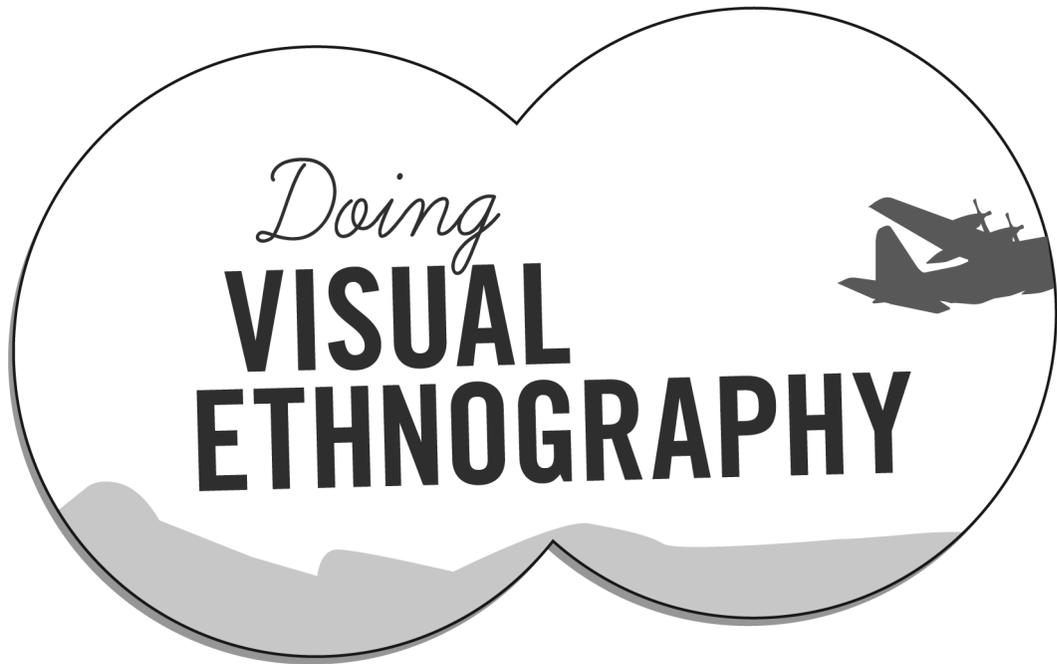


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SARAH PINK



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Visual Ethnography across Disciplines

Over the last ten or so years since the publication of the first edition of *Doing Visual Ethnography* I have met and communicated offline and online with many people from across the world about this field of practice. From them I have learnt much and I have developed my own approach to visual ethnography through new research collaborations with colleagues from across diverse fields. One of the most interesting and exciting elements of this process is that it has taken me far beyond my first discipline – I trained originally as a social and visual anthropologist. Working closely with scholars and researchers from other disciplines and giving lectures, seminars and workshops in departments and research groups beyond anthropology has offered me opportunities to learn about the priorities and needs of these related fields and to understand better how visual ethnography might be meaningful to their practices and scholarship. This has included directly collaborating with scholars and researchers whose work is based in for instance, design, engineering, the construction industry, urban planning, media studies, education studies and the arts. It has led me to dialogues with scholars in fields including geography, health studies, sports studies, ethnology, tourism studies, organisation studies, and art therapy. Moreover I am always left with the feeling that there are more collaborative possibilities to develop. In this chapter I map out the key influences and developments in visual ethnography as it crosses a series of central disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields. On the one hand this demonstrates the interdisciplinary situatedness of visual ethnography practice. On the other I hope to offer points of connection for researchers who might feel that in some ways their work belongs to one particular discipline or field of study, but who are open to others, and who seek to learn and innovate in their own practice. There are many connections yet to be made, and this book follows the same approach that generally characterises my writing on methodology in that it stands as an invitation to make new connections and relationships, rather than simply setting out to define those that are already there. Below I outline the disciplinary pasts and possibilities of visual ethnography. In doing so I trace its development, how the theoretical and practical elements of

this trajectory have shifted and changed across and within disciplines, and how disciplinary influences and interdisciplinary theoretical ‘turns’ and debates have shaped the development of this trajectory.



Figure 1.1 Visual Ethnography in Interdisciplinary Encounters

Christina Lammer develops visual ethnography methods alongside and in relation to her work with surgeons, artists, documentary filmmakers and photographers. Her blog and web site show how she combines these different perspectives and media in her research and arts practice. In her blog entry Lammer uses her own face and a very traditional medium – photo-booth photography – to explore patient experiences.

In her blog post of the 10 January 2012, Christina Lammer writes a short text and includes some images that she has taken of herself in a photo cabin at the Westbahnhof (train station) in Vienna. The photographs with her text below are a selection from 21 self portraits in which Lammer goes through a series of facial exercises designed for patients she is doing research with to do after they have been through surgery. Here we can see how using photography can enable us as researchers to develop and communicate about empathetic understandings of what we imagine other people’s experiences to be.

As Christina Lammer explains:

‘human expressiveness is not limited to a smiling or angry face. The whole body is included in how a person expresses him- or herself. Making faces is very much like dancing. However we automatically read in the faces of other people. Feelings are shared. A smile can be contagious ... I am working together with facially paralyzed persons who are treated in plastic and reconstructive surgery. After surgery the patients need to do exercises in front of a mirror on a daily basis. They get a list with schematic drawings of a human face and explanations of particular movements they shall do every day.’

© Christina Lammer 2012. Reproduced from <http://www.corporealities.org/wordpress/?p=426> with permission from Christina Lammer.

— Disciplinary concerns and visual ethnography research —

There are two ways to consider the relationship of visual ethnography to academic disciplines and interdisciplinary fields. One is to ask to which disciplines might visual ethnography practice be relevant, and from that perspective to consider how the theoretical tenets of those disciplines and fields might inform the way it is practiced. The other is to consider which disciplines have overlapping concerns in seeking to understand visual images, audiovisual media,

mobile technologies and the internet. Following this route we can ask more than just how visual ethnography might serve the intellectual and research agendas of these disciplines and how their theories might be used to engage it. Rather we might also investigate how the understandings of images, technologies and media that are developed in these fields will enable us to understand visual ethnography practice itself. The result of treating the interdisciplinarity of visual ethnography from these two perspectives is that it allows us to go beyond simply seeing visual ethnography as a practical device that can be used to produce knowledge, to understand it further as a practice and way of knowing and learning in the world that might be equally analysed. Following this approach therefore the visual ethnographer plays a dual role – she or he seeks to understand the visual practices and images that participate in other people's worlds, while also casting a reflexive focus on her or his own visual practices and images and the ways of knowing associated with them. Thus following arguments I have made elsewhere (Pink 2009, 2012b, 2012d) it provides us with a way to apply a theoretical approach that is coherent across the ways we understand research practice, and the findings of our research.

To develop the understandings of visual ethnography practice I apply in my own work I draw, sometimes critically, on a range of disciplines and fields, including: visual anthropology, media anthropology, visual sociology, media and internet studies, visual studies/visual culture studies and art history and geography. This is a shift from the approach I took in the first edition of *Doing Visual Ethnography* in the 1990s. I was then much more concerned with the emergent relationship between anthropological ethnography and cultural studies (e.g. as developed in the work of the anthropologist Penny Harvey (1996)). As Harvey pointed out at the time anthropologists hostile to cultural studies approaches focused 'on the differences between studying texts and studying people, between representation and situated practice' (1996: 14). Instead, a visual ethnography approach, as I developed it, explicitly acknowledged the need to attend to representation and text, as part of ethnographic practice. I continue to call for an approach to ethnography that attends to representations (see also Pink 2012d), yet I now distinguish a visual ethnography approach more sharply from the semiotic approaches to text that often inform cultural studies analysis, along with the Geertzian (see Geertz 1973) notion that culture, like text might be 'read' (see Pink 2011c).

Therefore while in earlier editions of this book I identified anthropology, sociology and cultural studies as the core disciplines informing visual ethnography, in this third edition I call for a visual ethnography that is informed by recent theoretical turns to theories of place and space, practice, movement and the senses. This follows my other methodological and substantive writings, relating to sensory ethnography (Pink 2009), advances in visual methodology more generally (Pink 2012a) and ways of researching and theorising everyday life (Pink 2012d), thus reframing the ways that culture and representations are understood in and as relevant to visual ethnography through an approach that seeks to recognise

the interwovenness of socialities, objects, texts, images and technologies in people's everyday lives and identities and as part of the wider environments in which they live, move through and sense.

The idea of an interdisciplinary approach to visual ethnography is close to its roots in visual anthropology where disciplinary boundary crossing has brought together, for instance, the theories and practices of art and photography with anthropological theory and practice (e.g. Edwards 1997a; da Silva and Pink 2004; Grimshaw and Ravetz 2004; Schneider and Wright 2005). The interdisciplinary focus in visual methods has also been represented in Theo van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt's *Handbook of Social Research* (2000) and Chris Pole's *Seeing is Believing* (2004) both of which combine case studies in visual research from across disciplines. The idea that visual research as a field of interdisciplinary practice is also central to *Advances in Visual Methodology* (Pink 2012a) and is demonstrated by the work of the volume's contributors, as well as by the recent *SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods* (Margolis and Pauwels 2011). Likewise the interdisciplinary journal *Visual Studies* (formerly *Visual Sociology*) provides an excellent series of examples of visual research, practice, theory and methodology.

A final point concerning the situating of visual ethnography within a context of interdisciplinarity relates to the status of ethnography as a field of practice. Ethnography itself, although its development has historically been associated with anthropology and sociology (see O'Reilly 2011), is not owned by any one discipline. Ethnography as practiced is shaped and formed by the disciplinary theories and priorities that inform the work it is required to undertake. Yet, this seems a necessary condition of its use. Ethnography itself is not an academic discipline, but a methodology (see Chapter 2). It is an *aspect* of research and representation not the totality of a research project in itself and is rarely the sole means or end of a research project; different disciplinary uses of ethnography are likely to situate it differently within their processes of research and representation by drawing from ethnographic and other approaches to varying extents (e.g. with textual, historical, narrative, statistical or a whole range of other research practices that intertwine and overlap or link conceptually as the research proceeds). This therefore enables ethnographic knowledge to develop in new relations to the types of knowledge produced by other approaches and methods. Moreover, other methods can enable deeper understandings of the contexts in which we do visual ethnography. For example, in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I discuss how studying local photographic, media and internet practices, cultures and histories can inform our understanding of how to practice visual ethnography in given contexts. Statistical sources or analysis of existing visual texts can likewise inform the design and interpretation of visual research. In Chapters 8, 9 and 10, I emphasise the importance of understanding the media we use for ethnographic representation in relation to possible audiences and users of photography, video and the internet.

Therefore while scholars from across the social sciences and humanities study and analyse and use photography, film, video and web-based images in research

and representation, historically and in different disciplines they have done so with varying degrees of acceptance and continuity. Moreover, both between and within disciplines the development of visual research methods has been informed by different theoretical approaches. In the following sections I review key historical and contemporary contributions to this field.

Visual and media anthropology: from anthropological film to phenomenological anthropology

Historically, ethnographic uses of the visual in anthropological research were a debated area (Pink 2006, Chapter 1). From the 1960s to the early 1980s debates focused on whether visual images and recordings could usefully support the observational project of social science (e.g. Collier and Collier 1986; Hockings 1975, 1995; and Rollwagen 1988). During this period some social scientists claimed that as a data collection method visual recording was too subjective, unrepresentative and unsystematic. Ethnographers like Margaret Mead, John Collier Jnr. and Howard Becker set out to prove otherwise, in both their theoretical arguments and practical applications of photography and film. Visual ethnographers were forced to confront the accusation that their visual images lacked objectivity and scientific rigour. Mead's response was that cameras left to film continuously without human intervention produced 'objective materials' (Mead 1995 [1975]: 9–10). Others, suggesting that the specificity of the photographed moment rendered it scientifically invalid (see, for example, Collier 1995 [1975]: 247), endeavoured to compensate for this. For instance, Becker (following Jay Ruby) proposed that the photographs anthropologists and sociologists might take during field-work 'are really only vacation pictures' (Becker 1986: 244), indistinguishable from those of the anthropologist's – or anyone else's – vacation. He advocated a systematic approach to photography as the social scientists' key to success (Becker 1986: 245–50) in an echo of Collier, who warned that '[t]he photographic record can remain wholly impressionistic UNLESS it undergoes disciplined computing' (1995 [1975]: 248). Thus some disputed the validity of the visual on the grounds of its subjectivity, bias and specificity. Others responded that, under the right controls, the visual could make a contribution as an objective recording method.

One of the most influential publications of this era was Collier's (1967) *Visual Anthropology: Photography as Research Method* (revised with Malcolm Collier and reprinted in 1986), a comprehensive textbook on the use of photography and video in ethnographic research and representation. Collier and Collier advocated a systematic method of observation whereby the researcher is supported by visual technology. They asserted that 'good video and film records for research are ultimately the product of observation that is organised and consistent. The equipment, except in specialized circumstances, cannot replace the observer' (1986: 149). This approach depended on a realist interpretation of still and moving images and was later criticised on that basis (for example, by

Edwards 1997a). For Collier and Collier, the research plan was key to the ethnographer's project of recording an appropriate version of the reality he or she could observe. Therefore they distinguished between the fiction of the "shooting scripts" often used in the photographic and film world' and research plans that purport to record reality. On their terms ethnography was an observation of reality, as opposed to the constructedness of the narrative-based communication 'stories' of scripted films (Collier and Collier 1986: 162). Their visual anthropology presented an alternative to the existing text-based ways of doing anthropological ethnography, which had an important and enduring influence in visual anthropology and visual sociology. Yet alongside this, also in 1986, in the now landmark collection, *Writing Culture*, James Clifford made the rather different suggestion that in fact ethnographies themselves are constructed narratives: in a word, 'fictions'. Clifford used the term 'fiction', not to claim that ethnographies are 'opposed to the truth' or are 'false', but to emphasise how ethnographies cannot reveal or report on complete or whole accounts of reality; that they only ever tell part of the story (1986: 6). For Clifford, not only was ethnography a constructed version of truth, but 'Ethnographic truths are ... inherently *partial* – committed and incomplete' (1986: 7, original italics). This can be applied to both research and representation. Clifford's ideas thus questioned Collier and Collier's claim that research shooting guides differ from 'fictional' shooting scripts because the 'systematic selectivity' of 'field shooting or observation guides' is concerned 'with defining procedure, structure, and categories for recording that produce data on which later research analysis and summations are built' (Collier and Collier 1986: 162). Clifford's very point was that 'cultural fictions are built on systematic, and contestable, exclusions' (1986: 6). The selectivity, predetermined categories and precautions that Collier and Collier assumed would prevent ethnography from being a 'fiction' rather than a realist observation were in fact the very cornerstones upon which Clifford's ethnographic 'fictions' were constructed. For example, while Collier and Collier of course recognised that the 'whole' view of a situation cannot be recorded on video, they urged the research photographer to confront 'the challenge of gathering a semblance of the whole circumstance in a compressed sample of items and events observed in time and space' (1986: 163). In doing so, however, their work was inconsistent with the 'postmodern turn' in ethnography since they did not account for the possibility that any attempt to represent a 'whole view' itself would constitute a 'partial truth' or, in Clifford's terms, a 'fiction' based on 'systematic exclusions'. Collier and Collier's (1986) work remains a very important guide to visual ethnographic methods, and John Collier's visual ethnographic practice has left an enduring legacy. However, as a methodology it was a response to the demands of a scientific realist twentieth century anthropology, which was surpassed by theoretical shifts during the 1980s and 1990s.

From the 1980s Clifford's ideas helped to create a favourable environment for the visual representation of ethnography. The emphasis on specificity and

experience, and a recognition of the similarities between the constructedness and 'fiction' (in Clifford's sense of the term) of film and written text, created a context where ethnographic film became a more acceptable form of ethnographic representation (Ruby 1982: 130; Henley 1998: 51). During this period the focus on the mediation of meaning between anthropologists and informants was developed in the reflexive ethnographic film style of David and Judith MacDougall and their contemporaries (Loizos 1993).

In the 1990s a new literature emerged around the historical debates and developments concerning the relationship between photography, film and the observational approaches of both anthropology and sociology (e.g. Edwards 1992; Chaplin 1994; Harper 1998a, 1998b; Henley 1998; Loizos 1993; Banks and Morphy 1997; Pink 1996, 1998). Edwards's (1992) and Marcus Banks and Howard Morphy's (1997) volumes signified an intentional departure from the scientific-realist paradigm but recognised that the contemporary context was one in which '[m]any anthropologists still feel caught between the possibility of conceptual advances from visual anthropology and the more conservative paradigms of a positivist scientific tradition' (MacDougall 1997: 192). Rather than attempting to fit visual anthropology into a scientific paradigm, whereby visual research methods could support and enhance an objective anthropology, David MacDougall proposed a significantly different approach that would 'look at the principles that emerge when fieldworkers actually try to rethink anthropology through use of a visual medium' (1997: 192). This implied a radical transformation of anthropology itself that would 'involve putting in temporary suspension anthropology's dominant orientation as a discipline of words and rethinking certain categories of anthropological knowledge in the light of understandings that may be accessible only by non-verbal means' and 'a shift from word-and-sentence-based anthropological thought to image-and-sequence-based anthropological thought' (1997: 292). Therefore, rather than attempting to incorporate images into a word-based social science, MacDougall advocated that since '[v]isual anthropology can never be either a copy of written anthropology or a substitute for it ... [f]or that very reason it must develop alternative objectives and methodologies that will benefit anthropology as a whole' (1997: 292–3).

When I wrote the first edition of *Doing Visual Ethnography* in the late 1990s MacDougall's analysis seemed an accurate characterisation of the academic climate. There was increasing curiosity about visual methods as technology became more available and the visual more acceptable, along with a growing number of examples of visual research practice in ethnographic fieldwork contexts. By 2006 when I revised *Doing Visual Ethnography* for its second (2007) edition anthropologists had written and edited several books on visual anthropology practices (Banks 2001; Pink, Kürti and Afonso 2004; El Guindi 2004) and were exploring the relationship between visual anthropological and arts practice (da Silva and Pink 2004; Grimshaw and Ravetz 2004; Schneider and Wright 2005). The representational practices of

visual anthropologists had taken new directions as further critiques of ethnographic documentary filmmaking (e.g. Ruby 2000a; Chalfen and Rich 2007) inspired both new forms of ethnographic documentary video (e.g. MacDougall 2005), the production of anthropological hypermedia representations (e.g. Kirkpatrick 2003; Ruby 2000b; and see Pink 2006) art and drawing (Ramos 2004), and applied visual anthropology practice (Pink 2006, 2007a). The challenge for visual anthropology as it re-established itself in the twentieth century was no longer the question of how it would be accepted by the mainstream, but how to connect with and contribute to mainstream anthropological debates. As I elaborated in *The Future of Visual Anthropology* (Pink 2006) the sub-discipline faced a series of opportunities and challenges that meant its practitioners needed to engage with a context framed by: interdisciplinary engagements of visual ethnography methods; the theoretical shifts in mainstream anthropology that had made the visual more acceptable; a focus on experience and the senses; technological developments in digital and hypermedia possibilities; and uses of visual methods and media in applied anthropology (Pink 2006: 3). This framing influenced the writing of the second edition of *Doing Visual Ethnography* as complementary to that wider project. Yet it also meant that the second edition was specific to its moment, created at a point in the early twenty-first century when a new focus on anthropology of the senses was emerging, and in a web 1.0 technological context when DVD hypermedia publishing was an emergent practice. The focus on the senses indeed developed further (Pink 2009), and I will account for this in Chapter 2. It is always, however, more dangerous to speculate about the emergence of technological contexts, and the short rise of DVD hypermedia publications is a good example of an emergent media form that initially appeared to offer exciting new possibilities but was quickly surpassed as a web 2.0 context emerged. This is not to say that web 2.0 should be coined as ‘the’ context for digital visual ethnography publications; web 2.0 itself might be considered to be a transient form in that predictions for the qualities and possibilities of web 3.0 already exist. Yet as Veronica Barassi and Emiliano Treré demonstrate these web forms are defined by the ways that practitioners engage with them as much as by their technological possibilities and might better be understood as ‘cultural constructs’ (Barassi and Treré 2012: 1283). The same of course applies to how we might use them as researchers. As we will see in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 contemporary media theory can inform our understandings of the digital and web-based media contexts for the doing and representation of visual ethnography research, yet it cannot necessarily tell us how this will be lived out in another five or ten years into the future.

During and after this first decade of the twenty-first century visual anthropology has thus re-emerged in renewed form. Banks’s and Ruby’s (2011) volume *Made to be Seen* charts this context and its history through a series of chapters that represent the key strands in the historical and contemporary development of the sub-discipline, making it a point of reference for readers wanting to engage with visual

ethnography through a visual anthropology perspective. Cristina Grasseni's work on what she calls the 'skilled visions' approach (Grasseni 2007, 2011) focuses on vision as 'situated practice' (see Grasseni 2011: 21–32). Grasseni argues that 'from the point of view of an ecological approach to visual practice, it is important that we consider our visual inscriptions as *artifacts* and that we assess the way in which they contribute to structuring a material, cognitive and social environment for situated action' (2011: 42–3). This perspective might urge visual ethnographers to likewise consider both their own disciplinary and scholarly visions through this lens in addition to understanding the ways that other people see as equally skilled and situated. Grasseni's approach draws on the work of the anthropologist Ingold, whose ideas are increasingly influential across the disciplines I discuss in this book. Ingold's is a phenomenological approach to anthropology in which, as he puts it, his 'overriding aim is to understand how people perceive the world around them, and how and why these perceptions differ' (Ingold 2011: 323). Ingold's work offers insights that enable us to better understand the senses in visual ethnographic research, as well as the environments in which we do ethnography. I refer to these at different points throughout this book. Of particular interest for visual ethnographers however are his works that attend to the place of images in the worlds we inhabit (e.g. Ingold 2010a), along with his edited volume *Redrawing Anthropology: Materials, Movements, Lines* (2011b). There Ingold's focus is on drawing, as a way to develop what he calls a '*graphic anthropology*' (2011: 2, original italics). The book's agenda to 'consider the potential of drawing, as a method or technique much neglected in recent scholarship, to reconnect observation and description within the movements of improvisory practice' (2011: 2) is especially interesting for visual ethnographers. As Ingold explains, 'This is to think of drawing not just as a means to illustrate an otherwise written text, but as an inscriptive practice in its own right, and of the lines of drawing as weaving the very text and texture of our work' (2011: 2). This indeed offers inspiring and novel ways for re-thinking elements of the visual ethnography methods discussed in earlier editions of *Doing Visual Ethnography* (and see Pink 2011d).

An impulse towards a more engaged, applied and public form of visual anthropology has also had an inevitable impact on the way it is practised. This includes the use of visual anthropology methods and practices in applied research on the one hand and on the other a move towards the making of ethnographic films that are directed towards a more participatory and public anthropology: that seek to address questions relating to change in the world. I have explored this context in earlier publications (Pink 2007a, 2011b). The contributors to my *Visual Interventions* volume (Pink 2007a) collectively show how visual methods and media have been used in anthropological projects that seek to inform processes of change across public, NGO and industry sectors. Such work is also increasingly being developed in ways that incorporate online and offline contexts (see Pink 2011b) and examples from this field of practice also feature in the following chapters.

These works reflect therefore a context not only framed by shifts to digital and web 2.0 technologies and platforms, but where there is an increasing emphasis in

visual anthropology, towards the experiential, the phenomenological, a focus on practice (e.g. Grasseni 2007; Pink 2009; Ingold 2011), an urge towards applied and public scholarship (Pink 2007a) and a focus on the connections between anthropological ethnography and arts practice (Schneider and Wright 2010).

— Visual Sociology: changing approaches to images and society —

While from the late 1970s visual anthropologists, turning their attention to ethnographic film and video, began to question the notion of visual realism, visual sociologists (e.g. Wagner 1979) continued to develop their use of photography within the realist paradigm (Harper 1998a: 27). When I wrote the first edition of *Doing Visual Ethnography* in the late 1990s my agenda to develop visual ethnography through an increasingly reflexive and subjective visual anthropology was partially a response to the visual sociology of the 1990s where scholars were slower to incorporate ideas from outside, tending to look inwards to sociological measurements for approval. Concepts of ‘validity’, sampling and triangulation (still important in some approaches to qualitative research in sociology) were stressed in sociological ethnography texts (see, for example, Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 227–32; Walsh 1998: 231) and often visual sociologists attempted to incorporate these conditions into their use of visual images, making their visual ethnographic ‘data’ succumb to the agenda of a scientific and experimental sociology (e.g. Grady 1996; Prosser 1996; Prosser and Schwartz 1998). During this period some sociologists responded to feminist and postmodern critiques, for instance to develop interdisciplinary approaches to the sociology of visual culture (e.g. Crawshaw and Urry 1997) or to examine the implications of photography for sociological understandings of the individual and self-identity (Lury 1998). However visual sociologists themselves engaged little with social theory or debates over reflexivity and subjectivity in research. For instance, in the 1990s Jon Prosser and Donna Schwartz considered how photography could be incorporated into ‘a traditional qualitative framework rather than adopt ideas emanating from postmodern critique’ (1998: 115). Stephen Gold maintained a similarly close alliance with existing sociological methods. He saw visual sociology as divided into two camps that deal with either the interpretation or the creation of visual images. He defined this as a ‘theory/method split’ – and ‘a major obstacle in the further development of visual sociology’ and proposed that theory and method may be brought together through the established ‘grounded theory’ approach (Gold 1997: 4).

However, some visual sociologists began to account for the critique of ethnography. Douglas Harper called for a redefinition of the relationship between researcher and informant through the collaborative approach developed in the ‘new ethnography’ and a postmodern approach to documentary photography that ‘begins with the idea that the meaning of the photograph is constructed by the maker and the viewer, both of whom carry their social positions and interests to the photographic act’ (1998a: 34–5, 1998b: 140). Nevertheless Harper did not

propose a radical departure from existing sociological approaches to the visual. He recommended that visual sociology should 'begin with traditional assumptions and practices of sociological fieldwork and sociology analysis' that treat the photograph as 'data', and that it should open up to integrate the demands of the 'new ethnography' (1998a: 35). A key critic of traditional approaches to the visual in sociology during this period was Elizabeth Chaplin. In her book *Sociology and Visual Representations* (1994) Chaplin engaged with post-feminist, and post-positivist agendas to advocate a collaborative approach that would reduce the distance between the discipline and its subject of study. Rather than treating the visual as being 'data' that is subjected to a verbal analysis, she argued the potential of the visual as sociological knowledge and critical text should be explored (1994: 16), thus going further than most visual sociologists by engaging with the visual not simply as a mode of recording data or illustrating text, but as a medium through which new knowledge and critiques may be created. Some visual sociologists explored this potential in their practice in the 1990s (e.g. Barndt 1997; Barnes et al. 1997).

In the early twenty-first century further departures developed. Emmison and Smith criticised visual sociology as 'an isolated self-sufficient and somewhat eccentric specialism' that was unable to connect with social scientific theory (2000: ix). Their own response was, however, to develop visual methods as part of an approach that treated observable human behaviour and material forms as visual data, finding interviewing often unnecessary. Other sociologists developed more participatory approaches, placing collaboration between researcher and participants at the centre of the visual research. For example, linking sociological theory with performance art, Maggie O'Neill suggested that 'by representing ethnographic data ... in artistic form we can access a richer understanding of the complexities of lived experience which can throw light on broader social structures and processes' (2002: 70). Indeed these works stressed collaboration, not solely between researcher and research participants, but also between the visual, textual and performative and the producers of images and words. Such developments, combined with two edited volumes by Caroline Knowles and Paul Sweetman (2004) and Susan Halford and Caroline Knowles (2005), signified new territory for visual sociology through methodological innovation, linking it more closely with the concerns of mainstream sociologists.

Since the early twenty-first century visual sociology has indeed moved on. In the following chapters I will discuss further the innovative works of sociologists such as: Dawn Lyon (2013), who has collaborated with a photographer to research and represent a refurbishment project; Christina Lammer (2012) who draws together sociology with other disciplines in visual and research practice; and Maggie O'Neill's continuing work (2012). As is evident in the work of both Lammer and O'Neill, a visual approach to sociology is also one that attends to the senses. This makes stronger connections between visual sociology practice and the sensory turn in ethnographic scholarship (see Pink 2009). Simultaneously, others are working with an agenda to re-focus the subdiscipline of visual sociology by exploring questions

relating to the image in a digital context. For instance, Francesco Lapenta seeks to re-frame the ways that we understand photography in the context of digital cartography (Lapenta 2011) and in doing so offers new ways of conceptualising how visual ethnography might be undertaken (Lapenta 2012). Yet, visual sociology remains part of a discipline that is in many ways diverse, which in turn means that its applications of visual ethnographic methods will not always ascribe to the same intellectual agenda.

— Geography: a ‘visual’ discipline —

My original development of *Doing Visual Ethnography* in the 1990s was based on the gathering together and reviewing of the existing literature that offered either theoretical or practical discussions and examples of how ethnography might be or had been practiced through the use of visual methods and media. While, as recent discussions by geographers make it clear, there is a strong argument for understanding geography as a ‘visual discipline’ (e.g. Rose 2003; Garrett 2011), in my earlier reviews the idea of geography as a ‘visual ethnographic’ discipline did not come to the fore. Indeed, neither did the first edition of the geographer Gillian Rose’s book *Visual Methodologies* (2000) cover ethnographic practice beyond discussing its potential for the study of the audiences of images. Yet, in her third edition (2011) Rose (with reference to the 2007 edition of *Doing Visual Ethnography*) notes how now ‘Many social science scholars are experimenting with making images in order to explore the nonrepresentational aspects of the social’ (2011: 11). In her own book she thus brings together the use of images in qualitative social research, with the analysis of images, redressing what she sees as a context where ‘there has been remarkably little dialogue between social scientists using visual research methods as a way of answering research questions, and visual culture scholars who study found images’ (2011: 11). Likewise, in recent years I have found myself increasingly encountering uses of visual methods and media in the research practice of geographers at conferences and meetings and in publications discussing research practice that seems to me to be a form of visual ethnography (and indeed is sometimes identified with it through references to earlier editions of *Doing Visual Ethnography*). A 2003 discussion of the visual in geography published in the journal *Antipode* to some extent explains these developments. Here Rose suggested that while there is an underlying assumption that geography is a ‘visual discipline’ (with the exception of the work of (David Matless) “the visual” hasn’t been analyzed in any sustained way in relation to geography as an academic discipline’ (2003: 212). Visualisation, as Rose’s examples show, is an important to how geography might be thought of as a visual discipline (she mentions ‘maps, videos, sketches, photographs, slides, diagrams, graphs’). But, she argues that more important are ‘the ways in which particular visualities structure certain kind of geographical knowledges’ along with the power relations of these (2003: 213). Rose proposes that geographers might approach their interrogations of the visual in geography

through a focus on the relationship between ‘image, audience and space’ (2003: 219) thus setting an agenda for an acknowledgement of geography as a ‘visual discipline’. Other articles in the same journal issue respond to Rose’s comments, through a focus on the use of slides in presentations in geography (e.g. Matless 2003; Driver 2003) rather than on fieldwork practices. Moreover James Ryan’s response to Rose is informative. He writes that ‘geographers need to think more deeply and imaginatively about the methods they employ in both teaching and research’ (Ryan 2003: 233), noting the possibilities that might develop when geographers engage with visual artists, photography or digital media. More recently the geographer Bradley Garrett suggested that ‘while geography as a discipline has seen the potential in film analysis and critique to enhance cultural understanding, and has produced some notable “landscape” films, the discipline has yet to realize the full potential of video as a research methodology’ (2011: 521). By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, according to Garrett, photography had fared rather better as a method in geography, with some of the uses he cites being those associated with visual ethnography – he writes:

Photography is now practiced in numerous forms including photography as experiential record, participant portrait photography, architectural photography, archival analysis and photo elicitation, with geographers showing little reluctance to become photographers in the course of work on their projects. But even ‘visual geographers’ seem to harbour some reservations about photography’s ability to be singularly situated as a method, usually viewing it as supplementary to text (Garrett 2011: 522).

Garrett makes an argument for what he calls ‘videographic geographies’ (2011: 522) – an approach that he connects to visual ethnography. These new geographical considerations of the visual have emerged alongside the increasing interest in the (non-visual) senses across academic disciplines (I discuss this further in Chapter 2). Indeed Garrett notes the multisensoriality that visual methods can attend to – as he puts it ‘It might of course be argued that video is a useful geographic research tool because it captures movement; video tracks the multisensual fluidity and rhythms of everyday life’ (2011: 522). Other recent uses of video in ethnography by geographers also show such attention to movement and the senses (discussed in Pink 2009) – for instance the work of Justin Spinney who used video to research cycling in the city (e.g. Spinney 2009). Therefore, while it might be said that anthropology and geography have both shifted towards an increasingly visual/digital (and sensory) form of ethnographic practice during the twenty-first century, they have arrived at this through different routes.

These debates and discussions of the visual in geography demonstrate that its practice has something important to contribute to both the ways images are analysed and how they are used in ethnographic practice. Yet I believe that the relevance of critical and practical work in geography to visual ethnography goes beyond these questions of interrogating the status of the visual and the image in the discipline and in the development of innovative experiential forms of research practice. First, the attention to questions of place and space in geography offers

ethnographers useful frameworks for understanding the contingencies and temporalities and power configurations of the everyday contexts in which we research (see Pink 2009, 2012d). This point might be applied to ethnographic practice in general, and I have developed this elsewhere in relation to sensory ethnography practice (Pink 2009).

Second, as a 'visual' discipline, geography has had a long-term engagement with maps and mapping. Critical geographical writing on mapping offers important insights for visual ethnographers in a context where digital and mobile media mean that everyday and other spatialities are increasingly understood and experienced through digital mapping (see Lapenta 2011). Therefore, for instance while the geographer Doreen Massey points out that not all maps are necessarily problematic (2005: 107), her critical stance on the idea of the map as a 'technology of power' and the idea that maps can 'give the impression that space is a surface' (2005: 107) has much to contribute to the ways we understand contemporary digital mapping and the ways that digital maps are constituted through the melding of 'contiguous images' (Lapenta 2011). Indeed, the power relations of digital maps are ambiguous and contingent. The platforms, software and corporations with which they are implicated imply one form of power, while their potential for participatory ventures (and research) makes them a potential tool for resistance or self-definition (see Farman 2010; Lapenta 2011). This of course is the case for paper mapping and its use in visual ethnography too (see Grasseni 2012). Given that digital maps shape a part of the way that many visual ethnographers and research participants experience and navigate everyday environments – through our laptops, smart phones and other digital mapping technologies – it seems important for us to turn to the work of geographers who have already developed a critical perspective on mapping as a way to inform our understandings of the 'visual' research contexts in which we engage.

Third, the development of and commitment to non-representational (e.g. Thrift 2008) or more-than-representational (e.g. Lorimer 2005) theory in geography offers us ways to engage with the visual, and with images themselves that go beyond the cultural studies interest in the image as representation and as text that henceforth dominated this field. Such approaches go beyond representation to focus on the tacit, sensory, habitual and sometimes seemingly mundane elements of everyday life, they give an emphasis to flow and movement and invite us to explore the unspoken and ongoingness of activity in the world as it is performed and experienced. Moreover, this move to non-representational theory, as I discuss towards the end of this chapter, enables us to make connections between developments across anthropology, geography and art history/visual culture studies which support the interweaving, or at least the establishment of interdependencies between these disciplines in the doing of visual ethnography. This move also facilitates new developments in the long-term geographical interest in the senses (discussed also in Pink 2009), and therefore likewise helps to inform the way that visual ethnographic practice along with visual media and images are situated in relation to the 'sensory turn' outlined in Chapter 2.

Therefore, along with a growing commitment to the interrogation of the visual that Rose (e.g. 2003) argued for (and has developed herself e.g. 2011), geography is increasingly becoming a discipline that offers convincing theoretical propositions concerning how we might comprehend the visual and the power relations in which it is embedded, as well as a growing body of literature that demonstrates how geographers are using visual methods and media in ethnography. It is, I suggest, a discipline that those aspiring to undertake visual ethnographic research might turn to for inspiration and examples of theoretical and practical steps that may serve to inform their work.

Visual Culture Studies: a critical departure

In the first edition of *Doing Visual Ethnography*, I turned to Visual Culture studies as a way to begin to understand the place of images in society. This interdisciplinary area of research offered an established mode of thinking about the ways that images were produced, disseminated/circulated and consumed, and how visual meanings were made. In this edition I depart somewhat from this earlier commitment to Visual Culture Studies. While the approaches in this discipline certainly offer some viable methods of understanding and analysing images in ways that are socially and culturally situated, I believe that new interdisciplinary theory offers a route to understanding the image that is more coherent with the approach I develop to visual ethnography.

Earlier cultural studies approaches to photography and video developed established ways of studying visual representation and visual cultures. For example, Stuart Hall's influential text *Representations* used 'a wide range of examples from different cultural media and discourses, mainly concentrating on *visual* language' (1997: 9, original italics). It considered issues related to the negotiation of visual meanings, emphasising the contested nature of meaning and 'the practices of representation' (1997: 9–10). Indeed the focus in cultural studies is on interpreting existing images and objects and the social and cultural conditions within which they are produced (see also, for example, Cooke and Wollen 1995; Jenks 1995; Evans and Hall 1999). Martin Lister and Liz Wells formulated what they call 'Visual Cultural Studies'. Mirroring the eclecticism of its parent discipline a *visual* cultural studies 'allows the analyst to attend to the many moments within the cycle of production, circulation and consumption of the image through which meanings accumulate, slip and shift' (2000: 90). As such, Lister and Wells would analyse photographs 'without separating them from social processes' (2000: 64). This approach differed from that of a visual ethnography in that rather than using images to produce knowledge, they focus on the analysis of images and the contexts in which they become meaningful. Yet, their methodology made a welcome contribution to my earlier development of visual ethnography in that it suggested ways that a visual ethnographer might attend to visual aspects of culture and to the embeddedness of images in society. Moreover, although cultural studies was

not a key site for the emergence of visual ethnography practice, visual cultural studies brought to the fore an emphasis that indicated the relevance of studying visual culture as a part of visual ethnography practice.

More recently, in parallel with the focus on the non-visual senses in anthropology, sociology and geography, scholars have begun to re-think the study of visual culture in relation to the senses. As I outline elsewhere (Pink 2011a), W. J. T. Mitchell defined the focus of the field of visual culture as being beyond simply the visual, writing of its interest in ‘ratios between different sensory and semiotic modes’ (2002: 90) and that ‘Visual Culture entails a meditation on blindness, the invisible, the unseen, the unseeable, and the overlooked; also on deafness and the visible language of gesture; it also compels attention to the tactile, the auditory, the haptic, and the phenomenon of synaesthesia’ (2002: 90). Likewise Elizabeth Edwards and Kaushik Bhaumik’s approach to the visual sense is one that ‘explores vision and sight as something sensorially integrated, embodied and experienced’ (2009: 3) – an approach that I have suggested marks an ‘explicit shift in the “visual culture” literature’ (Pink 2011a).

These developments in the visual culture literature offer one alternative way of thinking about the images beyond the visual. Yet, from the perspective of a phenomenological anthropology, the visual culture approach is limited precisely by its focus on the image. As Ingold has put it ‘For students of visual culture, seeing apparently has nothing to do with observation, with looking around in the environment or watching what is going on. Nor does it have anything to do with the experience of illumination that makes these activities possible. It rather has to do, narrowly and exclusively, with the perusal of images (Elkins 2003: 7)’ (Ingold 2011: 316). Although, as I noted above, the senses have become part of the agenda of visual culture studies, for Ingold, ‘they have simply added worlds of sounds, of feelings and of smells’ and this has led to the study of “scapes” of every possible kind. If the eyes return the world to us in its visual image, conceived in art-historical terms as landscape, then likewise the ears reveal a soundscape, the skin a touchscape, the nose a smellscape, and so on. In reality, of course, the environment that people inhabit is not sliced up along the lines of the sensory pathways by which they access it. It is the *same* world, whatever paths they take’ (Ingold 2011: 316).

The work of the art historian Barbara Maria Stafford offers one way to resolve some of these issues in the context of an exploration of the relationship between art and the neurosciences. Stafford’s work goes far beyond the task of re-thinking the concept of visual culture, her proposal is that ‘the neurosciences, cognitive science, and the new philosophy of mind need to come together with the variegated historical, humanistic, or cultural-based studies of images’ (2006: 207). Her book develops a complex and crafted argument, which it would be impossible to summarise here. Instead I wish to draw readers’ attention to Stafford’s departure from the use of ‘linguistic models of representation’ to what she calls ‘visual models of presentation’. She suggests that rather than being representations that ‘hang around in our heads’ instead we ‘reperform and ‘reinvent’ visual compositions

when we see them. Drawing on the work of J. J. Gibson (as does Ingold) and Kevin O'Regan, she writes that 'when you open your eyes and actively interrogate the visual scene, what you see is that aspect, or the physical fragments, of the environment that you perform' (Stafford 2006: 215).

If, as visual ethnographers we are to attend to the place of media and representations in the worlds we work in – that is to what have been called 'visual cultures' – then we need to attend to the theoretical shifts and turns. I believe that this current theoretical environment, characterised by the work of Stafford, and by Ingold's critique of conventional visual culture studies opens up new opportunities. This, with the growing appreciation of non-representational theory, allows us to refocus this interest in the question of the roles that images and representations play in people's lives in ways that are more coherent with the idea of visual ethnography itself as a process of learning and experiencing, rather than as a form of 'data collecting'. Indeed, this point in a sense brings me back to the starting point of the arguments I made in the first edition of *Doing Visual Ethnography*. There I sought to develop a visual ethnography approach that stood as a critical response to the scientific realist influence in the social sciences of the twentieth century. This was precisely against the idea of visual methods as modes of data collection and in favour of visual ethnography as a process of producing knowledge.

Visual Ethnography Now and in the Future

The moves towards phenomenological, sensory and non-representational approaches across anthropology, geography and visual culture studies, along with a sociology that appreciates the sensory and digital dimensions of the worlds we inhabit, offer a theoretical climate which invites the practice of visual ethnography as a way of being, knowing and learning. In a context where across the ethnographic disciplines the use of visual images in research and representation is becoming more frequently written about and more rigorously theorised, visual ethnography no longer needs to be supported by arguments that counter the twentieth century objections that they might be too subjective.

Indeed the camera and the digital image, as an increasingly constant presence in our pockets, our hands and our computers is part of our contemporary reality. As I write this book I am facing the web cam in my laptop, and my camera-phone is next to me. In contemporary technological and theoretical contexts there are still debates and arguments to be made, for example to distinguish between an approach to ethnography informed by phenomenological anthropology on the one hand and one informed by the semiotic analysis of the multimodality paradigm on the other (see Pink 2011c). Yet, perhaps more important to focus on are questions concerning how attention to the digital and technological contexts where we now do visual ethnography is creating not only new possibilities in terms of the methods we can use, but in terms of the way we can understand the visual and vision theoretically (see also Pink 2012a; Coover 2012; Lapenta 2012).

Second, as I have stressed throughout this review, the new focus on the senses, which I have taken up elsewhere in my own conceptualisation of a sensory ethnography (Pink 2009), is influential across disciplines. However, the relationship between visual and sensory ethnography is not, as it might initially appear, one of contradiction but one where visual methods and media and a sensory approach are supportive of each other. Finally the urge towards public and applied scholarship in the visual ethnographic disciplines is an important move (see Pink 2006, 2007b, 2012a). Due to their proliferation in recent years, such practices will be evident in examples discussed in the following chapters.

— Further reading —

Banks, M. and Ruby, J. (2011) *Made to Be Seen: Perspectives on the History of Visual Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Garrett, B. L. (2011) 'Videographic geographies: using digital video for geographic research'. *Progress in Human Geography*, 35(4): 521–541.

Ingold, T. (2010a) 'Ways of mind-walking: reading, writing, painting', *Visual Studies*, 25:1, 15–23.

Knowles, C. and Sweetman, P. (2004) (eds) *Picturing the Social Landscape: visual methods and the sociological imagination*. London: Routledge. (An edited volume of essays that demonstrate uses of visual methods in sociology.)

Margolis, E. and Pauwels, L. (2011) *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Methods*. London: SAGE.

Pink, S. (2012a) (ed.) *Advances in Visual Methodology*. London: SAGE.

Stafford, B. M. (2006) *Echo Objects: the Cognitive Work of Images*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Additional material is available on the book's companion website: www.uk.sagepub.com/pink3e