

ISCHE Standing Working Group „Material Hermeneutics and Remediation as Challenges in Visual Studies in Histories of Education“

FINAL REPORT 2023

Created by the General Assembly in August 2018 the Standing Working Group „Material Hermeneutics and Remediation as Challenges in Visual Studies in Histories of Education“ convened by Tim Allender (University of Sydney), Inés Dussel (Mexico, Cinvestav), Ian Grosvenor (University of Birmingham) and Karin Priem (University of Luxembourg) was a fruitful intellectual endeavor, and many tangible outcomes were produced by collaborative work.

The convenors of the Standing Working Group created numerous discussion forums where further avenues for visual inquiry were explored and could raise awareness for what images allow us to think about the plural and complex worlds of education. Major activities were the following:

Pre-Conference Workshops and Workshops at ISCHE conferences

2016–2018: The convenors of this Standing Working Group over the years had developed an international and interdisciplinary interest and expertise in the domain of visual studies in histories of education. Besides their publications in the field, they already had successfully organized several activities at ISCHE conferences two years before the Standing Working Group was created. At ISCHE Chicago (2016), Ian Grosvenor and Karin Priem served as organizers and chairs of three interconnected panels on “Capturing the Body: Visual Representations and Presentations in History of Education Revisited,” focusing on a broad array of themes and methodological issues around photography and films. The contributions have been published in a special issue of *Paedagogica Historica* (vol. 53, no. 6, 2017) entitled “Images and Films as Objects to Think With: A Reappraisal of Visual Studies in Histories of Education,” featuring Karin Priem and Inés Dussel as guest editors. At ISCHE Buenos Aires (2017), the convenors conducted a well-received pre-conference workshop on “The Visual and History Practices in the Digital Age”. Together with invited papers from other scholars, the presentations at this workshop were published at De Gruyter in 2021 (for more details see below).

2019: The SWG was launched at ISCHE 42 in Porto 2019. The convenors used one two-hour session which was made up of a paper presentation and a workshop. The paper, given by Eduardo Galak (IdIHCS-CONICET/Universidad Nacional de La Plata) and María Silvia Serra (Universidad Nacional de Rosario), focused on the activities of the *Cine Escuela Argentino*. Film extracts generated a wide-ranging discussion around film, education and propaganda. The workshop was organised by Maria del Mar Pozo Andres (University of Alcalá), Sjaak Braster (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Inés Dussel (DIE-CINVESTAV), Ian Grosvenor

(University of Birmingham), and Karin Priem (University of Luxembourg). Photography was used to explore two related areas of concern for historians of education. First, it considered how the context of seeing changes the nature of meaning as an image is moved from space to space and the implications this had for the ways in which history is communicated through and leaves its mark in images. Secondly, it considered the related issue of what Fred Ritchin termed “the crisis of believability.” Here the focus was on how the believability of visual evidence has become increasingly questioned as a source of “truth.” The images selected for discussion were connected by a common theme “Children and Foods” and were drawn from Spain, Italy, and England. The session was attended by over 40 delegates.

2020–2021: Interrupted by the COVID-19 crisis and following up on our workshop at the ISCHE conference in Porto, the SWG 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 digitized audio-visual 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.

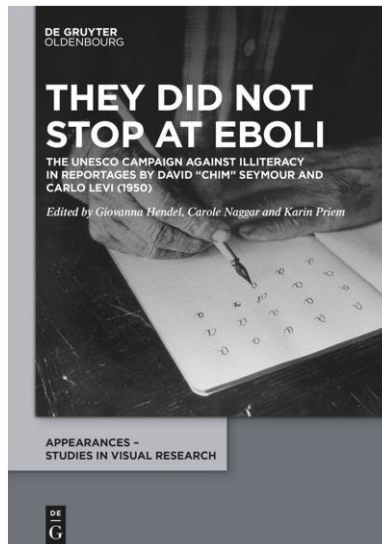
2022: “Education and the Imperial Gaze” was the focus of the Standing Working Group in at ISCHE Milan. The call resulted in an extended workshop and three papers at the Milan conference. The workshop ““A Most Valuable Aid to Education“”: Photography and the Imperial Imaginary,” organized by the Standing Working Group Convenors explored the relational encounter between the spectator, the photographer, the subject, and the production and circulation of imperial photographs. At the center of workshop was the archive of the English photographer, collector, traveller, and politician Sir Benjamin Stone.

2023: The Standing Working Group came to an end at ISCHE Budapest in 2023. Therefore, the convenors invited for proposals that will also be considered for a two volumes book project on the imperial gaze in the *Appearances: Studies in Visual Research* book series (De Gruyter) that is planned for 2024. The call for submissions has been widely advertised beyond the confines of ISCHE and can be found here: <https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/de/news/call-submissions-proposed-new-title-de-gruyter-book-series-appearances-studies-visual-research>.

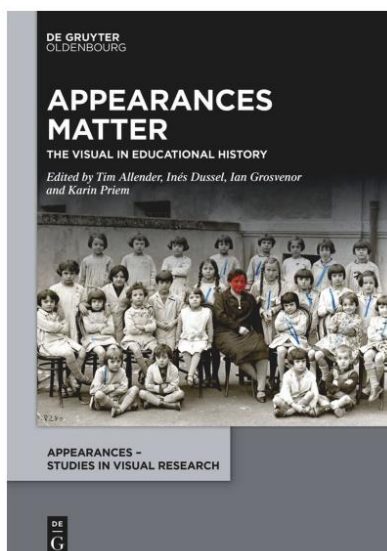
Book Series

Outside of the conference, the SWG convenors have focused their energy on initiating and developing the De Gruyter book series *Appearances: Studies in Visual Research* (<https://www.degruyter.com/serial/asvr-b/html?lang=en>):

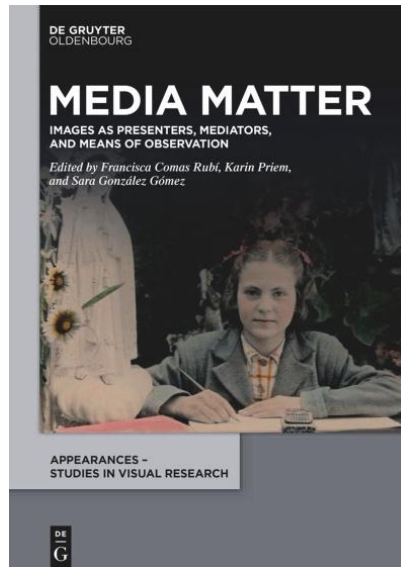
- A first volume on *They Did Not Stop at Eboli: UNESCO and the Campaign against Illiteracy in a Reportage by David 'CHIM' Seymour and Texts by Carlo Levi* edited by Giovanna Hendel, Carole Naggar and Karin Priem appeared open access in December 2019.



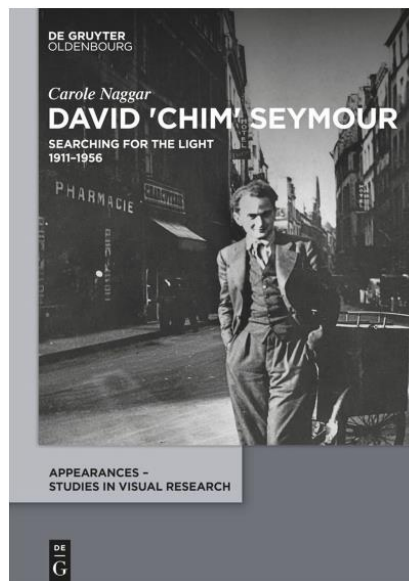
- The second volume entitled *Appearances Matter: The Visual in Educational History* was published in 2021 and is edited by the convenors. It showcases the results of a Pre-Conference-Workshop at ISCHE Buenos Aires.



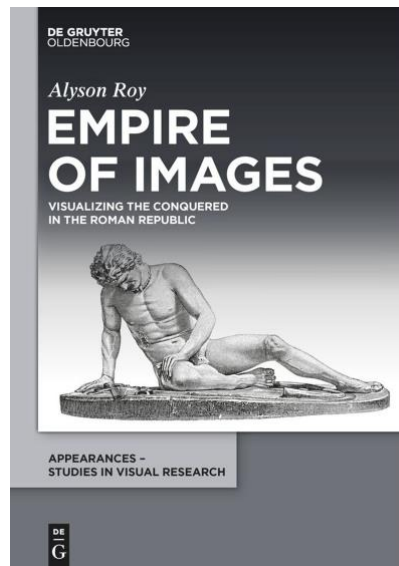
- A third volume is entitled *Media Matter: Images as Public Agents and Means of Shaping Identities* edited by Francisca Comas Rubí, Karin Priem and Sara González Gómez emerged from an international workshop on visual histories of education at the University of the Balearic Islands which took place in spring 2019.



- The fourth volume in the series deals with the intellectual and visual biography of Magnum photographer David Seymour and is authored by prize winning photography historian Carole Naggar. It is entitled *David 'Chim' Seymour: Searching for the Light 1911-1956* and was published in 2022.



- Volume five on *Empire of Images: Visualizing the Conquered in the Roman Republic* by Alyson Roy is currently under preparation and will appear in 2024.



- Following the success of the SWG programme in Milan and Budapest (on-site and online), the convenors are currently in the process of developing two edited volumes on *The Imperial Gaze: Practices, Representations, and Identities* (vol. 6 and vol. 7 of the book series).

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.

The convenors hope that their work encourages further research into the visual history of education and continues to foster interdisciplinary collaboration in the field.