

# PHOTOGRAPHY & RESISTANCE

*Catalogue of Abstracts*



Special Issue of *MAI: Feminism & Visual Culture*  
edited by Dr. Kylie Thomas

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

This special issue testifies to the powerful ways in which photography can be understood as a medium of resistance. The issue includes research articles, personal reflections, interviews and discussion pieces, as well as creative contributions that offer an array of perspectives and insights in visual and textual form. We have compiled this catalogue of abstracts to provide an overview of the contents of the special issue, all of which is available open access online.

This publication forms part of a larger research project focusing on Women, Photography and Resistance in Transnational Perspective conducted by Kylie Thomas at NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam. This study focuses on the work of women photographers who participated in resistance movements and whose images were made to expose and resist repressive regimes.

The project also explores how women and nonbinary photographers and visual activists continue to make use of photography in support of feminist, LGBTQI+ and anti-racist struggles across the world.

The special issue on photography and resistance was accompanied by a public talk series and research symposium, "[Feminism, Photography and Resistance](#)", hosted in collaboration with Four Corners Gallery in London, UK in March-April 2022. Two exhibitions also took place linked to this theme – "[Photographing Protest: Resistance through a Feminist Lens](#)" which "celebrates images by feminist photographers, who have used their cameras to support social change in Britain from 1968 to the present" and curated by Four Corners; and "[An Eye for Freedom: The Photographs of Gille de Vlieg](#)", an online exhibition curated by Kylie Thomas focusing on women's activism against apartheid.

A few months before the special issue was published, we learned that photographer, activist and teacher Doris Derby (1939-2022) had passed away. In the interview conducted with her by Heather Diack and included in the special issue, Doris Derby speaks about the history of her participation in the struggle for civil rights in the United States and the 'essential work' of resistance that is constituted not only by protest, but in the multiple, daily tasks that ensure survival. We would like to dedicate this special issue to her memory – her spirit lives on through her powerful work and her vision for a more just world.

Kylie Thomas  
Editor

Brian Muller  
Editorial Assistant

June 2022

## ORIGINAL CALL FOR PAPERS



**KALI SPITZER**

*Melaw Nakehk'o is Dehcho Dene and Denesulene from Liidlii Kue, Denendeh Northwest Territories. She is a Mother, Artist, Moose hide tanner, Actress and co-founder of the Indigenous organization Dene Nahjo.*

*From the series, "Resilience and Resistance", 2015.*

*Image courtesy of the artist.*



Authors with expertise in visual and cultural studies and related disciplines are invited to contribute to a special issue on photography and resistance of the journal, *MAI: Feminism & Visual Culture*. The special issue will be edited by Dr Kylie Thomas, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow at the Netherlands Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide studies.

Of particular interest are contributions that illuminate the lives and work of women and non-binary photographers and that draw on the insights and practices of antiracist and intersectional feminism.

Photography, as Yvonne Vera writes, “has often brought forth the most loaded fraction of time, a calcification of the most unequal, brutal, and undemocratic moment of human encounter” (Vera, 1999). Photography has also been used as a form of resistance to repressive regimes, to oppose war and violence, and as a means to challenge heteronormative patriarchy. Photography offers both a means of critique and a way of making visible events and forms of power that are not intended to be seen. Feminist and LGBTQ+ photographers have taken up cameras as a way to produce entirely new visual vocabularies, to reimagine the world otherwise, and to challenge hegemonic ways of seeing.

The ways in which women and non-binary photographers made use of photography as a form of resistance comes into clear view at the time of the Second World War. Among the photographers who worked at this time is Claude Cahun, whose photomontages reinvent the human form and refuse normative conceptions of the body. In 1937, Cahun moved to the Isle of Jersey with her partner Suzanne Malherbe (who practiced as an artist under the name Marcel Moore). From the time of the German occupation of the island in July 1940, until they were arrested in 1944 and sentenced to death for their resistance activities, Cahun and Moore produced pamphlets and visual material that they distributed across the island in defiance of the Nazi occupation (Thynne, 2010). Photographers Emmy Andriessse, Eva Besnyö and Violette Cornelius formed part of the Dutch resistance movement, *De Ondergedoken Camera* (the Hidden Camera). Once she obtained forged papers, Andriessse, who was Jewish, documented the occupation of Amsterdam at the risk of being murdered by the Nazis (Baring, 2013).

Doris Derby; Diana Davies; Ruth-Marion Baruch and Maria Varela are among the women who documented the Civil Rights Era in the United States (Speltz, 2016). In the 1980s, Lesley Lawson, Deseni Moodliar, Zubeida Vallie and Gille de Vlieg were among the women who joined the anti-apartheid photography collective Afrapix. Many of their images draw attention to the key role played by women in the struggle for freedom in South Africa (Lawson, 1985; Comley, Hallett and Ntsoma, 2006).

Nan Goldin’s intimate portraits of her friends over several decades and through the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States refuse state-prescribed moralising and the silencing of alternative forms of kinship (Junge, 2016). Visual activist Zanele Muholi has used photography as a way not only to honour the lives of LGBTQ+ Black Africans, but also as a form of advocacy in campaigns against homophobic hate crimes (Baderoon, 2011; Lewin, 2019). Nona Faustine’s “White Shoes” series (2014), consists of photographs of the artist in locations around the city of New York that evoke the repressed history of slavery in the United States and that reclaim the Black female body as a source and site of resistance against the violence of both the past and the present (Diabate, 2020).

Her Pixel Story in Kashmir, the Thuma Collective in Myanmar, and the Kaali Collective in Bangladesh, are instances of contemporary photography collectives making use of the medium to resist repressive regimes.

In the last decade, women and non-binary activist-photographers have taken part in resistance movements across the world, from the Arab Spring to Black Lives Matter. While recent exhibitions such as “Still I Rise: Feminisms, Gender, Resistance, Act 2”, at the De La Warr Pavilion (2018); *Another Eye: Women Refugee Photographers in Britain after 1933* at Four Corners (2020); and a major solo show of the work of Zanele Muholi at the Tate Modern, (2020), testify to a growing interest in this field, the ways in which women and non-binary artists, writers, (art) historians, thinkers and activists have made use of photography as a form of resistance remains underresearched.

#### **Suggested topics include:**

- How feminist / LGBTQ+ / anti-racist artists and activists have mobilized photographs as a form of resistance
- Women and non-binary photographers documenting conflict, protest and political violence
- How feminist, anti-racist and LGBTQ+ activists and activist collectives have produced photographs and/or made use of photographs
- The ways in which women and non-binary people have used photographs during times of conflict and war (feminist publications/ posters/ activism/ resistance archives)
- Women and non-binary photographers who participated in resistance movements during the Second World War
- Women and non-binary photographers who formed part of and documented anti-colonial struggles and the struggle against apartheid
- Photographers who have photographed their own bodies as forms of resistance to racist hetero-normative patriarchy (such as Berni Searle; Nona Faustine; Zanele Muholi)
- Photographers whose work provides a form of resistance to cultural amnesia and erasure
- Contributions that focus on the under-researched topic of the work of women and non-binary photographers from Africa and other parts of the majority world.

**300-500 word Abstracts due:** 12 December 2020

**The due date for completed work is:** 30 May 2021

#### **MAI considers submissions in the following formats:**

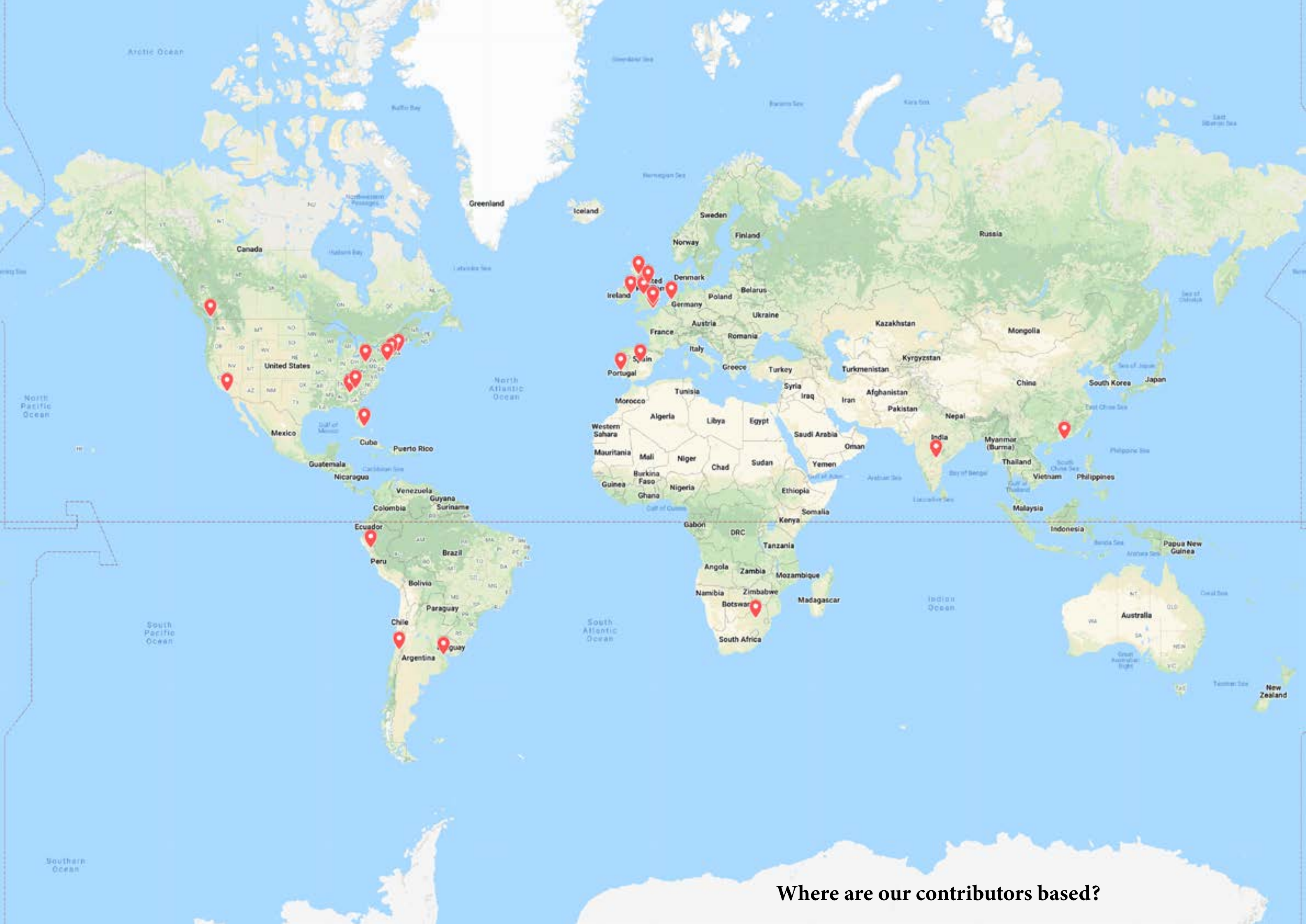
- academic research articles (6000-8000 words)
- interviews (1000-3000 words)
- creative writing (poems, short stories, creative responses, max 3000 words)
- video essays (5-10 min + a brief supporting statement 800-1000 words)
- photographs, visual/audiovisual or interactive art

Academic articles will be peer-reviewed.

The special issue will be published in early 2022.

Please consult the *MAI* submission guidelines before submitting: <https://maifeminism.com/submissions/>

Please send your abstracts to Kylie Thomas: [kylie.thomas.south@gmail.com](mailto:kylie.thomas.south@gmail.com)  
And to [contact@maifeminism.com](mailto:contact@maifeminism.com)



Where are our contributors based?





# RESEARCH ARTICLES



## Turning the Tide: Protest photographs and resistance from the archive of Rose Comiskey

By Orla Fitzpatrick

This paper will evaluate the photographic practice undertaken by Rose Comiskey whose images of street protest depict the major issues affecting Irish women in the late twentieth century. Taken between 1982 to 1992, they reflect challenging times during which issues such as abortion, the anti-apartheid movement and Travellers' rights were aired through collective action on the streets of Dublin and other Irish cities. Her work formed an integral part of the women's movement providing a record and bearing witness to the events whilst also communicating the message to wider audiences. Working independently, the black and white images have a particular resonance for contemporary activists. In addition to those images which provide a chronicle of resistance to the Irish church and state, the paper will also examine her depiction of marches against the visit of Ronald Reagan to Ireland in June 1984, thus revealing an important counter-narrative to pervasive media images of this event. Not only will this paper provide an overview of her practice, it will also examine the aesthetics of protest and contextualise and analyse her photographs. How did Comiskey work in and navigate the male-dominated terrains of street photography and photo-journalism? Did she tap into and play a part in the various collectives and women's groups who were active during the period? Does her portrayal oppose the mainstream images of Irish women and do her photographs differ from those created by international photographers for consumption outside of Ireland?

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



**ROSE COMISKEY**

*Judge puppet at the Defend the Clinics Campaign, Dublin, 1987.*

Image courtesy of the artist.

## Mineral Memories: Photography & disappearance in Argentina

By Jordana Blejmar

This article looks at the different ways, whether implicit or explicit, intentional, or unintentional, in which the photographic work of Paula Luttringer bears witness to those who, like her, survived torture and disappearance during the 1976-1983 dictatorship in Argentina. Luttringer documents the legacies of the traumatic past and the remains of clandestine centres of torture and extermination where terrible things happened. But more than registering an exterior reality, her photographs allow us to glance a tiny fragment of the interior lives of survivors, especially women. With her camera Luttringer captures not so much places but the (eerie) atmospheres that inhabit both sites of detention and torture and places seemingly unrelated to the dictatorship – a slaughterhouse, a dry forest. Photography becomes here an affective, and effective, tool of survival and resistance, and the means to weave together voices, gazes, and memories.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



**PAULA LUTTRINGER**  
*El lamento de los muros/The Wailing of the Walls, 2000-2010.*  
Image courtesy of the artist.





**DEAN HUTTON**

Installation view of *Fuck White People*, Iziko National Gallery, Cape Town, 2016.  
Image by Tessa Lewin. Courtesy of Tessa Lewin and the artist.

## #FuckWhitePeople: Dean Hutton's 'decolonial gesture' as critical digital citizenship

By Tessa Lewin

This article examines the explicitly anti-racist work of the non-binary photographer and performance artist Dean Hutton, in particular their 2016 work #FuckWhitePeople and its 'selfie booth' incarnation at The Art of Disruptions exhibition held at the Iziko South African National Gallery in Cape Town from June - October 2016. Hutton's piece emerged in the wake of large-scale student-led protests against racism and inequality at post-apartheid universities (Booyesen, 2016). Hutton's artwork can be read as a decolonial gesture, a rejection of the politics represented by 'rainbowism', a concept that has also been rejected by the many young South Africans disillusioned by the slow pace of change in the country and the persistence of the inequalities established through apartheid. In the aftermath of what many described as 'the death of the rainbow nation', Hutton's work asks us to imagine how we begin the task of moving forward, by first making visible, and then undoing the privilege that the rhetoric of rainbowism supported. I understand Hutton's artistic practice to be what Chantal Mouffe terms 'critical' in that it aims to subvert the hegemonic symbolic order of white supremacy. I argue that Hutton's work uses the selfie both as a mode of 'critical digital citizenship' and as a mode of survivorship in a decolonising context.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



**NONCEDO CHARMAINE**  
*Emerge Gxekwa, 2019.*  
Image courtesy of the artist.

## **Intimacy & play as resistance: Reimagining Black female representation in the photographs of Noncedo Charmaine**

By Deneesher Pather

This article reflects on the photographs of contemporary South African artist, Noncedo Charmaine, whose works explore authenticity and beauty through intimate photographs of Black female and non-binary bodies. With play and connection as her guidelines, Charmaine's portfolio reimagines depictions of Black female and non-binary bodies in diverse ways that celebrate their agency and individuality. As an artist creating an alternative South African art archive, Charmaine's photographs renew and reconfigure existing narratives through an awareness of iconographic precedents and body politics.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



## Three strategies of subverting representation during the 2019 Chilean revolt

By Rosario Montero Prieto

Documentary photography in Chile has a long history of visualising struggle and oppression. During the civil-military dictatorship, independent photographers played a crucial role in denouncing human rights violations committed by the state. Since the October 2019 revolt, a new set of documentary practices has emerged. This new set of rules of engagement between photographers and their photographed subjects comes with the awareness that social media platforms create the potential for the use of new tools for oppression. Tools such as algorithms on data analysis, facial recognition and GPS data location have enabled a new environment, consequently reframing the practice of documentary photography. The aim of this article is to reflect on the following question: Is it possible to overcome colonial impositions created by the photographic scopic regime? What are the algorithms that have been facilitated by corporations and used, to suppress resistance? And how can this same set of rules be subverted? By looking at the daily practices of photographers in Chile, I will analyse a collection of different practices of appropriation of these technical intersections that have taken place both in the streets and in digital spaces.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



**ROSARIO MONTERO PRIETO**

*Protester with a sign that reads: "we are not ok", 2019.*

Image courtesy of the artist.

## Resistance to Duterte's Penal Populism: The Photojournalism of Hannah Reyes Morales and Eloisa Lopez

By Gabriella McGrogan

Since 2016, the president of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, has relentlessly pursued a violent drug war, to the detriment of Filipino society, many of whose citizens continue to support him. As part of his particular brand of penal populism, he frequently invokes misogynistic tropes to frame women who oppose state violence and seeks to deter others through these derogatory representations. Young, emergent Filipino photojournalists Eloisa Lopez and Hannah Reyes Morales frequently centre women who have been impacted by and/or push back against the physical and rhetorical aggression they experience. This article explores how their work challenges hierarchies of visibility and seeks to draw connections between the women whose experiences they document. The images included focus upon women overseas foreign workers, community activists styled as 'Death Squad Disrupters' and Nobel-prize-winning journalist, Maria Ressa. Overarchingly and implicitly, this piece asks how the shift away from spectacular and visceral images of the obvious victims of the drug war and towards images of living women (as independent from male victims) acts as a more hopeful form of visual resistance and responds to the anesthetisation of audiences.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



### HANNAH REYES MORALES

*Each December nearly a million people land in Manila, many of them Filipinos returning for the holidays for precious time with family and friends. The airport is filled with family members waiting for a plane bringing their long-absent mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters home. In the sea of welcome signs, Sherina holds up a homemade one: WELCOME BACK MAMA. The diaspora, which former president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo called "our greatest export," is home again.*

Image courtesy of the artist and MAPS Images.





**HALIMA AL-HAJ**

*Scarves.*

Image courtesy of the artist/femLENS.

## **To See and Be Seen: What can a woman do with a camera (phone)?**

By Tracy Piper-Wright

This paper investigates how women can be empowered as photographers and visual storytellers and gain greater representation in visual culture. By analysing two historically divergent feminist photography projects, this paper argues that women's diverse authorial perspectives are enabled by combining theory and practice in the formation of a critical counter-visibility and a process of self-realisation. The paper explores how women enact their visual resistance through the interrelated processes of seeing and being seen and draws on Jo Spence's critical visual practice to explore photography that subverts expectations and creates opportunities for alternative modes of representation. Applying Spence's key deconstructive tools of making visible and narrating the image, the paper maps out ways in which education and collective agency create the conditions for women's participation and influence within photography.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).

## Dora Carpenter-Latiri's Tunisian Women of the Book: Creation, Enunciation, and Belonging

By Anna Rocca

My contribution is centered on the 2015 textual and visual exhibition of Dora Carpenter-Latiri entitled Tunisian Women of the Book. In the Qur'an, according to Ismail Albayrak, "the concept of Ahl al-Kitab (the People of the Book) is characterised by a degree of lack of rigidity and an overall attitude of amity and even a degree of respect" towards Judaism and Christianity (301). Indeed, Albayrak sustains, that expression: "highlights the community of faith between followers of monotheistic religions (Jews, Christians and Muslims), and sometimes pays tribute to religious and moral virtues of communities that have received earlier revelations."

Carpenter-Latiri rekindles the meaning of 'the People of the Book,' which originally refers to those who possess the scripture or the divine book, by portraying fifteen women in their relationship to creation, enunciation, and belonging. By evoking that expression, the author recovers and further expands the awareness of Tunisia as a plurality of cultures, languages, and religions. By substituting the expression 'Tunisian Women' for the original word 'People,' Carpenter-Latiri links women to knowledge, creativity, and eloquence. Furthermore, under the denomination of 'Tunisian Women,' she also includes women that are creatively connected with Tunisia, despite their origins, languages, and citizenship, thus expanding the notion of belonging and affiliation. Lastly, Latiri's textual and visual portraits posit and illuminates a space of dialogic and non-binary exchange among a multiplicity of perspectives, identities, artistic techniques, and creative strategies that her 'Women of the Book' have adopted and further embraced after the 2011 Tunisian Revolution.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



**DORA CARPENTER-LATIRI**

*Najet Limam-Tnani. Chercheur, universitaire, vit à Tunis, écrit en français.  
[Najet Limam-Tnani. Researcher, academic, lives in Tunis, writes in French]*

Image courtesy of the artist.



## ‘Shaping a space of understanding’: Marilyn Stafford’s street photographs of Cité Lesage-Bullourde

By Julia Winckler

This essay considers the legacy of a small, but substantial set of historical photographs, taken by American-British photographer Marilyn Stafford (b.1925) nearly 70 years ago in Paris. These photographs acted as the starting point for a re-examination of particular historic moments, dating back to the immediate post-war period. Stafford’s photographs of the Cité Lesage-Bullourde constitute precious fragments of an underrepresented Parisian working-class neighbourhood and are now its last visual trace as the Cité was demolished in 1961, leading to the dispersal of the residents to high-rise buildings in the suburbs within less than a decade of Stafford’s chance visit. The essay tracks the photographs from a temporal and spatial perspective, revisiting both the time they were made and the time they were reintroduced into the public sphere. The effect of the images on contemporary viewers is also discussed.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



**MARILYN STAFFORD**  
*Children playing, Cité Lesage-Bullourde.*  
Image courtesy of the artist.



# INTERVIEWS & DISCUSSION PIECES



**DORIS DERBY**  
*Women's Sewing Cooperative, Mississippi, 1968.*  
Image courtesy of the artist.

## **Essential Work: An Interview with Civil Rights photographer Doris Derby**

By Heather Diack and Doris Derby

After being recruited by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the early 1960s, Dr. Doris Derby committed herself to a life of art and activism, using photography as an instrument of community-building. Her photographs of the Civil Rights movement and beyond depict the lived experiences of Black people amidst the oppression and inequities of race relations in the Southern United States. While based in Mississippi during the 1960s and early 1970s, Derby took thousands of photographs, documenting the work of voter registration, political organizations, sewing collectives, vegetable collectives, health care workers, math teachers, among many others. Namely, the crucial scenes of community organizing and mobilization that remain too frequently under the radar of most iconic, high-circulation images of the Civil Rights Movement. Derby's thoughtful, humanizing and personal pictures speak volumes about the necessity of intersectional awareness and advocacy in the name of change. They also emphasize the essential role of women. Inspired by the visual lyricism of Roy DeCarava, Gordon Parks, Käthe Kollwitz, and others, Derby developed her own unique blend of photojournalism and art, often through the intimacy of portraiture. In this interview Dr. Derby and I discuss the formative influence of her formidable family, her photographic practice, and her career as an educator, anthropologist, photojournalist, painter, and poet. We touch on the politics of representation, social justice, and the ongoing importance of recognizing essential work, even within seemingly ordinary acts.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



## Participatory Photography & Resistance: A conversation

By Katy Jenkins & Lourdes Chuan Banda

This conversation piece reflects on the potential for participatory photography approaches to contribute to women's activism and resistance, in the specific context of women's grassroots resistance to large-scale mining projects in Cajamarca, Peru. The conversation between Lourdes and Katy reflects on their experiences of a participatory photography project that took place in 2017-2018, and the ways in which it engaged with, and articulated, ongoing struggles against resource extraction.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



**YENI COJAL ROJASS**

*My Strength*

*The variety of seeds that my plot of land produces. I sow with patience and harvest with pride. And, as a woman, I put food on the table of my home, and I enjoy the good taste with my family. Thanks to my Mother Earth and the warm sun and the divine blessing of God, who has given me water for my crops. Amen, 2017.*

Image courtesy of the artist and Women, Mining and Photography (2017).



## **‘I Cannot Be Sure That I Will Not Be Erased or Voided’: In Conversation with Katarzyna Kozyra**

By Aga Skrodzka

In this recent interview conducted by Aga Skrodzka, the new media artist Katarzyna Kozyra talks about her art, female artists, and her experiments with the camera.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



**KATARZYNA KOZYRA**  
*Men's Bathhouse*, 1999. Artist in disguise. [Video still].  
Image courtesy Katarzyna Kozyra Foundation

## A Woman with Brown Hair's Journey to the White Country: An interview with Hristina Tasheva

By Cristina Nualart and Hristina Tasheva

In this interview, art historian Cristina Nualart and Bulgarian-Dutch artist Hristina Tasheva converse about the artist's photobook *The woman with the brown hair (WBH) or me and my informant* (2015), a compelling piece of docu-fiction. The photobook is based on the artist's first-person experience of migration from Eastern to Western Europe, presented through a visual narrative entangled around a dystopian tale. The slippages between fact and fiction, the abundant (and often obscure) references to postcolonial thinkers, and the instrumental role of the book's physical format provide rich material to discuss the workings of structural racism and to revisit the fall of the Iron Curtain. Charged with potent imagery of metamorphoses, the artwork's references to slavery are comments on contemporary capitalist exploitation. This artist book is a complex work that takes on different critical approaches to unmask hegemonic privilege and political frictions between European states, while highlighting how the often undervalued role of personal relations in the social fabric can be transformative.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



**HRISTINA TASHEVA**

*The woman with the brown hair (WBH) or me and my informant*, [Detail, p. 82].  
Image courtesy of the artist.



**KHRISTEL MAE DECANAY ALTERADO**  
*Same Difference*, 4 November 2020.  
Image courtesy of the artist.

## **Capturing Be/Longing: A dialogue with Hong Kong's migrant domestic worker photographers**

By Christine Vicera

Christine Vicera speaks to Leeh Ann Hidalgo, Khristel Mae Dacanay Alterado, and Terenia Puspita, three Migrant Domestic Worker photographers about how photography has become a means through which each of them navigate the contentious relationship between their identities as women, migrant domestic workers from the Philippines/Indonesia, and 香港人, Hong Kongers. The interview critically interrogates the narratives of tragedy, sorrow, and loss that often frame the migrant domestic worker community in Hong Kong.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).

## **African Diasporic Femininities: A conversation with Sekai Machache & Awuor Onyango**

By Camila Cavalcante

This interview with artists Sekai Machache and Awuor Onyango explores the connection of their work in the exhibition *Body of Land*, at Street Level Photoworks, in Scotland. These emerging artists used photography to investigate the representation of women from the African diaspora in the Scottish context, influenced by their ancestral iconography and experience. Sekai Machache dives into the spiritual realm to produce a body of work that uses her Zimbabwean roots as a bridge between worlds, creating powerful portraits of entities that communicate through symbolic objects. Kenyan artist Awuor Onyango explores a similar conceptual ground. She is interested in understanding the visual memory and representation of African women, connecting their visual identity to their heritage and ancestors. She collaborated with African women living in Glasgow and used African fabric patterns and symbolic elements in 'rituals of memory' that took control of their visual representation. In the interview they looked back at the collaboration and how they accessed their ancestor's knowledge to build their imagery. Additionally, they reflected on the need to define their work and the limitations of Western perception in their reclamation of black women's place in history and visual culture.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



**SEKAI MACHACHE**  
*A Silent Gifting*, 2018 [Detail].  
Image courtesy of the artist.



## **‘Risky images’: A conversation with Phumzile Khanyile**

By Brian Michael Müller

Award-winning South African photographer Phumzile Khanyile in conversation with Brian Müller about her emerging career in photography, the 2015 Gisele Wulfsohn Mentorship Program, and how instances of violence and childhood trauma continue to inform and shape her photographic practice.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



**PHUMZILE KHANYILE**  
*Untitled (from Plastic Crowns series).*  
Image courtesy of the artist and AFRONOVA GALLERY .

## ‘Surface: Skin & Scab—Porous Virality’: An Interview with Claudia Bitrán

By Rebecca Shapass

Claudia Bitrán works primarily in painting and video, frequently using DIY aesthetics to represent the hyperbolic worlds of social media and pop culture. The artist employs a wide range of painting strategies to metamorphose her source material, resulting in dense and thick surfaces that transform the content of the artist’s videos. She holds an MFA in Painting from Rhode Island School of Design (2013), a BFA from the Universidad Catolica de Chile (2009), and was recently an artist-in-residence at Pioneer Works, New York. Bitrán teaches painting at Pratt Institute and Rhode Island School of Design. She lives and works in Brooklyn.

The full text can be accessed [here](#).



**CLAUDIA BITRÁN**  
*Video still from Bitrán's remake of Britney Spears' 2003 video for "Toxic"*  
Image courtesy of the artist



# PERSONAL REFLECTIONS



## Reflections on 'Khadija Saye: in this space we breathe'

By Kadija Sesay and Marion Wallace

Khadija Saye (1992–2017) was a British-Gambian artist of extraordinary promise. Her final series of nine photographic self-portraits are an extraordinary, extended meditation on spirituality, trauma and the body. In this piece, the curators of 'Khadija Saye: in this space we breathe', an exhibition held at the British Library in 2021, discuss Saye's work and its multi-layered meanings, which were gradually revealed as they researched the objects she holds in each self-portrait, and spoke to those who knew the artist before she was tragically killed in the Grenfell fire of 2017. The article also reproduces all nine artworks in the series and, in slightly edited form, the labels that accompany them. The authors pay tribute to a young and hugely talented woman who experimented with tradition and modernity, questioned social norms in a patriarchal and racist world, and drew strength from her African origins and spirituality in complex ways.

The full contribution can be accessed [here](#).



**KHADIJA SAYE**

*Peitaw*, 2018.

Image courtesy of the Estate of Khadija Saye and the Studio of Nicola Green and Jealous.

## Three Generations

By Amanda Hopkinson

This essay forms the first part of a trilogy focusing on three generations of a Jewish family who fled from Austria to England just before the Second World War. Amanda Hopkinson explores the troubled relationship between her maternal grandmother, Henriette 'Ricka' Deutsch, and her mother, photographer Gerti Deutsch; and tries to unravel some of the stories she was never told.

The full contribution can be accessed [here](#).



**GERTI DEUTSCH**

*Ricka Deutsch, England, c.1942.*

Image courtesy of Amanda Hopkinson

## Remembering and Regaining Images: Malayali Women's Engagement With Photography

By Vipula P.C.

Reflecting on her personal experience during PhD research field work, Vipula P.C. explains how the memory of a photograph and the effort to regain it can be understood as resistance in the life and struggles of a lower caste woman.

The full contribution can be accessed [here](#).



**VIPULA P.C.**  
*Family photographs*, 2021.  
Image courtest of the arist.





# ARTISTIC RESPONSES



**JEANETTE SPICER**  
*The Church, 2021*  
Image courtesy of the artist.

## ***What It Means To Be Here***

By Jeanette Spicer

*What It Means To Be Here* is a project that began in 2018 when I realized that I wanted to explore and represent my sexuality and lesbian gaze within and amongst my LGBTQ+ community. In the images I create and/or recreate spontaneous and honest representations of intimacy, pleasure, desire, and relationships between non-heterosexual women by often disjointing and fragmenting the body to think of these interactions: relationships, moments, sex, differently, and with pause. This approach allows for a reimagining of female sexuality/lesbian sexuality and a reclaiming of the gaze upon us, both by exploring my own lesbian gaze in making the work, and by my counter-arguing the male gaze in my aesthetic approach to the image making. I am interested in how the slice of a body opening in an expected space can raise questions and curiosities about how we understand gender, love, sexuality and ourselves.

The full contribution can be accessed [here](#).



**CAMILA CAVALCANTE**  
*Us for all women in 2011, 2011.*  
Image courtesy of the artist.

## *Us For All Women*

By Camila Cavalcante

*Nós Por Todas*, Portuguese for “Us For All Women”, is a project that explores the idea of the female body as a confrontational space to expand the debate around abortion. In Brazil, abortion is only legal to save a woman’s life, in case of foetal development without a brain, and in cases of rape. Despite this prohibition, one in five women between 14 and 40 years old have had at least one abortion in their lives.

The full contribution can be accessed [here](#).



## *Her Name in My Mouth*

By Onyeka Igwe

Invoking a lineage of female ancestors through embodiment, gesture and the archive, 'Her Name in My Mouth' reimagines the Aba Women's War, a major anti-colonial uprising in Nigeria.

The full video can be seen [here](#).



**ONYEKA IGWE**

*Screenshot from Her Name in My Mouth.*  
Image courtesy of the artist

## *Rebel Vision*

By Tara Pixley

In the wake of the most recent crises of white supremacist violence, visualized by photojournalists on the ground of a besieged Capitol Hill, BIPOC visual documentarians offer longstanding critiques embedded in feminist legacies of resistance and refusal to these violent norms. Rebel Vision historicizes this moment and charts collective possibilities of resistance in visual praxis through the work of leading Black female and non-binary photographers associated with Authority Collective (AC).

The full video can be seen [here](#).



**TARA PIXLEY**

*A man on horseback carried the Pan-African flag (also known as the Black liberation flag) during a 2020 Juneteenth celebration in Los Angeles.*

Image courtesy of the artist.

## ***Images That (Do Not) Exist: Tina Modotti & photographs from the Communist World***

By Giulia Strippoli and Paz Bustamante

Can I write about a photograph without seeing it? Can I write about a photograph if the image itself does not exist? This piece focuses on photographs Tina Modotti created in the Soviet Union and during her militant life as a member of the International Communist movement. These images do not exist, because she stopped taking photographs after her expulsion from Mexico in 1926, when she was accused of taking part in an assassination attempt against President Pascual Ortiz Rubio. Through combining history and fiction, the text explores how and why Tina Modotti stopped taking photographs and devoted herself to militant activity until her death in 1942. This piece interweaves photographs by Paz Bustamante with a text by Giulia Strippoli to explore the meaning of revolutionary photography.

The full contribution can be accessed [here](#).



**PAZ BUSTAMANTE**  
*Untitled.*  
Image courtesy of the artist.





**ROMINA BELDA**  
*Untitled (from Absence series), 2019.*  
Image courtesy of the artist.

## ***Absence***

By Romina Belda

*Absence* is a series of photographs about the two environments I grew up in and which forged my identity through their sense of belonging: my family's land, in the Spanish Levante region, and my grandmother's house in the city, located in the same region. This series of images speak of heritage, loss, inheritance, roots, and resistance; of absence and what prevails.

The full contribution can be accessed [here](#).

## ***The F Word***

By Vanessa Fairfax-Woods

*The F Word* aims to challenge the impossible beauty ideals that are pressed onto women. We are consistently told by fashion and the media that we are not good enough and this has a profound negative effect on self esteem. The main area of scrutiny is weight and this is what I am focusing on in this series. If we are fat, we have failed. The main focus of *The F Word* has been to create a subversive costume created from images of my flesh. The aim is to create something so absurd and grotesque it challenges why, as a society, we are so fixated on adhering to a very specific body type.

The full contribution can be accessed [here](#).



**VANESSA FAIRFAX-WOODS**  
*The Jame Gumb Triptych* [Detail], 2021.  
Image courtesy of the artist.

## ***Power & Hierarchy: Looking up!***

By Marta Poncelas

When walking in the City of London you feel impelled to look up – up towards the top of the towering buildings. Power & Hierarchy — Looking up! is a photographic exploration of the grandeur and design of buildings as an expression of masculine power, military prowess and imperial arrogance.

The full contribution can be accessed [here](#).



**MARTA PONCELAS**  
*City of London, 2020.*  
Image courtesy of the artist.



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Kylie Thomas is a Senior Researcher at the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam. She writes about photography, visual activism, feminist, queer and anti-racist movements, resistance and protest, and South Africa during and after apartheid. She is the author of *Impossible Mourning: HIV/AIDS and Visuality after apartheid* (Wits University Press & Bucknell University Press, 2014) and co-editor of *Photography in and out of Africa: Iterations with Difference* (Routledge, 2016) and *Women and Photography in Africa: Creative Practices and Feminist Challenges* (Routledge, 2020). She has held numerous research fellowships, including a EURIAS Fellowship at the Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna, Austria; a British Academy International Visiting Research Fellowship at the University of Brighton, UK; and in 2022 is a visiting researcher at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence, Italy. She currently co-directs the NIOD ImageLab, which focuses on war and visual culture from the time of the Second World War to the present.



From 2019-2021 she held a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship at NIOD and guest-edited this special issue of *MAI* as part of her project, “Fem-Resist: Women, Photography and Resistance in Transnational Perspective”, funded by the European Commission within the framework of H2020-EU.1.3.2. Grant agreement ID: 838864.

### BRIAN MICHAEL MÜLLER

Brian Michael Müller is a South African-born queer scholar based in Vancouver, Canada. He recently completed his MPhil exploring queer neo-ethnographies and double consciousness in post-apartheid South Africa. His research intersects queer theory, feminist studies, violence and Southern African art and popular culture. His earlier publications appeared in *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* and *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies*. He is an experienced project co-ordinator and editor, and has worked on several publication projects together with Kylie Thomas. Beyond academia, he works as the Director of Operations at Bastian Global, a multinational investment and technology company.



