RPS Lecture 1

Left page:

RPS lectures: Looking to the present, looking to the past lecture 1. 10/9/20.
With Colin Pantall

Raising questions rather than answering

Lecture 1: The face.
   Mao, – 2.2 billion portraits were printed. probably one of the most reproduced image in history

— Hans Maes. – Slide. Portraiture + Philosophy.

— Barthes
— Goldblatt – need to tell a good story.
— Edward Curtis – Martabey + Presence within the image.
                        + greatness
— Mary Steefes Schaffer – Will of life compared to Curtis –
                        relationship between photographer + Subject
— Lucy Lippard – Diary of a relationship – The connections made/wrote
                        lead us to judgements that can have real
                        life implications.
                        – Emotional judgements are faster + long lasting
— Susan Bright – the △ of relationships or gaze.
                        changes the Power of the image.
— Barthes – looks from a different angle.
— The Medical Gaze – Hugh Diamond – Female patients, photography
                        as a diagnostic tool, judge people from the image
                        — Diamond quote
— Duchenne – The face showing the Soul. Photography or Scientific
                        evidence.
                        The emotional face doesn't reveal anything about the person
                        Book – Mad, Sad + bad.
· Sobieszek
— Liz Orton – Images + how its used in medicine, trys to address
— Oguibe – dismisses the idea that photography is objective
— Agazziz + Deka – African born Slave photography. Used as a racist
                        Position
                        — Ariella Azoulay – Civil Contract of photography

Right page:

Sojourner Truth – First Afro/American that won a legal case.
Where/How | Placed | Archived – John Tagg
                        not the image that matters, but all the 'baggage' - text, history
Record, where was it placed, Shown
Alphose Bertillon – Criminologist, identity.
Delgado – Visual clues result in criminality. No emotions = criminal.
The Sydney Police Archive – More relaxed poses.
Andres Ojuela – recontextualization of mugshots + crime scenes.
Art Spiegelman –
Amak Mahmoodian – Shenasnameh - passport/identity photograph.
                        – the control of government, the writing on the image
                        is very Violent. Control of the image.

Paul Ekman – 6 Basic Emotions – No emotion – Crime
                        – advertising
Richard Philips – Research by dividing the face into 2.
Ken Ohara– book 'One'. – 500 pages of faces.
                        – removal of identity.

Laura El-Tantawy – emotions, grief
Marc Garanger – no trust between photographer + Subject. Force to have
                        their image taken.
Jill Greenberg – End Times. – respond to images in an emotional way.
Why is this Relevant?
                        because we are surrounded by images
                        – we are assessed via an image
           Zun Lee 'Father Figure'
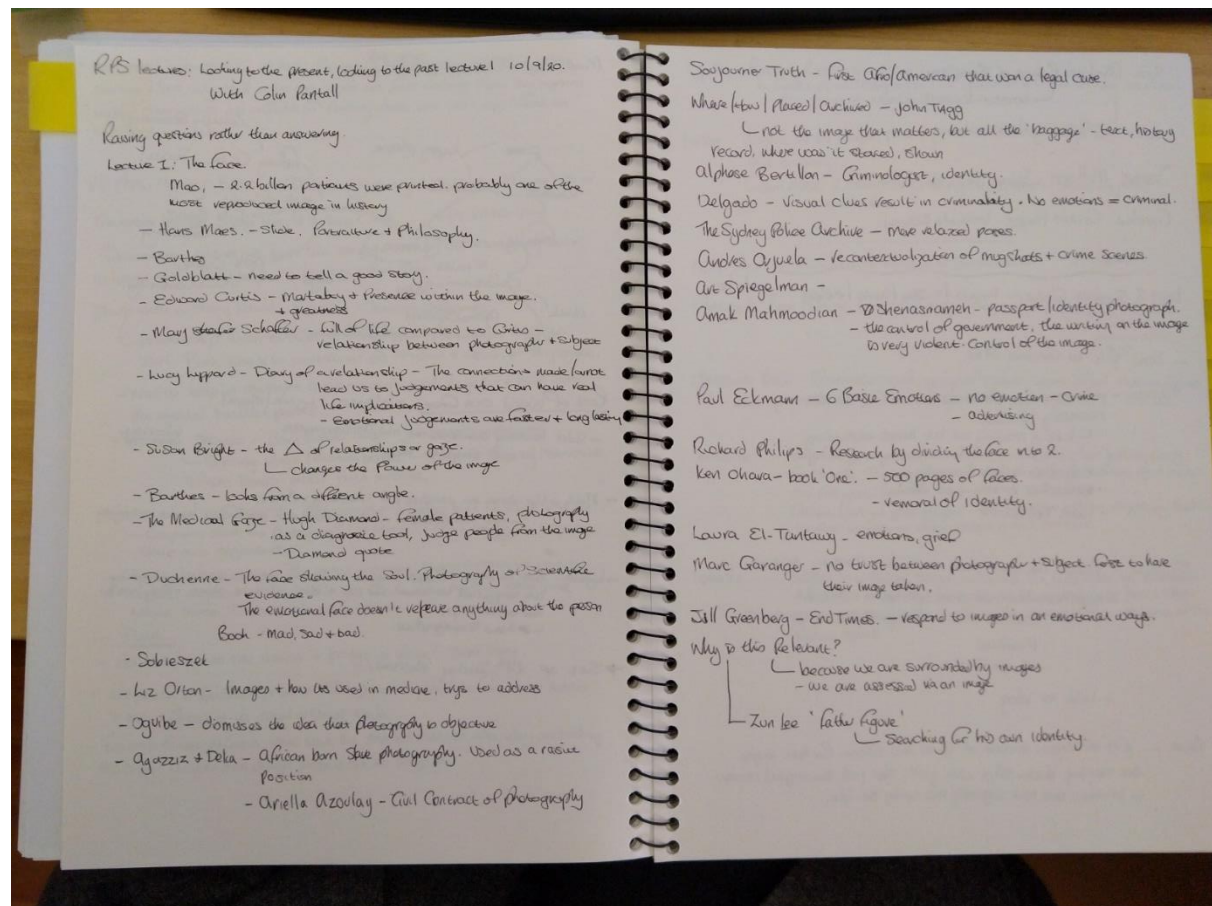   Searching for his own identity

Some Photography Histories

Michael Frizot: A New History of Photography

Juliet Hacking: Photography the Whole Story

Mary Warner Marien: Photography A Cultural History

RPS Lecture 1: The Face

- Official portrait of Mao

- Retouched by Chen Shilin

- 2.2 billion portraits of Mao were printed during the Cultural Revolution

- This may be the most reproduced image in history

https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-01/08/content_6376460.htm

Wu Hung: Zooming In - Histories of Photography in China

Hans Maes: Portraiture and Philosophy

According to the standard view of greatness in portraiture, the best portraits manage to distill and clarify the complexity of a person's character into one image. This is a very widely held view, endorsed by both amateurs and scholars of the genre, and across different period of time.

In the 19th century, for instance, G.W.F. Hegel stated: **'It is one thing for the artist simply to imitate the face of the sitter, its surface and external form, . . . and quite another to be able to portray the true features whichexpress the inmost soul of the subject'** (1975 , p. 155). The influential 20th century art historian E.H. Gombrich concurred: **'This, at any rate, is the ever-present ambition of the great portrait painter: . . . to bring out and to reveal a person's "inner self" '** (1945 , p. 6).

In a conversation between Ruth Spencer and celebrated portrait photographer Yousuf Karsh, she asked how he would define the art of portraiture. His response: **'When you penetrate and remove all the masks which we all have and make a synthesis of the many moods a man has: that's portraiture'** (Spencer1976 , p. 407).

More recently, Cynthia Freeland put the idea as follows: **'The best portraits manifest a person's . . . unique essence or inner character';and 'the greatest portraits . . . reveal someone's essential nature or their character in a deep sense'** (2010, p. 44).

Presence

According to Tarnya Cooper, curatorial director at the National Portrait Gallery: **'Most portrait drawings aim to record likeness accurately and/or to capture the character and physical appearance of the sitter, but some exceptional studies . . . also appear to recreate a sense of the sitter's physical presence at a moment in time'** (Cooper 2017 , p. 32).

Studium and Punctum

In front of the photograph of my mother as a child, I tell myself: she is going to die: I shudder, like Winnicott's psychotic patient, over a catastrophe which has already occurred. Whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe.
(Barthes 1981 , p. 96)

David Goldblatt

"I don't believe there are positive or negative images, what we need to aim for is to create/construct complex images that make us think."

Edward Curtis: The North American Indian (1907)

Mary Schaffer: Samson Beaver and Family (1907)

Lucy Lippard writes about the timelessness of the image of the Beaver family (it is not situated in the past), the communication in the image, the relationship between…

• The people photographed
• The photographer

The connections made (or not made) lead us to judgements that can have real life implications.

Susan Bright – Art Photography Now

Susan Bright describes the portrait being made up of a triangle of relationships or gazes

• the sitter
• photographer
• spectator

Roland Barthes – Camera Lucida

The portrait-photograph is a closed field of forces. Four image-repertoires intersect here, oppose and distort each other. In front of the lens, I am at the same time:
1.   the one I think I am,
2.   the one I want others to think I am,
3.   the one the photographer thinks I am, and
4.   the one he makes use of to exhibit his art.

The Medical Gaze

a selection from Hugh W Diamond photographs of his patients, from his paper 'On the Application of Photography to the Physiognomic and Mental Phenomena of Insanity', c.1852-1856

Working in the belief that mental states are manifested in the physiognomy and that photographs are objective representations of reality, Diamond described himself as a photographer as one who "catches in a moment the permanent cloud, or the passing storm or sunshine of the soul, and thus enables the metaphysician to witness and trace out the connexion between the visible and the invisible."

https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/190036282

Hugh Diamond

- In 1852, he was the first photographer to photograph patients in an asylum
- Showed patients pictures which showed them to be 'mad'
- Connection between mental state and physical state
- Idea of the photograph as truthful
- Photography as humanitarian and scientific
- When he went into private practice, he did not photograph the rich

Guillaume-Benjamin-Amand Duchenne

- Believed Facial Expressions reveal the soul
- Triggered expressions using photography
- Published findings in 1862: *The Mechanism of Human Physiognomy*
- Book divided into scientific and aesthetic sections
- Idea of the photograph as scientific evidence
- Used performance and sets
- Taught Charcot
- Reinforced social hierarchies

a selection of images from 'The Mechanism of Human Physiognomy' ('Mecanisme de la Physionomie Humaine'), Duchenne, 1862

Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893)

- Taught Freud
- Studied Hysteria
- Invented the visual idea of hysteria
- Staged pictures of patients in various emotional states
- Used pictures as evidence of hysteria

- Charcot – Hysteria is an inherited disorder
- Freud – Hysteria is the result of psychic stress

Planche XXIV.

ATTITUDES PASSIONNELLES

Planche XX.

ATTITUDES PASSIONNELLES

SUPPLICATION AMOUREUSE

Robert Sobieszek: Gymnastics of the Soul

- Unlike Duchenne, however, Charcot was interested exclusively in pathological subjects, viewing the population of more than five thousand patients at the Salpetriere as a "living pathological museum."

…If Duchenne had felt obliged to pose his female subject like a mannequin, Charcot went so far as to choreograph a troupe of actresses; one colleague described an experiment in which verbal suggestions induced a female patient to hallucinate and perform "like an actor who, beset by madness, imagines that the drama she plays is a reality, not a fiction," assuming and speaking the roles of a peasant, an actress, and a nun in quick succession."

Each Tuesday, Charcot also staged what amounted to a "theater of the passions," in which an audience made up of high society and those devoted to scientific reason and medical jurisdiction was confronted by the "uncontrollable fits and rages of hysterical bodies" and by what sociologist John O'Neill has termed the "transgressive possibilities" of an "erotics of a male science imposing itself upon a female body."

Liz Orton: Humanising the Medical Gaze
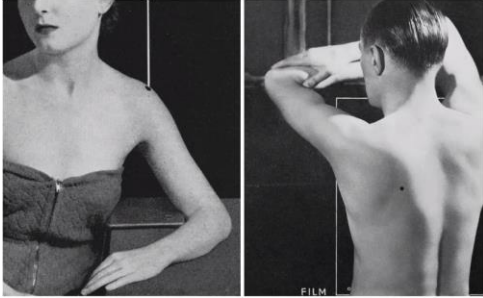
Examines how imaging is used in
clinical settings.

Attempts to humanise the
medical gaze

https://www.photomonitor.co.uk/liz-
orton-humanising-the-medical-gaze-
2/

So how objective is portraiture?

Is there a direct connection to reality, an indexical connection?

Whose agenda is being met when a photograph is made?

Does it matter where a photograph is used?

Duane Michals: A Failed Attempt to Photograph Reality
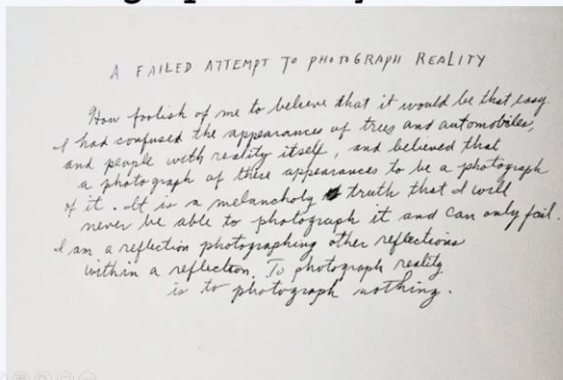
'How foolish of me to believe that it would be that easy. I had confused
the appearance of trees and automobiles, and people with a reality
itself, and believed that a photograph of these appearances to be a
photograph of it.

It is a melancholy truth that I will never be able to photograph it and
can only fail. I am a reflection photographing other reflections within a
reflection. To photograph reality is to photograph nothing.'

Olu Oguibe: The Fact of Fiction

Olu Oguibe – Photography and the substance of the Image – dismisses the idea that photography is objective.

"…photography… is, first and foremost a human invention entirely dependent on human manipulation from its beginning in the conception and manufacture of the photographic mechanism and its peripherals, to the conclusion of the image making process in the form of the photograph."

Rather it creates a parallel visual universe that has much to do with, for example, the Yoruba tradition of making twin images.

"From the onset, we can see from this and other examples, the Yoruba associate photography not with objectivity, but with the possibility and necessity of illusion or what we might otherwise regard as the fact of fiction (Oguibe 577)."

Louis Agazziz and Delia
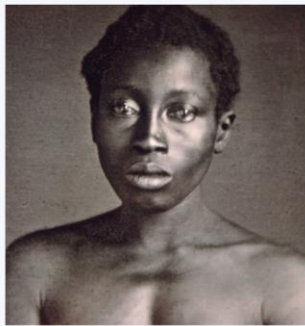
In1846 Agassiz said he believed that blacks and whites were different species.

A year later, Agassiz said "the brain of the Negro is that of the imperfect brain of a seven months' infant in the womb of a White."

Also see Delia's Tears

Chapter in Ariella Azoulay, Civil Contract of Photography

Carrie Mae Weems

See also:
https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/06/20/agassiz-descendants-urge-harvard-give-up-renty-delia-slave-photos/1508475001/

Ariella Azoulay

"When the assumption is that not only were the photographed people there, but that, in addition, they are still present there at the time I'm watching them, my viewing of these photographs is less susceptible to becoming immoral.

Azoulay, A., Mazali, R., & Danieli, R. (2014). The civil contract of photography. New York: Zone Books

Soujourner Truth

I sell the shadow to support the substance

I Sell the Shadow to Support the Substance.
SOJOURNER TRUTH.

Mugshots and Crime

"Photographs are never 'evidence' of history; they are themselves the historical" (Tagg 1988, 65).

Alphonse Bertillon - Criminologist

• The Bertillon System

• "Every measurement slowly reveals the workings of the criminal. Careful observation and patience will reveal the truth."

• Measured different body parts to identify and classify criminals
• System adopted in photographing criminals and murder scenes
• Fingerprints found to be more accurate – and now DNA
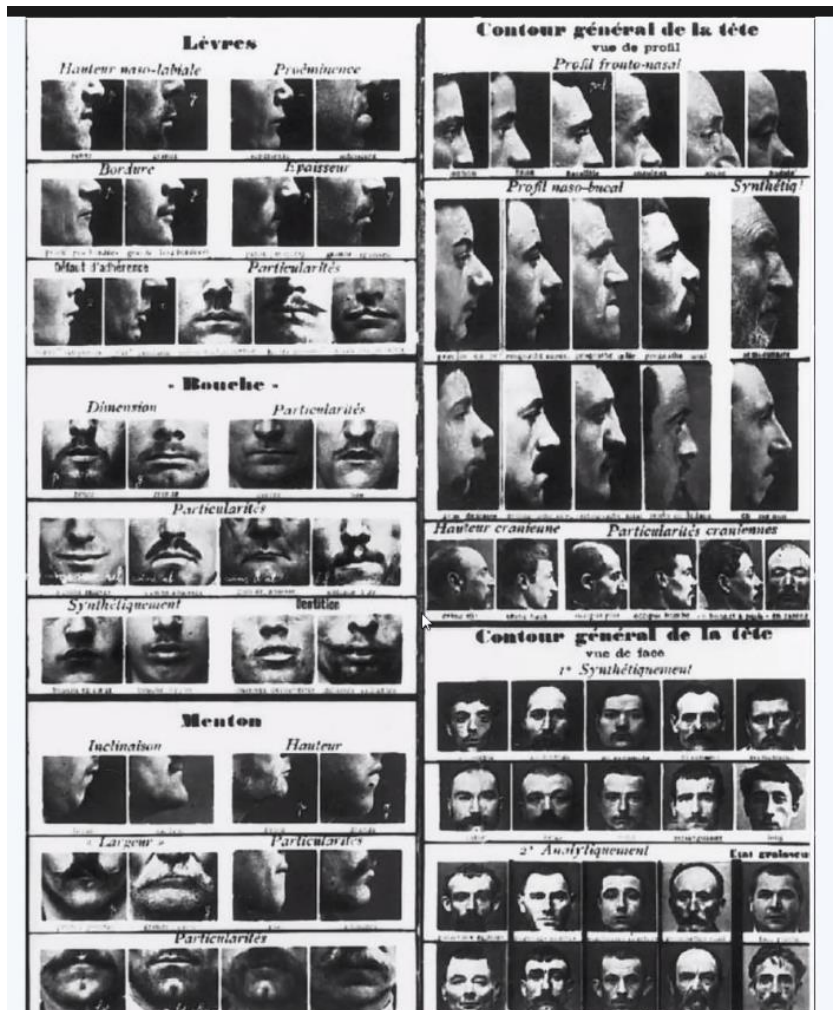
Lourdes Delgado: Mugshot's Bias: A Semantic History of Guilt

"When a witness is shown such photographs (mugshots), not only do they see the objective description of an individuals' physical features but juxtapose the mark of criminality to these portraits."

The Sydney Police Archive

Mug shot of De Gracy (sic) and Edward Dalton. Details unknown. Central Police Station, Sydney, ca.1920.

NSW Police Forensic Photography Archive, Justice and Police Museum, Sydney Living Museums

Andres Orjuela

Art Spiegelman: Maus

Amak Mahmoodian: Shenasnameh

Further Reading

John Tagg: The Burden of Representation

Joan Fontcuberta: Pandora's Camera – Eugenics without Borders

Michel Foucault: Discipline and Punish

Paul Eckmann: 6 Basic Emotions
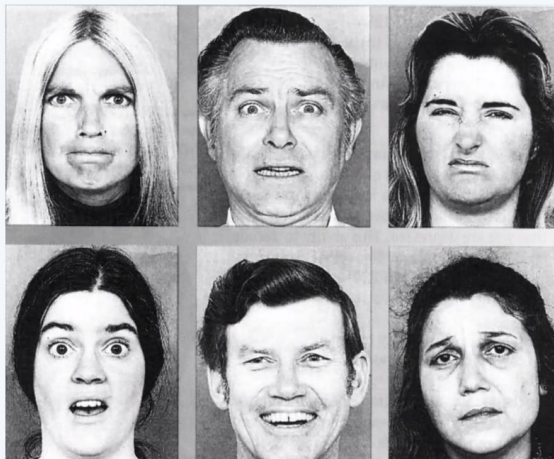
Ken Ohara: One

Richard Philips
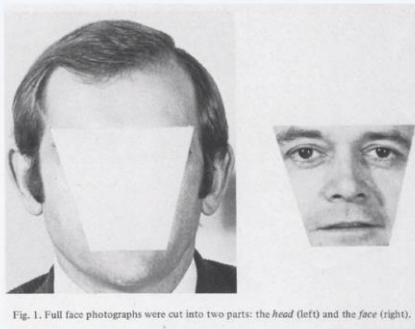
Fig. 1. Full face photographs were cut into two parts: the *head* (left) and the *face* (right).

http://www.richardphillips.org.uk/faces/faces79c.pdf

Laura El-Tantawy: In the Shadow of the Pyramids

Marc Garanger

Jill Greenberg: End Times

Why is this relevant?

- 2014: Zun Lee's Father Figure
- Tired of stereotyping of African American males – dealers, pimps and baby daddies
- Search for his own identity
- Started as search for the 'right kind' of black father
- And progressed from there

'I provide for my son as best I can, but as a single father, it's hard to provide for him emotionally at times. I give him enough affection as a dad. But sometimes he needs the input of a mother in his life.'

- 'My first few months as a father were so overwhelming. Sure, you prepare as much as you can but you quickly realize you don't really know how things will shake out, and despite all the advice from family and friends, you're still just winging it. You kind of learn as you go, and over time, your confidence grows.'

- 'Fatherhood at its core means that there is someone else on the planet that is more important to you and that it humbles you to realize that there are more unknown elements than known. It means that I have to be open to learning more and experiencing life through another. It is wildly satisfying.'

https://www.ceibaeditions.com/tag/zun-lee/
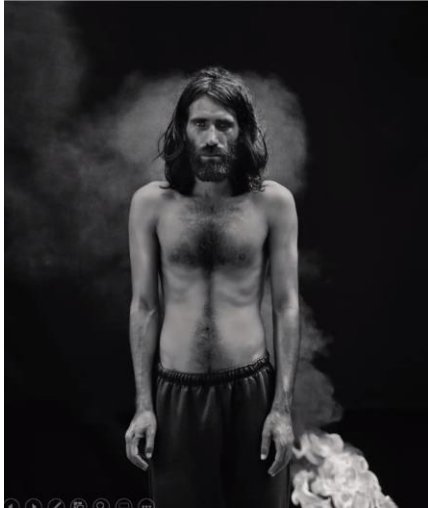
Hoda Afshar:
Behrouz Boochani

Iranian-Kurdish writer

Sought asylum in Australia

Imprisoned on Manus Island for 7 years

Now lives in New Zealand

Avoiding the banal

"I sent this portrait to Behrouz after I returned from Manus in April 2018, and called him' says Afshar in the image caption. ' I said, 'This is you, Behrouz, with your passion, your fire, and your writer's hands. It symbolises your resistance.'

He heard this, and paused. 'You are right,' he said. 'But I do not see myself in this picture. I only see a refugee. Someone whose identity has been taken from him. A bare life, standing there beyond the borders of Australia, waiting and staring.' He fell silent, then said, 'This image scares me.'"

https://witness.worldpressphoto.org/hoda-afshar-and-how-to-see-people-as-individuals-d50146ec92b3

Additional Reading

- Azoulay, A. (2013) The Civil Contract on Photography (see section on Delia and Agazziz)
- Basaglia (2008) Psychiatry and Photography Delaporte, François. Anatomy of the Passions. Stanford: Stanford University Press
- Belting, H. (2017) Face and Mask Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Didi-Huberman, G. The Invention of Hysteria
- Fontcuberta, J (2014) Pandora's Camera London: Mack Books
- Gaskell, N., and Gujral. D. (2017) Photography in India London: Prestel Books
- Maes, H. (2020) Portraiture and Philosophy London: Routledge
- Pinney, C. (2011) Photography and Anthropology London: Reaktion Books
- Sobieszek, Robert A., Ghost in the Shell, 2003, MIT Press
- Strother, Z.S., (2013) '"A Photograph Steals the Soul": The History of an Idea', in: John Peffer and Elisabeth L. Cameron (eds.), Portraiture & Photography in Africa, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press,
- Tagg, J. (1988). The burden of representation: essays on photographies and histories. Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press.
- (see also sections in A Cultural History of Photography, Michael Frizot's History of Photography etc).

David Goldblatt

"I don't believe there are positive or negative images, what we need to aim for is to create/construct complex images that make us think."