



DECOLONIZING VISUALITIES

Critical Concepts and Interventions in Visual Studies

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Course Instructor: Nasheli Jiménez del Val

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ONLINE COURSE — November 2023
4 sessions / dates TBC — 6pm - 9pm (GMT)

Andrea Noble (2004) has argued that canonical Visual Culture Studies have tended to present a progressive and innovative discourse in its approach to image and visual analysis. Yet, for her, Visual Studies' understandings of the visual have found clear limits when it comes to addressing non-Western forms of visibility. Noble maintains that, emerging mostly from Anglophone, Francophone, and Germanophone academia, Visual Studies have invisibilized the Western-centredness of their theoretical framework and have erased the theories and practices of coloniality that conceptually anchor their foundational analytical categories. Similarly, Nicholas Mirzoeff (2011) has argued that, historically, Visual Studies emerged as a discourse mostly by the West for the West. And yet, for him, one of Visual Studies' strengths may prove to be its capacity to think transculturally. In this regard, Noble and Mirzoeff champion a more critical, decolonial approach to Visual Studies that takes into account the orthodoxies on which this interdisciplinary field is based in order to better account for other, non-Western understandings of visibility.

Considering this problematic as a point of departure, this short course will analyse three specific categories central to Visual Studies that, I propose, can be decolonially intervened. Firstly, the course will look at the concept of representation and consider its central importance to the theoretical framework of Visual Studies. Next, the course will analyse the image as a conceptual cornerstone for canonical theorisations of visibility. Thirdly, this course will approach the

concept of visibility as a foundational epistemic regime of modern/colonial Western dominance. Finally, the fourth session will discuss the potentiality of a decolonial in/disciplinary Visual Studies that can make explicit the colonial anchorages of its theoretical framework and seek out new/other categories for a decolonial study of the visual.

Session 1. Representation: Scope and Limitations of Representational Systems

By providing a brief genealogy of the concept of representation, this session will consider representation as central to theorizations of visibility in cultural and visual studies. Through a critical decolonial engagement with this concept, we will discuss the scope and limitations of representation as a theoretical category and further consider the role that Western representation plays in "the colonization of the imaginary of dominated peoples" (Quijano cited in Castro-Gómez, 2008).

Session 2. Image: Decolonizing the Canon

This session will analyse the status of the image beyond Western logocentric binary understandings of the concept. Firstly, we will briefly consider the image through its canonical theorizations in Anglophone, Francophone, and Germanophone visual studies. Then we will explore Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's discussion of the image through her critique of Stuart Hall's concept of the image as visual representation. Further, we will look at Rivera Cusicanqui's proposal of a ch'ixi gaze as a potential avenue for decolonizing the image.

Session 3. **Visuality: Visualities and Counter-Visualities in the Global Age**

Following Nicholas Mirzoeff's work on *visuality* (2011), this session will consider *visuality* as an epistemic regime that has historically served to authorise Western regimes of imperial/colonial dominance world-wide. We will further discuss alternative visualities or counter-visualities through the work of Joaquín Barriandos (2011) and his proposal of an inter-epistemic visual dialogue for the decolonization of the coloniality of seeing.

Session 4. **Inter/in/discipline: In/disciplinary Interventions in Visual Studies**

The final session will look at the potentialities of a decolonial Visual Studies. Can/should Visual Studies be decolonized? To what aim? What strategical and tactical advantages are there in intervening Visual Studies as interdiscipline (Mitchell 1995)? What specific categories from Visual Studies are conceptually anchored in theories and practices of colonialism and Eurocentrism (Noble 2004) and should be, therefore, critically intervened? of *visuality*. Thirdly, this course will approach the concept of *visuality* as a foundational epistemic regime of modern/colonial Western dominance. Finally, the fourth session will discuss the potentiality of a decolonial in/disciplinary Visual Studies that can make explicit the colonial anchorages of its theoretical framework and seek out new/other categories for a decolonial study of the visual.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Nasheli Jiménez del Val is a researcher and professor in Visual Studies with a focus on decolonial approaches to theorizing images and visualities. Her main research interests centre on power dynamics and the construction of *visuality*, authority, and counter-looking in the age of global necropolitics.

She holds a PhD in Cultural Studies from Cardiff University (2010), an MA in Political and Social Studies from UNAM (2005), and a BA in Graphic Communication from UNAM (2002). From 2014 to 2018 she was Associate Researcher at Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, with the research project "Violent Death: Images of Horror, Sensationalism, and Resistance in Mexico (1994-2012)". Previously, she was Marie-Curie-Beatriu de Pinós Fellow at the Department of Art History, University of Barcelona (2012-2014), Lecturer in Spanish and Latin American Cultural Studies at the University of Stirling (2010-2011), Getty Latin America Guest Researcher at l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, INHA (2003-2004), and Research Assistant at Museo Nacional de Arte, MUNAL (2001-2003). She has been Editor in Chief for the journal *Revista de Estudios Globales y Arte Contemporáneo* of the Art, Globalization, Interculturality Research Group (PI: Anna Maria Guasch, 2012-2014) and currently serves on the editorial boards of *Archivo Papers Journal*, *El ornitorrinco tachado*, *Revista de Artes Visuales* (Mexico State Autonomous University), and *NOiMAGEN* (Center for Visual Studies, iViCON Foundation, Chile).

REGISTRATION

Registration will open in September 2023 at **Archivo Platform**
www.archivoplatform.com/event-details/decolonizing-visualities

Early Bird Fee: €150.00

Regular Fee: €180.00

