

# Visualising the merging of culture from an ‘other’ perspective

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This paper reflects on the challenges of cultural identity in an increasingly globalised society. As the individual questions their identity within a surge of globalisation, and with it a dominant Western viewpoint, so visual studies of imagined visual identities emerge. In an attempt to understand the implications of emerging cultural identities that question Western dominance, the work of the following visual artists working in the medium of photography are considered, namely Cristina de Middel, specifically her work *The Afronauts*; Andrew Putter, specifically his work *African Hospitality*; and Sarah Keogh, specifically her work *Multi-culturally Modernised*. In order to address globalisation and cross-cultural appropriation or multiculturalism, the paper firstly reflects on the understanding of cultural identity and cultural integration. It secondly reflects on an understanding of the visual as a form of cultural identity and discusses examples of appropriation of culture within imagery displaying a cross-cultural visual communication context. These visual communicators predominantly use photography within a context that does not afford the Western perspective prime position. The significance of the study lies in the fact that the visual message being communicated has the ability to reflect on both political and cultural ideologies giving advantage to a non-Western perspective.

**Key words:** cultural identity, globalisation, visual communication

### Visualisering van die ineensmelting van kulture van ’n ‘ander’ uitgangspunt

In hierdie navorsing word die uitdagings van kulturele identiteit in ’n toenemende globale samelewing gereflekteer. Soos die individu sy eie identiteit bevraagteken binne die opwelling van globalisering vanuit ’n oorheersende westerlike oogpunt, so verrys die visuele ondersoek na denkbeeldige visuele identiteite. In ’n poging om die gevolgtrekking van ineengesmelte kulturele identiteite wat Westerse dominasie bevraagteken te verstaan, word die volgende visuele medelers wat in die medium van fotografie werk, naamlik Cristina de Middel se *Afronauts*, Andrew Putter se *African Hospitality* en Sarah Keogh se *Multi-culturally Modernised*, in ag geneem. Om sodoende globalisering en die toe-eiening van ’n kruis kulturele of veelsoortige kultuur aan te spreek, beoog die navorsing eerstens om kulturele identiteite en kulturele integrasie te begryp. Tweedens word die begrip van die visuele as ’n vorm van kulturele identiteit bepeins en bespreek dit die toe-eiening van kultuur wat kruis kulturele visuele kommunikasie uitbeeld. Hierdie visuele medelers gebruik oorwegend fotografie binne die konteks wat nie die Westerse perspektief as aanvangspunt aandui nie. Die belang van die studie lê in die feit dat die visuele boodskap wat uitgebeeld word die vermoë het om beide politieke en kulturele ideologieë te weerspieël wat nie ’n Westerse uitgangspunt bevoordeel nie.

**Sleutelwoorde:** kulturele identiteit, globalisering, visuele medeling

Visual communication via electronic media has altered the ‘geography of social life’, allowing people to become ‘direct’ audiences to performances anywhere in the world and giving them access to audiences that are not ‘physically present’ (Meyrowitz 1985). In addition, media has recreated the terms that are used to define individuals through the blurring of physical settings, social situations and the division between private and public domains.

In her book *Vision, Race, and Modernity: a Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*, published in 1997, Debra Poole stresses unequal flows and exchanges of images using the term ‘economy’ rather than ‘culture’. Poole (1997: 8) states that economy ‘suggests that this organization (sic) has as much to do with social relationships, inequality, and power as with shared meanings and community’. The use of economy is further used to reinforce the globality of image flows that exceed the locality that the term ‘culture’ may imply. The traditional approach to portraiture, or the reflection on the individual, is based on a Western perspective. While the approaches of other societies are valid, historical evidence suggests that the concept of the recorded portrait originated in Egypt and worked its way through Europe to the Americas.

This paper reflects on the potential of cross-cultural visual communication evident in the appropriation of culturally specific visual identity, and so questions the predominantly Western perspective. In order to address globalisation and the increasing reach of Western viewpoints, as well as cross-cultural appropriation or multiculturalism, the paper firstly reflects on the understanding of cultural identity and cultural integration. It secondly reflects on an understanding of the visual as a form of cultural identity and discusses examples of appropriation of culture within imagery displaying a cross-cultural visual communication context. While there are many understandings of the terms culture, globalisation and identity, this discussion endeavours to ‘contain’ these explanations within a context that is particular to the visual communicators and their work under discussion.

### **The concept of cultural identity**

The concept of cultural identity can be a reference to the collective self-awareness that a particular group embodies and reflects: ‘The cultural identity of a society is defined by its majority group’ (Bochner 1973: 23). Nation, culture and society exert considerable influence on the individual, modeling values, engineering a particular view of the world, and shaping responses to experience.

According to Allan and Skelton (1999: 2) there are three potentially different meanings of culture within the social sciences. (1) The crucial difference between humans and animals is culture. (2) Culture as a value laden individual – ‘what a person ought to acquire in order to become a fully moral agent’ (Barnard and Spencer 1996: 136), for example a well-educated English gentleman, or a human product such as a classical piece of music (Allan and Skelton 1999: 3). (3) Culture as explained from a ‘plural and relativistic perspective’ (Allan and Skelton 1999: 3): ‘Any particular person is a product of the particular culture in which he or she has lived, and differences between human beings are to be explained (but not judged) by differences in their cultures (rather than their race)’ (Barnard and Spencer 1996: 136). In many instances the discourse of referral can overlap between these basic concepts of culture. In an attempt to perceive culture in its broadest sense, Allan and Skelton (1999: 4-5) define culture in the following way:

We reject conceptions of culture as fixed, coherent or ‘natural’, and instead view it as dynamically changing over time and space – the product of ongoing (sic) human interaction. This means that we accept the term as ambiguous and suggestive rather than as analytically precise. It reflects or encapsulates the muddles of living. We recognise that there are ideas and practices which may be maintained over long periods of time, from generation to generation, but culture is always contingent upon historical processes (extremely important in the context of development debates and historical legacies of Empire). It is also influenced by, influences and generally interacts with, contemporary

social, economic and political factors. Geography too is significant. It is not just about where you are on the world map, for example but about the ways in which space and place interact with understandings about being a person. Moreover, any one individual's experience of culture will be affected by the multiple aspects of their identity – race, gender, age, class, caste position, religion, geography and so forth – and it is likely to alter in various circumstances.

The understanding of cultural identity can be likened to the idea of a national character that describes a set of behaviors that members of a given community share with one another above and beyond their individual differences. 'In its collective sense, the concept of cultural identity includes typologies of cultural conduct that is appropriate and inappropriate for various situations, values, beliefs and the daily patterning of activities' (Rahim and Pawanteh 2009: 226). This supports the argument that cultural identity is socially constructed, bestowed and sustained (Allan and Skelton 1999; Adler 1975; Berger 1963).

Electronic media has allowed an increased awareness of visual culture: 'In the past decade, visual culture has become a global field of critical practice... its referent as the assemblage of visualities, images and ways of seeing in a given place and time is now a common place in museums, universities, art galleries and even journalism' (Mirzoeff 2013: xxviii).

Cultural identity in a sense is an association or identification with a specific culture or sub culture, as well as a shared common interest with other cultures, or what distinguishes it from other cultural groups. Stuart Hall's (in Voicu 2013: 162) outlook on cultural identity is always in transformation, 'never complete, always in process' within itself as a production rather than a purely defined static form. Hall (in Voicu 2013: 162) is of the opinion that cultural identity is always in transformation and points out that there are two principal ways of thinking about (cultural) identity. Firstly Hall (in Voicu 2013: 163) disapproves of the view of cultural identity as something that can be defined 'in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective one true self' hiding inside the many others or more; secondly he defines cultural identity as 'what we really are', or rather 'what we have become'.

Cultural identity can also be relevant to the individual and Voicu (2013: 161) brings into question the 'unique sense of self', implying a first person perspective. This definition can be constituted from a whole diversity of factors, for example one's language, place of birth and age. The definition can also be constituted from one's typology and even one's geographical location – from regional to national. The way somebody is identified and categorised – by others and by self – does influence an individual's identity.

In Hauser's (1998: 8) opinion, 'between the past and the future, there is the temporal aspect of cultural identity'. In essence 'What man is, is told only by his history' (Dilthy in Hauser 1998: 8). Furthermore Graumann (in Hauser 1998: 8) then states that 'cultural identity almost always has problematic connotations because it must first be searched for (in the past), then must be found and developed, respectively (in the present), or because it threatens to be lost (in the future).'

In the new era of rapidly expanding globalisation, society has become more concerned with creating exclusivity for one's self and their culture. Deng (2005: 40) points out that cultural identity answers the questions 'who am I?', 'where are we going?' and 'what do we have?' Globalisation, in this sense, has brought more openness or bridging of localised knowledge and global significance. Therefore the more the world becomes globalised, the more opportunities one has to communicate, interact and learn, which can result in trans-cultural relationships and interconnectedness. McGrew (in Tomlinson 1999: 2) supports this theory, reflecting on

globalisation as ‘simply the intensification of global connectedness and stresses the multiplicity of linkages it implies’.

There are others who are wary of rapid globalisation, reasoning that the process of globalisation began in the West, and has mainly fostered the expansion of Western ideas, values, lifestyles and technology. According to Nederveen Pieterse (2009: 59), ‘contemporary globalization (sic) is westernization (sic) or Americanization (sic) writ large, a fulfilment in instalments of the classical imperial’. Globalisation is a concept of uniformity, preferably following the Western model (Sotshangane 2002: 22).

As Western domination becomes increasingly apparent, so the individual reacts to the their loss of identity. Progressively the personal voice is heard as technology and social media provide both the platform for domination as well as the individual response. It is this ability to respond that is reflected in the work of the three visual communicators discussed in this paper. All three of these visual communicators question Western hegemony in their work; as ‘white’ visual communicators they grapple with the question of a predominant ‘other’ perspective in an attempt to interrogate how cultural identity has been bestowed. These visual artists enter the dialogue on cultural identity, a complex field that is highly disputed.

### **Cristina De Middel: the Afronauts**

Cristina De Middel is a Spanish photographer whose body of work *The Afronauts* questions the original concept of truth and realism in photography. In order to understand the context from which De Middel comments, we reflect on the perception of Western media and the role that it plays in cultural identity formation. According to Hariman and Lucaites (2007: 2), ‘photojournalism might be the perfect ideological practice: while it seems to provide objects as they are in the world, it places those objects within a system of social relationships and constitutes the viewer as a subject within that system.’ In Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen’s (1998: 1) opinion, news can be regarded as ‘a process that lies at the heart of modern capitalism and which also illuminates processes of globalisation (sic) which modern capitalism has helped to generate’. They are of the further opinion that over a period of approximately the past hundred and fifty years, ‘news contributed to processes of the construction of national identity; to imperialism and the control of colonies... the collection and dissemination of this commodity was organized (sic) and rationalized (sic) on behalf of media and non-media clients by a small group of powerful agencies, acting globally as a cartel’ (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen 1998: 2). According to Williams and Newton (2007: xv), when referring to contemporary photojournalism, ‘no form of visual communication has a more profound effect on the private minds of individuals or the development of the public mind and culture than the visual imagery of today’s media’.

De Middel, originally a photojournalist, became disillusioned with the practice of the media ‘[p]utting photography, which apparently has such an honest approach to reality – a mechanical intervention in reality – in the hands of people that deliberately want to manipulate the public opinion and truth’ (De Middel in Chiocchetti 2013). De Middel’s work brings home the fact that the African continent is often treated unfairly by the media. De Middel’s series *The Afronauts* is based on a true story people don’t believe. The work questions the prejudice in thinking that Africa could not go to space or even have a role to play in the 1960s space race. According to De Middel (in Lavalette 2013):

One of my intentions with *The Afronauts* was to raise awareness of how we consume the image of Africa that is given in the media, and how a whole continent has been stigmatised. This uncomfortable reaction and prejudice belongs to the viewer as it is not literally included in the images.

The series *The Afronauts* is based on the story of Edward Makuka Nkoloso, a Zambian science teacher who decided that his country could take part in the space race during the 1960s. He designed a rocket and catapult system and trained ten men and a woman as astronauts. Nkoloso wanted the woman and some cats to be the first to reach the moon. Unfortunately the programme did not work out when Unesco refused his application for funding, and the woman became pregnant by one of the other astronauts and returned to her village. According to De Middel (in Andreasson 2014), ‘People I have spoken to who met Nkoloso say he was very charismatic: a dreamer who took his project very seriously, maybe even with the same serious approach Nasa (sic) and the Soviet Union had. He went on to become an important personality in the politics of Zambia and even received a state funeral.’

De Middel (in Andreasson 2014) emphasises that the point she wanted to make was ‘not that the project failed because it was the work of a poor African country, but that Nkoloso tried and believed it was possible’.



**Figure 1**  
Cristina De Middel, 2012, *Hamba* from the series *The Afronauts* (reproduced with permission from Cristina De Middel).



**Figure 2**  
Cristina De Middel, 2012, *Iko Iko* from the series *The Afronauts* (reproduced with permission from Cristina De Middel).

De Middel visually creates an identity for the African astronauts (see figures 1 and 2), playing with the question of truth of documentary and providing an alternative reality. The series is staged photography in a photojournalistic manner. De Middel is creating a scenario of the astronauts as if the space programme resulted in success. De Middel (in Chiocchetti 2013:30) suggests that the series is a ‘re-design of reality and filters it to make it more fantastic and believable’. Her work deliberately challenges the audience to ‘question the language and the veracity of photography as a document, and plays with reconstructions or archetypes that blur the border between reality and fiction’ (Schwendener 2013).

She has created a positive identity for the Zambian 1964 space programme, with colourful African space suits and interesting compositions reflecting a questionably realistic and alternative outlook on Africa as a continent (see figures 1 and 2). Alongside these fabricated moments, she places images from her archive, and includes a mixture of genuine and faked documents relating to the story: 'I used an original press cutting, but changed Edward's face. The letters are real letters I found on the internet, but I retyped them with an old typewriter. To make the story understood, I needed all these different parts' (in Davies 2014). Rather than deriding Zambia's ambitions, De Middel compares them to dreams of other nations and peoples: 'The Afronauts is based on the documentation of an impossible dream that only live in the picture' (in Chiocchetti 2013: 1). Through the series, De Middel gives a different approach to African reality. De Middel (in McCracken 2013: 3) stresses that she wants to portray the fact that although there may not be the same level of technology all around the world, sharing of similar dreams can be a reality. The point that she brings across is not so much based in actual Zambian identity but rather that identity is constructed by offering an alternative to the traditional ways of representing Africa.

### **Andrew Putter: African hospitality**

During the 1870s, when the colonial powers laid the foundations for new administration, ethnologists, geologists, geographers, soldiers and merchants all needed images to understand, describe or organise the colonial countries. They were not interested in individuals but concentrated on social groups, their physical environment or their customs (De Gouvion Saint-Cyr 1999: 17). Africa was seen as the Dark Continent, historically cut off from the European Enlightenment and racially inferior. Social Darwinists misinterpreted Darwin's theories to mean that people and societies that had not developed in the manner of Western culture were inherently inferior. Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, was seen as a prime example of timeless backwardness (Marien 2002: 220).

Late in the 19th century, as photographic technology progressed, the image became easier to make and reproduce and photography became more diversified. The representation of black Africa became more complex and more precise, but it was still 'an interpretation by white men for white men' (De Gouvion Saint-Cyr 1999: 19).

The late 1800s saw the recording of ethnological approaches and emerging ethnic consciousness as a technically powerful means for imposing positivist classifications on non-industrial cultures worldwide. Photographers made images from their own view, as outsiders, and distributed them; thus they established and controlled another group's visual identity (Hirsch 2000: 272). These images are iconic in that they represent a particular period and mind-set. They are therefore highly controversial and 'are widely recognized and remembered, are understood to be representations of historically significant events' and accordingly therefore 'activate strong emotional identification or response' (Hariman and Lucaites 2007: 27). When appropriating the particular approach to documenting visual identity the appropriated image therefore assumes a continuing tension within the public memory between historical accountability, continuing trauma and identifying with a particular set of visual codes.

Andrew Putter appropriates the visualisation process evident in the work of A.M. Duggan-Cronin, a pioneer of anthropometrical photography in South Africa, aimed to document the cultural, social and economic life of all the various indigenous inhabitants of Southern Africa (Grundlingh 1999: 244). According to Putter (2012: 6), Duggan-Cronin's work stands apart from most other anthropological studies of the time:

Duggan-Cronin's work both affirms difference, and seeks out commonalities across racial difference, doing so within a particular Western European aesthetic framework at a time just prior to apartheid beginning its particularly intense denigration of native life and history. He disrupts the assumptions apartheid required its subjects to make about the lowly status of native Africans, using all of the tools in his aesthetic arsenal to seduce and convince his viewers of their equality.



**Figure 3**  
**Andrew Putter, 2009, Bessie, from the series African Hospitality (©Andrew Putter, courtesy of Stevenson, Cape Town and Johannesburg).**



**Figure 4**  
**Andrew Putter, 2009, Joao the Portuguese, from the series African Hospitality (©Andrew Putter, courtesy of Stevenson, Cape Town and Johannesburg).**

Putter first viewed Duggan-Cronin's work in 2009 and later that year Putter produced *African Hospitality*, a series of portraits styled within the tradition of Duggan-Cronin's work. Putter (2012: 5-6) acknowledges that Duggan-Cronin's approach to documenting his subjects had a profound impact on him:

Something in the photographs made me see the black, tribal, primitive, African, native sitters in them as singular, cultured human individuals. There was something shockingly dignified about them, a bearing and a styling of costume which ran at puzzling odds to my received ideas about what to recognise as culture. Most importantly, these works appeared as cyphers to me, as indicators of local lives and histories of which I suddenly realised I was completely ignorant. A compulsion to start learning about these lives that had previously been invisible to me was initiated by that first encounter.

The series (see some examples of the work in figure 3 and 4) is named after a painting titled *African Hospitality*. The artist, George Morland, painted the work in 1790 interpreting the event of castaways from the *Grosvenor* (an English ship wrecked on the Wild Coast in 1782)

being rescued by the native Mpondo. According to Theal (in Carter 1968: preface), ‘this wreck has been a favourite theme for poets and romance writers, and to the present day speculations are frequently put forward as to the fate of the lady passengers’. Stephen Taylor’s account of the eighteenth century shipwreck, *The Caliban Shore: The Fate of the Grosvenor Castaways*, published in 2005, speculates that some of these European citizens formed deep ties with their African hosts, learning the language, marrying into the tribe, and dying as Africans. Putter creates a visual identity for the much speculated upon characters in an attempt to comment on cross-cultural merging.

Putter’s series presents a set of European portraits that have been heavily influenced by the local African tribes that they were reportedly integrated into. ‘The survivors in Putter’s works are drawn from three historical wrecks – the earliest being the Portuguese Nossa Senhora de Belem in the mid-1600s, the latest the Grosvenor’ (Michael Stevenson Gallery 2009). There is no solid documentation of the castaways’ physical appearances, so Putter produces a creative interpretation of identity for these Europeans, creating a visual representation of their existence. This series consists of five artworks and visualises these characters, as seen in figure 3 and figure 4. Through precise execution, Putter portrays an interesting visual perspective and proposes that ‘it is not inevitable for one culture to thrive at the expense of another, but that it is possible for new forms to emerge through the interplay of dissimilar cultures’ (Putter in Michael Stevenson Gallery 2009). Putter’s work reflects that this ‘interplay’ is in fact already present in colonial history, and serves as a reminder to purists that the concept of cross-cultural merging is apparent even in the earliest years of colonisation. *African Hospitality* makes the European coloniser the ‘subject’ of an ‘anthropological’ study and in so doing questions the integrity of early Western visual representations of the ‘other’. The message conveyed is complex in nature as Putter deals with the sensitive issue of cultural identity and historical accountability revealed in the personal viewing experience.

### **Sarah Keogh: *Multi-culturally Modernised***

Keogh’s series, *Multi-culturally Modernised*, is an exploration of cultural identity, interconnectedness and possible cross-cultures. The portraits portrayed in the series are in many ways a futuristic possibility, and the photographer’s creative interpretation of how the individual may choose to represent themselves as ‘other’ to the predominant Western influence. Again the visual appropriation of the anthropometrical approach to imaging creates tension and possible ambiguity in the viewing process.

The work is based on the principle that globalisation allows cultures all around the globe to gain knowledge about one another, and allows a platform for communication between them: ‘Globalization (sic) is an on-going process of the formation of world-wide social relations’ (Nederveen Pieterse 2009: 7). The knowledge gained allows society to learn about other cultural belief systems and how people adopt religion, diets and travel, allowing for an adaptation of these aspects. Various cultures manifest different identities. Even though individuals are exposed to a multitude of cultural influences, these subjects can sift through various influences and either reject or integrate them (Wang 2007: 84). The principle of an imperial Western cultural domination is therefore called into question.

Modern societies are multicultural in themselves, encompassing a multitude of varying ways of life and lifestyles of people. Today most people’s identities, not just Western intellectuals, are shaped by more than a single culture. People, not only societies, are multicultural. The



concept of globalisation on the other hand, assumes that cultures are becoming the same as the world. ‘Globalization (sic) is a concept of uniformity, preferably following the Western model’ (Sotshangane 2002: 22).



**Figure 5**  
Sarah Keogh, 2013, *Fulani Woman* from the series *Multi-culturally Modernised*.



**Figure 6**  
Sarah Keogh, 2013, *Fulani Woman* from the series *Multi-culturally Modernised*.

*Multi-culturally Modernised* is a visual journey through a multitude of predominantly African cultures, an assimilation of localised individual characters (see figures 5 and 6), which in some ways can be seen as a new reflection on ‘inter-national’. The emphasis is not on being inclusive of all cultures, but rather a comment on the Westernised view of society emphasised by the anthropological approach to ‘documenting’ the subject’s portrait. Keogh did extensive research into cultural dress, artefacts and rituals in order to fabricate identities that are based on a view of multicultural society that emphasises the alternative (in this case African) or ‘other’ than Western society as a predominant futuristic portrait. This work directly comments on giving a voice to those whose identities have been formed by Western perspective. This imagined identity was inspired by the way that social media has allowed an alternative perspective to global communication. It is no longer only news networks that have the ability to channel a particular perspective on the understanding of an event, as the social networking that allows a voice from the average citizen now challenges them.

According to Keogh, ‘for generations, tribes and cultures have practised the same or similar ways of life, therefore this series is not necessarily a major twist in what each and every culture believes and lives for, but rather adds a multicultural identity by mixing aspects of existing cultural identities within a modernised perspective’. Keogh conducted research into cultural

identity prior to the execution of these images. ‘This body of work is merely a possibility, a creative interpretation, and in no way a pure representation of what the future may hold through globalisation from a predominantly individualised perspective’ (Keogh). Within this series there is a study of over twenty-two different tribes and cultures within Africa, focusing on aspects such as customs, annual carnivals and/or festivals, as well as rituals for rites of passage. In a sense, the portraits look at the diverse lives of cultures in Africa, but also attempt a deeper look at the influence globalisation has on multiculturalism and attempt to offer an alternative to Western dominance. The work also allows the individual to emerge from the constructs of any one particular culture.

By appropriating symbols of cultural identity as well as the implementation of the anthropometrical approach to imaging a strong emotional identification or response is (possibly inadvertently) activated. As Keogh sets out to comment on the visualising of culture, the images that emerge are often (and unavoidably) stereotypes themselves, for example the African skin markings evident in Keogh’s work. The complexity of the appropriated visual coding and the personal viewing experience therefore has the potential to reinforce ‘othering’ rather than ‘undoing’ them as was the original intention of Keogh.

## Conclusion

These visual communicators predominantly use photography within the context of the ‘other’ and so do not afford the Western perspective prime position. The work reflected on in this paper questions prejudice, the language and veracity of photography as a document, the interplay of culture as well as purist attitudes. There is no wrong or right or indeed a clear distinction of black or white, but rather a questioning of identity construction. It has become evident that the individual is no longer a silent ‘other’ or visual consumer; rather, they actively question how identity is constructed or created and challenge the ‘normal’ visual conventions of culture.

The significance of the study lies in the fact that the visual message being communicated within the appropriated context has the ability to reflect on both political and cultural ideologies giving advantage to an ‘other’ or non Western perspective. However, unintentionally this reversal has the power to strengthen the dichotomy of the West versus the ‘other’. By attempting to ‘advance’ a non-Western perspective, the reversing of roles generates irony that serves to ‘other’ the ‘other’ even further via the ‘strangeness’ of the reversal. This paper has predominantly concentrated on the particular perspective of the visual communicators under discussion. What has not been elaborated on, and can perhaps become a topic for further research, is the possible reading of the images that extend beyond the intentions of the photographers. The very nature of the subject matter is controversial, with the ability to elicit uncomfortable reactions. The viewer can in fact be constituted as a subject within the larger social relations of the image, and so varied readings expressed.

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