troeller@uni-graz.at) and Dr. Hyewon Yoon (hyewon.yoon@unh.edu). (We will relay decisions by January 15, 2021). Final essays (maximum of 7,000-8,000 words including footnotes) will be due September 1, 2021. The language of the volume is English. Publication will be with a reputable peer-reviewed university press.

Reference:

CFP: Photography, Women, and Global Encounters in the 20th Century. In: ArtHist.net, Sep 30, 2020 (accessed Mar 14, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/23634>>.