

PROGRAMME
VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN LATIN AMERICA

PANEL 1

Chair: Carlos Y. Flores

I.-

**FROM SCARCITY TO CREATIVITY:
CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES OF VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN
MEXICO**

Elisa Lipkau (Goldsmiths, London)
Antonio Ziri3n (GCVA, Manchester)

Two Mexican visual anthropologists consider the situation of this discipline in their country. Through an overview of Mexican ethnographic documentary, they identify the rise of what they call a “third gaze”, as a response to the ethical dilemmas that anthropology faces in the use of images as instruments of either domination or liberation. They highlight the importance of creative experimentation stimulated by the scarce financial support and lack of academic recognition of visual anthropology in Mexico. The authors envision that these circumstances might result in the development of a new school of Mexican visual anthropology; a possibility that presents significant challenges but also promises big rewards.

II.-

**VIDEO WORKSHOPS:
A DISCUSSION WITH BRAZILIAN VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGISTS**

**Rose Satiko Gitirana Hikiji, Edgar Teodoro da Cunha
and Ana L3cia Camargo Ferraz**

**Department of Anthropology
University of S3o Paulo, Brazil;
Post-graduate Course in Documentary Cinema at
CPDOC/Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV);
Group of Visual Anthropology (GRAVI-USP)**

b) Since 1999, the Laboratory of Image and Sound in Anthropology at the University of São Paulo has supported the production of more than 20 ethnographic videos, made mainly by anthropologists in various stages of their academic careers. The films, made in different ethnographic contexts, raised some common questions for the researchers/directors. One of these was the proposal of training members of the groups being studied as video makers. In this paper I describe some of these processes, which can be called “video workshops”, and analyse them as a means of expression, performance and communication.

III.-

**PICTURING BOUNDARIES:
ANTHROPOLOGISTS AT WORK AMONG QUILOMBOLA COMMUNITIES**

**Angela Torresan
PRODOC fellow
Department of Anthropology
Universidad Federal do Rio Grande do Norte
Brazil**

A clause in the 1988 Brazilian Constitution has granted land rights to rural black communities that identified themselves and requested their recognition as Quilombolas, the name given to descendents of former fugitive slave communities. The Department of Anthropology where I work at the University of Rio Grande do Norte, has signed a contract with the federal land reform agency, INCRA (Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária), to assist in the identification of a number of Quilombola communities in the region. Together with this new legal provision, anthropologists have joined other experts in helping to define Quilombola identities throughout the country under a broad criterion of recognition. Although a significant number of papers have been written on these anthropological studies, which consist in judiciary pieces in the land demarcation procedure, there have been no films made on the work anthropologists undertake and the role of mediator they play in the negotiating process. With that purpose in mind, I have been filming two anthropologists assigned to do fieldwork with the Quilombola communities of Acauã and Macambira. This paper will address some methodological and theoretical concerns related to the experience of making an ethnographic film on anthropologists doing fieldwork for non-academic purposes. It will talk about issues of representation that pervade the perception the people make of themselves as Quilombolas e how they visualize the territory that will become a Quilombo; how the anthropologist represent the

people and their own work of identification; and finally how the visual anthropologist pictures this whole unfolding identity politics scenario.

IV.-

INDIANS, TELEVISION AND MEDIA IN THE RIO NEGRO AMAZON

Renato Athias
Laboratório de Antropologia Visual
Núcleo de Imagem & Som e Ciências Humanas
Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Brazil

This paper has the objective to discuss the main issues related to the visual production among and by the indigenous people in the Rio Negro region in Brazil. Over the two last decades several communities have received satellites dishes and television to be used as educational tools. The Brazilian television programmes has invaded the indigenous life in whole area. Today most of the indigenous villages have the own satellite set and they know very well and they watch every day both Brazilian and Colombian television programmes. The video production, since the beginning of the millennium, has been part of the work in the indigenous movement of the Federação das Organizações Indígenas (FOIRN). They have now a unit, in their bureaucratic structure, which is called Communication Sector, where their programmes are produced and their views are presented. The use of the film camera and others visuals tools by the Indians is now a current practice to register their events and show their images to them selves and to the outsiders that come to visit São Gabriel da Cachoeira. This work seeks to explore the indigenous visuality and the main themes that are been working by the Indians association in Rio Negro, besides to joint other discursions, this paper is leading about the representation of the Indians by themselves.

V.-

NEW TENDENCIES, NEW REALITIES: REFRAMING VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL WORK IN MESOAMERICA

Carlos Y. Flores
Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos
Mexico

During the past half century visual anthropological or ethnographic film-making work in Mexico and Guatemala has been primarily focused on traditional, rural and marginalized indigenous communities living in the outskirts of so-called

"modernity". There is, however, a gradual and important shift towards more varied subjects of anthropological focus, often closely related to the personal life and concerns of the anthropologists working with cameras. New subjects, such as graffiti painters, rock and gay communities, street gangs, and urban and/or transnational indigenous groups, have been recorded with a renewed anthropological gaze. Within this drive, issues such as reflexivity, collaboration and new visual grammar have also been challenging the "old way" of elaborating ethnographic films. The aim of this paper is to examine some recent documentaries by anthropologists (both students and professionals) and locate them within a wider discussion of the new subjects and methodologies coming to the fore of the visual anthropological work in Mesoamerica.

PANEL 2

Chair: Alejandra Navarro Smith

I.-

CANON FILMS: PEDREGAL VIDEO PROJECT ONE DECADE OF COLLABORATION IN COMMUNITY MEDIA

**Ricardo Leizaola
Anthropology Department
Goldsmiths College
PhD student/ Visual Resource Officer**

Canon Films is an ongoing collaborative experience on community media production that has been going on for over a decade. This presentation reviews a collaborative experience of community media in El Pedregal, Venezuela for over a decade. It reviews the aims, dynamics and results of this video project exploring my role as visual anthropologist and external participant.

II.-

IMAGES OF THE RURAL: THE ETHNOGRAFIC DOCUMENTARY IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND REPRESENTATION OF THE RURAL

Eliezer Arias*

Manuela Blanco**

Sahirine Martinez*

*** Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas, Venezuela**

**** Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión, Cuba**

The perspective of idyllic rural has been emphasized not only by academic and the political elite, but also by different art disciplines, including the visual one. This vision has historically represented rural societies like genuine and where the “traditional” values have persisted, transformed this representation as the dominant focus of rurality. This paper, through a documentary about the suicide in rural communities of Venezuela, exposes this idealised vision of the rural by external actors, that describe a glorified and an improbable rural past in the present landscape, in contrast to the “real” and “violent” everyday life and the experiences of rural inhabitants.

III.-

**INDIGENOUS VIDEOMAKING AMONG MIGRANT YOUNGSTERS IN SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LAS CASAS – CHIAPAS (MÉXICO):
A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO VISUAL PRODUCTION AND RESEARCH**

Laura Cardús i Font)

Departament d’Antropologia Social i Història d’Amèrica i Àfrica

Universitat de Barcelona (UB)

laura_cardus@yahoo.es

Axel Köhler

Centro de Estudios Superiores de México y Centroamérica

(CESMECA/UNICACH)

Collaborative research methods are attempting to subvert the conventional hierarchies between scholars and their “others”. However, it is difficult to propose new research approaches that propitiate mutual engagement in more horizontal relationships in a field that has been characterized historically by structural hierarchies and extractive practices.

The anthropologist’s collaboration in the production of audiovisual material that reflects the complexity of identity construction and expression of its agents, offers the possibilities of exploring a more useful, more engaged and more meaningful social science. Today’s indigenous videoproduction in Chiapas is a growing phenomenon that reflects current indigenous politics of self-determination and self-representation. At the same time, it is a field of collective production in which many past and present influences, histories, actors and conversations converge.

This presentation will problematize and critically reflect this enterprise by focusing on collaborative experiences within the *Proyecto Videoastas Indigenas de la Frontera Sur* in Chiapas.

IV.-

CEMENTERIES IN MEXICO CITY: THE CREATION OF SACRED AND PROFANE SPACES

**Marcel Reyes-Cortez
Goldsmiths College
University of London**

Research project is based in a complex of cemeteries in Mexico City, where I am currently in field research. My project endeavors to explore how and why sacred and profane spaces are created and maintained, in which the living interact in everyday activities, yearly rituals, social and political practices and material culture with the dead. I have chosen to carry out my work and research by using Photography as my visual Methodological tool in my academic work and visual practice.

V.-

ETHNOGRAPHIC FILMMAKING IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH: FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN THE SUBJECTS' QUESTIONS AND THE ACADEMIC DEBATES

**Alejandra Navarro Smith
Centro de Investigaciones Culturales-Museo
Universidad Autónoma de Baja California**

This paper discusses the process by which the use of video and photographs during fieldwork among Tzeltal indigenous people in Northern Chiapas, Mexico, allowed the researcher to introduce people's interests and questions as key references for the development of her research. Drawn from doctoral fieldwork, the presentation uses a series of film clips to illustrate how the research questions of the anthropologist changed at the time that people spoke. As a result of the participation of subjects, a number of new issues and historic backgrounds were spotted such as the need to contextualize the indigenous experience of access to land, education and justice, at the light of interethnic interactions. This process was central to redefine the contents to be explored and put in dialogue with academic debates in the final written document. This kind of research using film provided yet another viewpoint to define "collaborative relationships" in doing visual anthropology. In addition, the paper also compares

the experience of fieldwork using film to an act of intercultural communication, where cultural misunderstanding is also revealed as rushes are reviewed.