



The allure of the visual: possibilities, promises and spectres

Andrew Clark

(School of Nursing, Midwifery, Social Work & Social Sciences, University of Salford)

Those working with the visual can no longer claim our approaches are new, if indeed we ever could. The proliferation in extent and scope of efforts to visually document, analyse, and perhaps ultimate change, the social world mean that visual approaches have become somewhat mainstream in researchers' methodological armouries. In this presentation I will reflect on my experiences working with visual methods and materials, and the promises, possibilities and challenges that arise when working with the visual. Drawing on a range of participative and participant-driven visually-orientated techniques, I will explore the sorts of analytical insights on offer to us and look beyond well-rehearsed debates about the benefits of using visual methods to consider aspects of their the social and emotional practices. In doing so, I will consider the sorts of realities the visual affords us as well as reflect on why the visual might haunt our research endeavours.

BIOGRAPHY

Andrew Clark is Reader in Sociology at the University of Salford. His research explores the relationships between marginalization and the spatiality of social life, in the context of wellbeing, neighbourhoods and community. His current work focuses on two areas: the meaning of neighbourhood across the life-course, including an ESRC/NIHR funded project on neighbourhoods and dementia; and the sociology of fire and fire risk supported by several initiatives with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. He has been using visually-orientated approaches in his work for over 15 years.



Image 1. Walkers(2015)



Image 2. Bus Stop (2015)



Image 3. Wire Fence (2015)