

## ISCHE Standing Working Group

### Material Hermeneutics and Remediation as Challenges in Visual Studies in Histories of Education

#### ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

The Standing Working Group “Material Hermeneutics and Remediation as Challenges in Visual Studies in Histories of Education” was created by the General Assembly during the ISCHE 41 meeting held in Berlin in August 2018. The convenors are Tim Allender (University of Sydney), Inés Dussel (Mexico, Cinvestav), Ian Grosvenor (University of Birmingham) and Karin Priem (University of Luxembourg).

#### 1. General Purpose of the SWG

The Standing Working Group aims to initiate and invite debates and scholarly exchanges on images and films as complex material and social objects. This objective will be achieved by looking at images as *objects to think with*, by problematizing them as signs or traces of complex entanglements with both the past and the present. These interactions invite us to take more rigorous and complex approaches to studying them.

The convenors conceive the SWG as a space that will open up and discuss further avenues for visual inquiry, enhance interest in images within ISCHE, and raise awareness for what images allow us to think about the plural and complex worlds of educational practices.

#### 2. Activities

Following up on our workshop at the ISCHE conference in Porto, the SWG on Visual Studies in Histories of Education was holding another workshop followed by two panels at ISCHE Online 2021 entitled “Opening the Audiovisual Archive: New Initiatives in History of Education”. The purpose of the first part of this workshop was to present recently digitized audiovisual materials from the UNESCO Archives. The focus was on documentary films featuring selected UNESCO missions in the field of fundamental education. This part of the workshop offered the opportunity to connect historians of education with UNESCO archivists and to initiate and encourage scholarly exchanges on UNESCO’s media policies and film productions in the field of education. The second part of the workshop explored forgotten (audio-)visual materials originating from Belgian and Swedish reform initiatives in the 20th century and looked at how the camera (film and photography) was used to observe and promote educational reforms.

For the presentations that followed the workshop, new archival materials were introduced on how the camera (film and photography) was used to propagate a specific educational iconography and how scattered visual sources and silenced histories of education could be brought to our attention by collecting them in digital archives and by audio-visual ethnographical research on rural populations.

All presentations stimulated lively discussions on the interplay of history of education, media history and the promotion of educational reforms, values, and missions.

#### 3. Book Series Appearances: Studies in Visual Research

Outside of the conference, the SWG convenors have focused their energy on further developing the De Gruyter book series *Appearances: Studies in Visual Research*. After the first volume *They Did Not Stop at Eboli: UNESCO and the Campaign against Illiteracy in a Reportage by David ‘Chim’ Seymour and Texts by Carlo Levi* (ed. by Giovanna Hendel, Carole Naggari & Karin Priem) appeared in December

2019, the second volume of the book series was prepared in the following year and appeared in 2021. It is entitled *Appearances Matter: The Visual in Educational History* (ed. by Tim Allender, Inés Dussel, Ian Grosvenor & Karin Priem) and showcases results of an international Pre-Conference Workshop at ISCHE Buenos Aires. The third volume entitled *Media Matter: Images as Presenters, Mediators, and Means of Observation* (ed. by Francisca Comas Rubí, Karin Priem & Sara González Gómez) was prepared in 2021 and appeared in autumn of the same year. It emerged from an international workshop at the University of the Balearic Islands which took place in spring 2019. Finally, a fourth volume that is currently in preparation deals with the intellectual and visual biography of Magnum photographer David Seymour and is authored by photo historian Carole Naggar. All volumes testify to long-standing interdisciplinary collaborations among an international group of scholars who continue to discuss a broad range of themes and methodological issues around images, photography and film.