

Framing the Visible – the representation, distribution and visibility of political action

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Visibility is not just an aesthetic phenomenon, but also a means and an effect of power. This is why Andrea Brighenti observes that: ‘Visibility lies at the intersection of the two domains of aesthetics (relations of *perception*) and politics (relations of *power*)’ (2007). As such, visibility is therefore a matter of being seen in particular ways and in particular places in order to have the greatest political impact (Faulkner, 2014).

Taking Israel/Palestine as my context, this talk examines how visual politics and the politics of visibility dominate and effect how the act of occupying is understood.¹ Situating my talk in a Post-Second Intifada timeframe (2005 onwards) I will draw on a number of visual examples to explore how activists and artists (and the overlap between the two) seek to reframe the conditions and management of vision and visibility related to the Israeli occupation. Firstly I will look at a number of photographic practices by International Photography collective, Activestills as well work by Israeli landscape photographer, Gaston Ickowicz, (2005), Palestinian artist, Yazan Khalili (2010) and Italian documentary photographer, Gianluca Panella (2014). In doing so, I am to sketch out some of the specific configurations of the occupation and the distribution of the visual, asking who or what can be seen, what or who remains invisible and the political construction of sight and visibility related to this context (Hochburg, 2015).

To conclude I will discuss some of the pros and cons of conducting online ethnography, specifically when content is subject to web-decay. Looking at the Internet archive application, the ‘Wayback-Machine’ in relation to examination of the Palestinian village of Bil’in and their now defunct homepage. Active between 2005-2011 before it went offline in 2013, I will touch on the processes of being a ‘web-historian’ (Brügger, 2011) and some of the issues therein.

¹ Occupying in this sense is not just the temporal, physical control of space, but also bodies, movement, commerce, vision, and visibility amongst a range of other bio-political, disciplinary and sovereign modes of control (Neve Gordon, 2008).



Image 1. From the Settlement Series 2003/5 © Ganston Ickowicz



Image 2. Landscape of Darkness – 2010 © Yazan Khalili



Image 3. Blackout (2014) © Gianluca Panella



Figure 4. Street exhibition #ObliteratedFamilies, on Gaza, Marseille, France, May 8, 2015 © Activestills

References

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