

LEARNING MATERIALS

The Image Complex: Photography, Vision, and Belief in South Asia

Facilitated by Aastha D and Impart

Session 1

Seeing Historically: Photography, Knowledge, and Power

August 18, 2026 | 7:00 pm IST

With Dr Deepali Dewan and Dr Sudeshna Guha

These learning materials are intended to support and enrich your insights and takeaways from the upcoming lecture. They include resources that the co-facilitator and guest speakers may draw upon during the session, as well as recommended readings, and a reflective prompt. While not necessary, we encourage you to engage with these materials prior to the session. For a broader range of references on the themes and ideas we explore throughout this series, scroll down to the 'Further Resources' section.

Read

1. Berger, John. "Chapter 1 of Ways of Seeing by John Berger." Ways of Seeing.
<https://www.ways-of-seeing.com/ch1>
2. Dewan, Deepali. "The Painted Photograph in India." In *Embellished Reality — Indian Painted Photographs: Towards a Transcultural History of Photography*. Royal Ontario Museum Press, 2012.
https://www.academia.edu/66747835/Embellished_reality_Indian_painted_photographs_towards_a_transcultural_history_of_photography
3. Dewan, Deepali, and Deborah Hutton. Introduction to *Raja Deen Dayal: Artist-Photographer in 19th-Century India*. Mapin Publishing; Alkazi Collection of Photography, 2013.
<https://alkazifoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Raja-Deen-Dayal-F.pdf>
4. Edwards, Elizabeth. *Raw histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums*. Routledge, 2020. First published 2001 by Berg Publishers.
<https://books.google.co.in/books?id=GSQSEAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

5. Edwards, Elizabeth, and Ella Ravilious. *What Photographs Do: The making and remaking of museum cultures*. UCL Press; Victoria and Albert Museum, 2022.
<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10159120/1/What%20Photographs%20Do.pdf>
6. Pinney, Christopher. Prologue to *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*. University of Chicago Press, 1997.
https://books.google.co.in/books?id=CVzqAOAAOBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbg_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false
7. Pinney, Christopher. *The Coming of Photography in India*. British Library, 2008.
https://www.academia.edu/37861086/The_Coming_of_Photography_in_India
8. Pinney, Christopher, and PhotoDemos Collective, eds. *Citizens of Photography: The Camera and the Political Imagination*. Duke University Press, 2023.
https://library.oapen.org/viewer/web/viewer.html?file=/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/76485/Pinney_9781478093619_txt.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
9. Sekula, Allan. "The Body and the Archive." *October* 39 (Winter 1986): 3–64.
https://monoskop.org/images/6/65/Sekula_1986_The_Body_and_the_Archive.pdf
10. Strassler, Karen. *Introduction to Demanding Images: Democracy, Mediation, and the Image-Event in Indonesia*. Duke University Press, 2020.
https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/f7ca9afb-82c2-002a-a423-84e111d5b498/efadf6d7-e335-4a33-b867-036a90c0c795/978-1-4780-0469-1_601.pdf
11. 'Typecasting: Photographing the Peoples of India.' Curated by Sudeshna Guha. DAG, New Delhi (January 31–February 15, 2026). Exhibition.
<https://dagworld.com/typecasting.html>

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1. “Inside Typecasting: Colonial Photography and Identity | Bikaner House | DAG.” Posted February 19, 2026, by Bikaner House. YouTube, 21:48.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-0wzrCEmOk>
2. “Shape of the Museum: Deepali Dewan and Sophie Hackett.” Posted September 16, 2020, by Art Gallery of Ontario. YouTube, 50:15.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oVhRXYiRqg>

Listen

1. “Deepali Dewan: Photographing the Maharajas (2).” Posted 2016, by Art Gallery of Ontario. SoundCloud, 01:25:11.
<https://soundcloud.com/agotoronto/photographing-the-maharajas?in=agotoronto/sets/ago-talks>
2. “Reflections on Royal India.” Posted 2019, by Royal Ontario Museum. SoundCloud, 57:50.
<https://soundcloud.com/rom-toronto/sets/reflections-on-royal-india>

Think

Find an ethnographic photograph from the 19th century. What information does it appear to give you? Write down your observations and inferences. Then, list five things you *cannot* know from looking at this image. What questions does the image leave you with?

Feel free to share your response with the rest of the learning community on our Discussion Forum.

Further Resources

1. Anthony, Theo. "ALL LIGHT, EVERYWHERE - Official Trailer." Posted May 18, 2021, by Super. YouTube, 2:12.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luHmSqY0Xsk>
2. Anthony, Theo. "Documentary: All Light Everywhere." Posted August 4, 2025, by Incarcerated Nation Network INC Media. YouTube, 01:55:43.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEY2MHvDMcY>
3. Azouley, Ariella. Introduction to *The Civil Contract of Photography*. Zone Books, 2008.
<https://jpgenreblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ariella-azoulay-the-civil-contract-of-photography.pdf>
4. Azouley, Ariella. "Citizens of Disaster." In *The Civil Contract of Photography*. Zone Books, 2008.
<https://jpgenreblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ariella-azoulay-the-civil-contract-of-photography.pdf>
5. Berger, John. "Ways of Seeing by John Berger." <https://www.ways-of-seeing.com/>
6. Berger, John, and Mike Dibb. "John Berger / Ways of Seeing, Episode 1 (1972)." Posted July 27, 2020, by Enlight Studies. YouTube, 30:04.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-4LwAuTw7k>
7. Campt, Tina. "Imagine Otherwise: Tina Campt on Listening to Images." Interview by Cathy Hannabach. Posted May 16, 2018. Ideas on Fire, 27:10.
<https://ideasonfire.net/63-tina-campt/>
8. Campt, Tina. "The Sound of Defiance." Interview by Brian Wallis. *Aperture*, October 25, 2017.
<https://aperture.org/editorial/tina-campt-conversation-brian-wallis/>

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9. Edwards, Elizabeth, and Janice Hart. "Introduction: Photographs as Objects." In *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*. Routledge, 2004.
https://yale.imodules.com/s/1667/images/gid6/editor_documents/yacol/ycba_readings/week_6_elizabeth_edwards_and_janice_hart_introduction_to_photographs_objects_histories.pdf?sessionid=853c3754-3ece-442a-92ec-f75cb01e1bc9&cc=1
10. Edwards, Elizabeth, and Janice Hart. "Mixed Box: The Cultural Biography of a Box of 'Ethnographic' Photographs." In *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*. Routledge, 2004.
11. "Keynote: The Rise of Techno-Authoritarian Control - Safiya Noble in Conversation with Gina Neff." Posted April 25, 2025, by Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy. YouTube, 31:58.
<https://youtu.be/Y9tydzKE2lE?si=bExDgQcFR8WVd1>
12. Paglen, Trevor. "Invisible Images (Your Pictures Are Looking at You)." *The New Inquiry*, December 8, 2016.
<https://thenewinquiry.com/invisible-images-your-pictures-are-looking-at-you/>
13. Papa, Stephanie. "Stories Behind Revolutions." *Magnum*, April 3, 2026.
<https://www.magnumphotos.com/newsroom/the-stories-behind-revolutions/>
14. "PARI - People's Archive of Rural India." PARI. <https://ruralindiaonline.org/>
15. Pinney, Christopher. Prologue to *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*. University of Chicago Press, 1997.
https://books.google.co.in/books?id=CVzqAQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbg_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false
16. Sekula, Allan. "The Body and the Archive." *October* 39 (Winter 1986): 3–64.
https://monoskop.org/images/6/65/Sekula_1986_The_Body_and_the_Archive.pdf

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17. Steyerl, Hito. "In Defense of the Poor Image." *e-flux Journal* 10 (November 2009).
<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image>
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This document is part of the lecture series 'The Image Complex,' facilitated by Aastha D and Impart. Click [here](#) to start learning.

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