

LEARNING MATERIALS

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

Facilitated by Aastha D and Impart

Session 2

Unstable Objects: Photography, Social Change, and Dissent

August 20, 2026 | 7:00 pm IST

With Dr Avrati Bhatnagar, Rahaab Allana, and Dr Ranu Roychoudhuri

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. Allana, Rahaab. "The Archive as Proposition." *Third Text: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture*, May 19, 2023.
<http://www.thirdtext.org/livingarchives-allana>
2. Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Translated by Harry Zohn. In *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, edited by Hannah Arendt. Schocken Books, 1969. See esp. sections II–VI.
<https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/benjamin.pdf>
3. Berger, John. "Uses of Photography." In *About Looking*, 48–63. Pantheon Books, 1980. <http://timothyquigley.net/vcs/berger-uses.pdf>
4. 'Disobedient Subjects: Bombay 1930–31.' Curated by Avrati Bhatnagar and Sumathi Ramaswamy. Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University, Durham (October 30, 2025–January 19, 2026); Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai (October 16, 2025–March 31, 2026). Exhibition.
<https://sites.google.com/view/disobedientsubjectsexhibit/home>

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5. Warner, Michael. "Publics and Counterpublics (abbreviated version)." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (November 2002): 413–425.
<https://courses.imp-art.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Michael-Warner-Publics-Short.pdf>

Listen

1. "Interview with the Curator - Rahaab Allana." Posted December 2, 2021, by French Institute in India. YouTube, 00:59.
<https://youtu.be/Ks3ET1CUcwU?si=zUJbMTwL8bbMS9DQ>

Think

Choose a historical photograph. Find three versions of this photograph online. Note any differences you see between these versions. How has cropping impacted each version of the image? How has cropping affected or changed the politics of this image?

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>

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3. Azouley, Ariella. Introduction to *The Civil Contract of Photography*. Zone Books, 2008.
<https://jpgenrgb.blog/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://jpgenrgb.blog/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/>
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.

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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=CVzqAQAAQBAI&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
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>

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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Impart is an online platform that encourages greater engagement with South Asia's art and cultural histories. We are a unit of the Art & Photography Foundation, and an institutional partner of the Museum of Art & Photography (MAP), Bengaluru.