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“Through a reading of the history of photographic advancement in the Middle East, we illustrate the inherent imperialism present within the writing of photographic history and the importance of decentering the European advancement of photography.”

Visual Pedagogies: Decolonizing and Decentering the History of Photography

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This article discusses strategies to decolonize the classroom through changes in course structure that place postcolonial scholarship into dialogue with emerging scholarship that seeks to unsettle settler colonialism. This pedagogical approach interrogates the very structure of traditional art history to critically explore how systemic Eurocentrism is reproduced in an introductory history of photography course at a public university. As a case study, this article focuses on a history of photography course designed for second-year undergraduate students that provides a broad overview and historicization of one medium. Acknowledging important scholarship in visual culture studies, which has broadened what constitutes important art histories, we contend that more work needs to be done in introducing these complex ideological and methodological innovations in introductory courses. This article proposes methodologies for teaching an undergraduate survey course within the history of art that integrates non-Western and Indigenous knowledge. We argue that a transformed curriculum becomes a catalyst for decolonizing research.

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Research and methodologies in art education have undergone major shifts over the last few decades, foregrounding feminist; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and intersex; Indigenous; and racialized perspectives in art history, a discipline that has traditionally been understood as conventional and traditionalist (Brzyski, 2007; Iskin, 2017). Visual culture studies in particular, versus strictly the study of canonical art history, has reimagined what are recognized as important histories of art. In university settings, upper-level undergraduate courses and graduate seminars center on complex issues of power and representation, yet the introductory course is too often reduced down to the most straightforward, "comprehensible" history. Rethinking the survey course acknowledges the possibility of creating more expanded notions of what constitutes "important" art while accepting responsibility for the histories we create as educators. Canons of art are actively established and reinforced through the questions or themes instructors choose to focus on, the sites or artists they study, and the methods of teaching they employ. While critics have defined the canon as expressions of universal standards of quality, the canon itself can function as a mechanism of oppression, a guardian of privilege, and a vehicle for exclusion through which structures of class, gender, and race are hidden. As art historian Brzyski (2007) argued, "it is more than curious, therefore, that despite the extensive nature of the critiques of canonicity and their wide acceptance, mainstream art history continues to embrace canonical logic in its day to day operations, research, presentation of scholarship, pedagogy, and curatorial practice" (p. 2). This article focuses on introductory courses because it is within the pedagogy of foundational courses that we witness the day to day and often unintentional maintenance of the canon, which influences and affects the scope of future research.

For the benefit of art historians and artist-educators, this article discusses strategies to decolonize the classroom through changes in course structure. We are two art educators who write and teach in Canada's Tkaranto (Toronto), the Three Fires Confederacy, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wyandot territories. For the purposes of this article, we use the term decolonization in recognition of our responsibilities as settlers on Indigenous land and the damaging role education has played in the displacement of Indigenous culture and identities.

Scholars Tuck and Yang (2012) have argued that the "language of decolonization has been superficially adopted into education and other social sciences" (p. 2), which turns decolonization into a metaphor. They suggested that when "metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters Whiteness, it resettles theory, it

extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future" (p. 3). With this in mind, our course foregrounds Indigenous histories, perspectives, and theories while the geographic structure of our syllabus enables more specificity in highlighting the differences between postcolonial contexts and *settler colonialism*. Settler colonialism is a form of colonialism that cannot be theorized in the past tense, as it is characterized by the ongoing replacement of Indigenous populations with a new society of settlers, and the assertion of state sovereignty and juridical control over their lands.

It is our intent to question the systemic structures that currently underpin the field, and we illustrate the ideological and methodological shifts in art education that are needed in the 21st century. Operating within a broader societal context of social unrest, state violence, xenophobia, and intolerance, arts education and arts educators have significant responsibilities when teaching and researching the history of representation and cultural production. As Kraehe (2017) has argued, the classroom presents significant day-to-day opportunities in which educators have the potential to seek justice in art education (p. 275). We suggest there is a need to question the ideologies of the traditional survey course and to integrate postcolonial pedagogy into the introductory or foundational learning in the arts. As a case study, this article focuses on an undergraduate survey course on the history of photography, a course that provides a broad overview and historicization of one medium. Building on the critiques of the Eurocentric writing of history, how can we zero in on the history of photography as a case study to examine the multiple and often contradictory histories that exist within the history of art? We argue that a transformed curriculum becomes a catalyst for decolonizing research. Rather than having to unlearn the Eurocentric foundation of photographic history and the history of art as students progress through upper-level courses, whereby scholarship can often function more as critique than intervention, we suggest that teaching postcolonial methodologies as foundational to the history of art provides a significant foundation for generative interventions that complicate and expand dominant histories of art, introducing the possibility of multiple, varied, and occasionally contradictory histories of photography.

As educators in Toronto, a city where 51.5% of the population self-identified as a visible minority in the 2016 census (Statistics Canada, 2017), our classrooms at York University reflect this diverse make-up. As one of Canada's largest and most multicultural universities, which enrolls students from 178 countries, the limitations of the traditional survey course to reflect diverse histories and viewpoints are apparent. In this context, the following questions frame our pedagogical concerns: Which version of the history of photography is taught in university curriculum? How can the survey course speak to students who may feel alienated by Eurocentric histories? Can postcolonial narratives co-exist within traditional accounts of photography? How do ongoing experiences of settler colonialism further complicate "traditional" narratives of photography? How can both conventional and postcolonial histories speak to one another productively to uncover a deeper connection between photography as a medium and the subjects within the photographs? While the focus of this analysis is photography, we believe that the methods discussed in this article have broader applications for professors and researchers in art history and arts education.

This article first provides a traditional overview of the history of photography, and later, we illustrate the complex narratives of intertwined, multilayered histories that are better understood as pluralized histories of photographies. Then we examine how this history is translated into classrooms. Building from this, we analyze the limitations of common textbooks used to teach the history of photography. Next, we suggest methodological approaches that incorporate strategies of decentering Eurocentric frameworks. We conclude by applying this theoretical intervention

in decolonizing historical accounts through a short analysis of photography in the Middle East.[1] While this case study is only one instance in which colonial epistemological structures actively excluded non-Western histories within the formation of the art historical canon, we hope this example will resonate with photographic histories in many different geographic regions.

What Is Traditional History Anyway?

The history of photography is traditionally narrated as emerging in two competing forms in 1839: in France, Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre's daguerreotype; and in England, Henry Fox Talbot's calotype negatives. The earliest histories were written by the inventors who developed photographic technology, notably Daguerre's *Historique et Description des Procédés du Daguerréotype et du Diorama* and Talbot's *Some Account of the Art of Photogenic Drawing*. Curator and historian Gasser (1992) classified the early histories of photography (1839 to 1939) as falling into three categories: nationalistic debates over invention, technical handbooks, and image-oriented histories (p. 50). These foundational texts established an account that focused on technological development, written for specialized audiences. This history situates the development of photography in the innovations of a few individuals, and by extension, nationalistic histories of England and France. As Brunet (2011) has observed, the universal claims of photography are contradictions to the patriotic debates on the origins of photography and often result in a reductive comparative discourse that centers on national geniuses, traditions, and characters (p. 98).

By the turn of the 20th century, an interest in photography as art came to the fore, and the aesthetic quality of photographs became a significant concern in scholarship. The first curator of photography at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), Beaumont Newhall, wrote the influential *The History of Photography: 1839 to the Present* (1982), a book based on his 1937 exhibition at MOMA. For Newhall, photography was both a technologically determined product of the camera and the creation of an individual artist. Linking the technical innovations of photography to aesthetic developments, Newhall bridged the earlier historiography (e.g., the concern with "calotype vs. daguerreotype") with contemporary concerns regarding the photograph's status as an art object and the importance of authorship. Newhall played a significant role in shaping the Western canon, producing a limited but influential idea of what constituted important photography, primarily formed by photographers from England, France, and America. Newhall's language of objective detachment in assessing the strength of photographs masked his subjective aesthetic judgments (Bertrand, 1997, p. 143).

By the second half of the 20th century, the emphasis on "important" photographers and masterpieces was complicated by the inclusion of feminist, queer, and multicultural perspectives. This theoretical re-examination of photography introduced new methods of interpretation that facilitated complex histories from multiple vantage points. John Tagg's (1988) term "photographies" has become influential in describing the diversity of practices, artifacts, and practitioners, resulting in many and concurrent histories of photographies. Informed by Althusser (2014), Barthes (1981), Benjamin (2007), Berger (2008), Sontag (1977), and Bourdieu (1990) among others, historians of photography foregrounded issues of representation, identity formation, and power by critically analyzing the photograph, the archive, and the museum (Burgin, 1982; Rosler, 1993; Sekula, 1986; Solomon-Godeau, 1991; Tagg, 1988). This period saw a new interest in amateur or vernacular photography, complicating notions of artistic genius and formalist readings in favor of a sociohistorical approach. Transnational perspectives have sought to place developments in technology and style within a broader international

framework that challenges the traditional focus on the West and argues for the need to provincialize Europe within the history of art. These efforts align with scholars of global art histories that work to complicate the writing of art history and determine a historical narrative that does not "other" non-Western art as periphery, derivative, or reduce it to an addendum to dominant history (See Low, 2012; Pinney & Peterson, 2003; Poole, 1997; Tagg, 1988, 2010). However, these advancements in scholarship are not often taught in introductory classes. We aim to further this valuable art historical trajectory into strategies for *postcolonial pedagogy* within visual culture. We are not referring to specific pedagogical practices or schools of thought when we say postcolonial pedagogy. Instead, we look at how postcolonial theory, critical race theory, and anti-racist critique can be used within the teaching of art history. *Postcolonialism* as a term is used broadly within our study to signal an approach to research and teaching that is focused on decentering Eurocentric epistemological structures; instead, we aim to center Indigenous and non-Western historical narratives.

Globalizing the Classroom

Our pedagogical intervention is rooted in the critical works done in the history of art and visual culture studies that have, and continue to, actively rework the Western canon.[2] While scholars have complicated and globalized the history of photography, within the classroom, introductory and foundational courses tend to favor textbooks that establish a more traditional narrative. More challenging theoretical approaches often are reserved for upper-level special topics seminars, at which point the student already has a Eurocentric foundation of the discipline. To analyze how the history of photography is currently taught, we have consulted The Open Syllabus Project (2016), which gathers open access syllabi from across the Internet and allows instructors to upload their own. The Open Syllabus Project includes over 1.1 million syllabi, built from publicly posted syllabi and supplemented by instructors uploading their own. We use the following abbreviations to demonstrate the overall results: Overall Rank (OR) Assignment Count (AC) Teaching Score (TS). The TS is the most significant indicator, marking the "frequency with which a particular work is taught" (The American Assembly, 2016, n.p.).

In texts that contain the keywords "history" and "photography," Mary Werner Marien's (2013) *Photography: A Cultural History* ranks first (OR: 4,832, AC: 94, TS: 12) followed by Rosenblum's (2007) *A World History of Photography* (OR: 5,189, AC: 89, TS: 11.3), and Newhall's (1982) *The History of Photography* (OR: 10, 284, AC: 54, TC: 6.9). A more general search of "photography" shows results with a much higher OR: Berger's (2008) *Ways of Seeing* (OR: 66, AC: 1,202, TS: 92.0) and Sontag's (1977) *On Photography* (OR: 343, AC: 536, TS: 63.6). However, neither of these texts are a *history* of photography, they are frequently assigned in upper-level classes, and they are commonly assigned alongside other texts (often one of the more specifically "history" textbooks listed above). Overall, while Marien's (2013) TS is slightly higher, Rosenblum's (2007) was more commonly assigned as the primary textbook.

The use of the Open Syllabus Project data has been supplemented by our analysis of syllabi in universities across Ontario, Canada. One of the shortcomings of the Open Source Syllabus model is that it does not distinguish between texts assigned over multiple weeks (each text is counted only once) or between primary and suggested reading. To address this issue, we conducted a survey of publicly posted syllabi at universities in Ontario, Canada; in addition, we chose a random sample of history of photography courses in the United States. Through our supplemental analysis of individual syllabi, we found that Marien's (2013) and Rosenblum's (2007) texts consistently formed the foundation of history of photography courses. While this is far from a comprehensive analysis, we suggest that it reflects a reasonably accurate distribution of assigned texts.

Our research concludes that a few foundational, historical texts form the basis of many courses. Newhall's (1982) aforementioned text, *The History of Photography*; Rosenblum's (2007) *A World History of Photography*; and Marien's (2013) *A Cultural History of Photography* rank as the key survey textbooks assigned in introductory-level history of photography courses. Rosenblum's (2007) text is our primary site of analysis as it is commonly assigned and explicitly claims to be a global history. This book provides a rich site of analysis both for the frequency with which it is assigned and with regard to the ways it attempts to construct a global history of photography. While we briefly discuss Marien's (2013) text, we focus our analysis on Rosenblum's (2007) textbook as an example of how Eurocentric frameworks are replicated in the classroom.

Marien's (2013) *A Cultural History of Photography* has become a popularly assigned text in survey courses, and it is a strong addition to the history of photography. Marien's survey moves beyond technological innovation, mechanical reproduction, and "great" or "genius" artists, instead asking larger questions about the function of photography in society. Chapters weave the development of photography through explorations of the role of photography in colonialism, radical politics, advertising, and war. However, Marien's focus remains primarily on canonical European and American photographers, with short case studies that shed insight into more global developments. Likewise, Rosenblum's (2007) ambitious text attempts a survey of the global development of photography. Rosenblum introduces her survey with the observation that locates photography within the history of European Enlightenment, claiming that in 1839, Western industrialized society was ready for photography. To Rosenblum (2007), "the photograph was the ultimate response to a social and cultural appetite for a more accurate and real-looking representation of reality, a need that had its origins in the Renaissance" (p. 15), supported by the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and the emergence of the middle class. As a result, Rosenblum (2007) established the medium of photography as rooted in "the materialistic outlook of the industrialized people of the 19th century" (p. 155), and tied to the understanding of the photograph as an objective document due to the mechanical nature of the camera itself.

Rosenblum (2007) deftly and comprehensively outlined a history of the medium rooted in these issues while branching out periodically to global concerns in chapters such as "Camera Portraits in Asia" and "Landscape Photography in the Near East and Orient." However, it is worth probing what a "world history" looks like if the reference points are still deeply rooted in European frameworks. To demonstrate, all of the photographers who receive stand-alone case studies in Rosenblum's text are White Europeans or Americans. The exclusion of photographers—contemporary or historical—from the global south is reflective of the continued strong Eurocentric bias in the canon. This is not to discount the significance of canonical photographers, but rather, we ask, how might these case studies be enriched or complicated by comparisons that look beyond the West?

Rosenblum's (2007) textbook demonstrates the shortcomings that arise when "globalized" histories simply include other regions while asking the same questions and maintaining Western frameworks of taste and stylistic development. Rosenblum weaves a history rooted in technological progress and artistic innovation that centers on Europe and America, a history tied to a barometer of technology and taste established by the West. In this framework, non-Western ways of making, seeing, and valuing photographs become obscured or disregarded, as they often do not intersect neatly within the Western linear history. To use one example, Rosenblum's blindness to local aesthetic traditions is present in her discussion of the Indian subcontinent. Rosenblum notes how Indian portraits were influenced by the

patterns and compositions of Indian painting. Portraits often were hand-painted photographs in the decorative style of Indian miniatures. However, photo-historian Judith Mara Gutman's (1996) *Through Indian Eyes* argued that while the camera is based in monocular perspective, Indian photography has a very different approach to space, suggesting that non-Western ways of seeing have in fact influenced photography. Rosenblum (2007) referenced Gutman's (1996) argument, noting that Gutman suggested: "that the camera itself was used in a different fashion than in the West, that Indian photographers were somehow able to avoid the representation of space and dimensionality even before the paint was added" (p. 74). However, Rosenblum rejected the contention that Indian photographers photographed differently than Westerners, instead suggesting the innovation was limited to the application of paint and did not reflect a strong break with Western ways of seeing. Yet as Pinney and Peterson (2003) observed, in India, photography is not clearly identified as "modern" because of the integration of other, more ancient, media (p. 2). India thus introduces a complication to the history of photography, and the framework Rosenblum (2007) established is unable to account for alternative uses and understandings of photography and the camera.

While photography undoubtedly was more widespread in prosperous, industrial nations, there are significant histories that emerge outside of these centers. To list a few examples: within months of Daguerre's innovation, photography studios catering to the urban elite had sprung up in Lima, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and Rio de Janeiro (Poole, 2013, p. 1). In 1845, Russian experiments produced images on copper and brass, lowering the cost of daguerreotypes (Rosenblum, 2007, p. 23). In India, photography arrived in Calcutta in 1840 and was widespread in Bombay and Calcutta by the 1860s (Gutman, 1996, p. 427).

These facts prompted us to ask: does the use or meaning of photography differ in these non-Western contexts? How do we assess photographs that fall outside of Western ideals of formalism or technical skill? How can historians of photography introduce these histories within the dominant Western history? While these questions are too difficult to address in one analysis, we suggest holding on to the tensions that surface when multi-local histories are placed into dialogue and inform a more complex understanding of the history of photography.

Methods for Teaching Histories of Photographies

Decentering is an active process of accepting responsibility as educators for the canons we reinforce through the artworks we choose and the texts we assign. Panelists at a presentation entitled "Surveying the Survey" at the 2017 Universities Art Association of Canada conference observed that while over the past two decades the discipline of art history has undergone many changes, the traditional survey course remains entrenched at many institutions (Korda & Dymond, 2017). Through this article, we are in dialogue with many educators who are actively challenging the limitations of the European-centric survey course. A recent social media hashtag, #firstdayfirstimage, asked art educators to actively rethink the canons they create for their curricula starting with the first image shown to students on the first day of class. Doing so centers voices that have long been under-examined as the first image discussed in the classroom. These images include, but are not limited to, works by female artists; artists of color; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer artists; and Indigenous artists, and the works expand the histories [they] helped to create.[3]

In our proposed course, for example, a photograph of Frederick Douglass, the African American abolitionist, social reformer, orator, and writer, could start a survey of the history of photography. This would not substitute for a traditionally important photographer or subject purely to make a political point, however.

Douglass, who sat for his first portrait in 1841, was the most photographed American of the 19th century, sitting for at least 160 portraits. Conscious of the role of images and employing the visual to advance his political causes, images of Douglass can be used to open up discussion of complex issues in the early history of photography as they pertain to race, class, and social justice.

We propose extending this decentering further: structuring the course itself to center voices that have been left out of the discussion. Our proposed changes to the survey course structure are inspired by a curriculum shift at the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) in Toronto (Seck Langill, 2017). OCAD restructured its program to make introductory undergraduate courses largely non-Western, while upper-level classes teach more traditional, canonical art histories. Students who choose to study more traditional courses are able to, but students also are given a decentered foundation on which they can choose to build.

Course Structure

While OCAD is an example in which teaching non-Western art was prioritized in designing a university program at the administrative level, there also are ways to achieve these pedagogical interventions through course structure. To address the complexities of photographies, we designed a course structure that combines a thematic and geographic approach with a full week of lectures and course readings dedicated to a specific thematic inquiry followed by a focus on one geographic region. Thematic weeks include: Issues in Photography, Photography and Power, Photography and Resistance, and Decolonizing Photography, all of which introduce key issues in the history of photography and provide a framework for deeper analysis. Other weeks are geographic case studies that explore the development of photography in the various regions. The geographic weeks focus on photographic histories in Africa, East Asia, South Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, North America, and Europe. As a method of decentering, we ask: what happens when the history of photography in Europe is taught last, rather than first? How do Daguerre and Talbot's innovations change when explored through a Middle Eastern or Latin American perspective *before* European or American perspectives are considered? In this switch, which issues and narratives come to the fore that might have been obscured when the lineage began with Europe and slowly ended up in colonial outposts? This intervention does not ignore the significance of technological innovation in Europe, which is addressed in thematic weeks—specifically "Issues in Photography"—and Europe's involvement in photography is entwined with other geographic regions. However, it is important to reorient histories away from a clear center-periphery narrative, and studying Europe last can offer this revisionist approach.

Timeline

Our second method involves shifting the temporal parameters of the discussion. History of photography courses typically start in 1839, but we ask: what would a history of photography look like if it started *before* 1839? The history of Talbot and Daguerre is well documented, but they were only two figures in a much broader exploration of light, lenses, and light sensitive substances in the period. Our course begins with the pre-history of photography, which goes back to observations that inform the camera obscura. This intervention responds to writing on photography. For example, Marien's (2013) history of photography starts before 1839, focusing on the "partial successes, missed opportunities, good fortune, and false starts" (p. xiv). Rosenblum's (2007) text begins in 1839, but she later analyzes the study of light in 5th-century B.C. China, 6th-century Greece, and 10th-century Iraq, to name a few points of convergence (p. 192). Even the term "photography" was first used in two different hemispheres by Hercules Florence, who was based in Brazil, and Johann H. von Maedler in Germany

(Rosenblum, 2007, p. 27). The impossibility of writing one linear history of photography becomes apparent with these interventions. By establishing the development of photographic technologies as contested, numerous, and often nonlinear, multiple and occasionally divergent histories of photographies emerge.

Within each week that is focused on a specific region, discussions move beyond a strictly linear format while maintaining a roughly chronological structure within each lecture. Our course returns to key moments from different perspectives, exploring significant issues, people, and developments from multiple viewpoints. This structure helps to address the gaps in work by people of color, women, and Indigenous photographers. For example, within Canada, there are not many examples of early photography by Indigenous artists. However, the work of contemporary Indigenous artists, such as Rebecca Belmore or Jeff Thomas, can be placed into dialogue with historical work by settlers to open up discussions about how history is written. We suggest that this approach reveals the entwinement of histories: rather than a straightforward narrative of innovation and influence, we find connections and differences in unexpected places.

Course Readings

Survey classes of art history and the history of photography often exclusively rely on textbooks. While course-packs do not seem novel, our research indicates that textbooks are common for history of art survey courses. Some textbooks are strong. For example, Marien's (2013) *A Cultural History of Photography* is a widely valued textbook. However, if the textbook is the primary or sole source of information, students are presented with an easy to comprehend, linear progression of information that reflects only one perspective. When complex issues such as feminism are introduced later, they can seem peripheral or additive, rather than central to the history of photography. Finally, because the textbook is comprehensive, students are given the mistaken impression that certain knowledges are fixed, and some questions have a right or wrong answer, which limits dialogue and the production of new knowledge in the classroom. Course packs, while more work for the instructor and potentially more challenging for the students, set students up better for upper-level courses, as course packs introduce higher-level thinking as foundational to reading and writing at the university level.

Assignments

Assignments and course evaluations still take place in traditional research essay formats. The parameters of the essays, however, are flexible in topic choice, and they require engagement with more than one geographic sphere and/or time period. Students are required to draw connections, comparisons, and contradistinctions between the histories of two or more locales, and students are encouraged to think thematically. For instance, a student may wish to explore themes of travel photography and the comparison of commercial trade photography through a comparative analysis of hand-painted photographs in Japan and Egypt. This type of topic choice resists any compartmentalization of historical narrative.

Collaboration

A common concern by educators is that they lack the expertise beyond their specialization to teach a more complex survey. As a result, the survey course continues to replicate narrow interpretations of art history. Recognizing the limitations of our own art historical research, our proposed course was designed by both of us as a collaborative effort to combine the strengths of each scholar and to place traditional photographic history into dialogue with postcolonial scholarship and emerging scholarship that seeks to unsettle settler colonialism. The course builds from our respective specializations in the Americas and the Middle East, modern and contemporary, and artistic and vernacular photography. To further round out our course, we have engaged in dialogue with

specialists in other regions and methodologies. This can take the form of guest lectures, both in person and over Skype, suggestions for recommended readings, or advice on points of interest. Another form of knowledge sharing is the use of open source syllabi that facilitate a reconfigured survey.

Decentering Photography: A Case Study

This case study is meant to illustrate the need for restructuring and reimagining how the history of photography is taught in the classroom while providing some possible approaches. Through a reading of the history of photographic advancement in the Middle East, we illustrate the inherent imperialism present within the writing of photographic history and the importance of decentering the European advancement of photography.[4] Additionally, we provide further methods of implementing these strategies within future teaching and research. While this section deals heavily with the Eurocentric history of photography, it analyzes the academic interventions happening within the discipline and seeks to find ways to incorporate these methods into pedagogy. As argued throughout this article, it is important that theoretical advancement and decolonial praxis take place within the classroom as much as within the textbook.

As historian Ali Behdad (2016) argued, a crucial link between the history of photography and Europe's knowledge about the Middle East has existed since the invention of the daguerreotype in 1839. Since Louis-Jacques-Mandé-Daguerre introduced his invention to the Chambre des députés in France, politician, mathematician, and physicist Dominique François Arago (1980) commented on "the extraordinary advantages that could have been derived from so exact and rapid a means of reproduction during the expedition to Egypt" (p. 17), and recommended that the Institut d'Egypte be equipped immediately with the new visual technology. In subsequent decades many European photographers followed Arago's suggestion and, with the support of various governmental institutions, photographers traveled to the Middle East to amass portfolios of Egyptian antiquity and the sites of the holy lands, making the region one of the principal training grounds for the early practice of photography (Behdad & Gartlan, 2013, p. 1). This intrinsic link between photography and the Middle East also is seen in Daguerre's British counterpart, William Henry Fox Talbot, who in 1846 published a pamphlet entitled "The Talbotype Applied to Hieroglyphics," which was distributed among archeologists and orientalist scholars (Perez, 1988, p. 15).

The dominant historiography understands photography as a Western import into Eastern lands. Historians of photography have generally assigned only marginal importance to the Middle East in the works of the many European photographers in the 19th century, and even less importance to the various traditions of Indigenous photography that emerged in the region soon after the introduction of the daguerreotype in 1839 (Behdad & Gartlan, 2013, p. 1). Currently, the study of photography in the Middle East is not focused on Indigenous photography, but rather historiographies of European photographers traveling to the Middle East on imperialist adventures during a period of colonial expansion. These European photographers and photo-studios that dominate the history of Middle Eastern photography include: Le Gray, Du Camp, Salzmann; the works of Tancrède Dumas, Francis Frith, Felice Beato, Emile Béchard, Hippolyte Arnoux, and Alexandre Leroux; as well as Maison Bonfils, Maison Lehnert & Landrock, Maison Garrigues, Photoglob Zurich, and Underwood and Underwood. Tellingly, all of these photographers and photography studios still define the imagery and historical narrative of photography in the Middle East. Then, how does one study, interpret, and read the visual imagery of Middle Eastern photography from local photographers and artists? In his detailed study of Middle Eastern portrait photography, *The Arab*

Imago: A Social History of Portrait Photography, 1860–1910, historian Sheehi (2016) argued that asking how Middle Eastern photography is *really* different only re-inscribes the binaries of the dominant historical narrative of Middle Eastern photography (p. xxi). Cultural difference, and arguably Western exceptionalism, is maintained if photography from "Eastern lands" is distinct from the Western master-image. Rather than strictly analyzing the subject matter of the image itself, Orientalism's asymmetries of power need to be read as part of the photographic image as much as the subject matter.[5] The clear divide between European photographers in the Middle East versus local photographers in the Middle East is indicative of the Western exceptionalism that maintains this Eurocentric master-narrative and disenfranchises Arabs from proprietorship of the universalizing power of photography.

Instead, a method we implement is to begin with local and Indigenous photographers, and then branch out from there into the photography of Europeans in the Middle East. It becomes evident that tropes like Orientalism and exoticism are used in complex ways by locals in a struggle of power and representation between Indigenous and tourist photographers. An instance of this local use of photography can be seen in the book *Camera Orientalis*, in which Behdad (2016) shares family photographs of his grandfather in Iran from the turn of the 20th century.[6] In the photographs of Mahmood Oskooui, the little boys in the scene are clearly visible and are seemingly playful and happy to be in front of the camera, while an ominous black shadow occupies the left quadrant of the picture. An unknown person scratched a shadow into the photograph deliberately. As later revealed by Behdad, the figure that stood in the picture was his grandmother, and she had been scratched off the negative plate to remove any traces of her presence within the photograph. Her absence in this photograph is noteworthy and the intentionality of removing a woman from the frame is something to be considered when evaluating local methods of image making and photographing local populations. More than this, the absence of Behdad's grandmother in the rest of the photographic archive speaks to matters of gender within photography, and possible techniques of image making and their relation to vernacular photography in Iran. It is this type of illustration of gender representation that images made by European photographers in the region will not, and could never, account for. It is the local understanding of cultural tradition fused with newly invented technologies of photography developing within the region that better illustrates what photography in the Middle East looks like and its vernacular function.

While studies of local photographers in the Middle East are largely lacking in the academy, the valuable examples provided by Behdad (2016) and Sheehi (2016) demonstrate that the local uses of photography in the Middle East have been overlooked until very recently. Instead, scholars have been looking closely at the writing of the history of photography in the Middle East, and edited volumes like Behdad and Gartlan (2013) *Photography's Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation* offers a revisionist approach to Eurocentric writings of art history and the creation of the photographic medium. An important method and arguably a strength of this text, are the geo-temporal ambiguities it uses. For example, the inclusion of Iranian photography—which is not part of the Middle East—within Behdad's book on Middle Eastern photography reflects that the geographic borders created by colonial powers need to be reimagined. The inclusion of Iranian photography within a study of Middle Eastern photographic history is not only natural but oftentimes necessary. Feldman (2013) stated, "This is precisely the point. Recalling Edward Said's claim that Orientalism is generated by an imaginative geography" (p. 153), we reimagine this geography, or we imagine it differently.

Scholars such as Behdad and Gartlan (2013) are re-writing the history of photography to show how the Middle East has been part of the development of the photographic medium since its conception—rather than being a solely British or French phenomenon later taken up by the rest of the world. This new wave of scholarship in the field needs to be better incorporated within the art history curriculum in order for these case studies to resist being only one-off instances of deep readings of both local photography and revisionist historiography. A method of doing this is to ensure that photographs of local photographers as well as readings focusing on the local advancement of photography in each region are studied in tandem, as doing so helps decenter and provincialize Europe in yet another way. Showing the very close link between European history of photography and the Middle East illustrates how since its invention, the photographic medium was developed, practiced, and re-invented in the Middle East by European photographers and by the local population. Taking history out of this European bubble shows the back and forth cultural exchanges that the Middle East had on the European conception and practice of photography, and vice-versa. This transculturalization offers much more nuanced accounts of the history of photography (Pinney & Peterson, 2003), and shows the immense impact Islamicate cultures had on photographic production (Behdad, 2016), dissemination of photographs (Linrothe, 2013), technological advancements and genre making (Akcan, 2013; Grigsby, 2013; Pinney & Peterson, 2003), and the making and unmaking of nationalism and nation-states through photography (Feldman, 2013; Tagg, 2010).

As demonstrated through this brief case study of both the history of photography in the Middle East and the literature on the topic, a multi-local approach is needed to decenter traditional conceptions of photography. Comparative understandings of the developments of photography in less contained geographic structures are conducive to understanding the influence photography as a technological tool had on local populations and their use of the medium. Building on the imaginative geography of Orientalism mentioned above, the power of representation can only truly be examined when historical ambiguities are embraced. As previously expressed, fixed parameters and rigid timelines reduce complex histories of intercultural encounters to an easily digestible linear narrative, erasing with it all complex overlaps in an undeniably global history of photography.

Conclusion

The survey course remains an important issue in art education research. While the history of art has undergone a reconsideration of the assumptions and traditions that underpin the discipline, more work must be done to introduce the results of new methodologies and ideologies in introductory-level courses. The canon is actively produced in the survey course, and the survey remains one of the foundational learning experiences for students entering the discipline. Globalizing and decentering histories need to fully integrate the histories of multiple locales in order to examine their relationships to power and representation. It is vital that this be done from a decentered starting point. Otherwise, attempts at globalizing histories will always center on Europe, and all other histories will remain peripheral additions to a grand narrative. This control and limitation of how geographies outside of Europe are permitted to contribute to historiography as a whole, whether it be the history of photography or art history more broadly, needs to be examined in ways that highlight the construct of such hierarchies, and educators should question the value judgments still being made by historians about civilization, progress, and those left outside of modernity.

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ENDNOTES

[1] We define the Middle East loosely as the geopolitical designation western Asia and northeast Africa that includes the nations on the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey. Even though some of these regions, like Iran and Turkey, are not technically a part of the Middle East, our emphases on historiography make it integral to include regions that were connected by empire, culture, and language.

[2] See Belting, Buddensieg, and Weibel (2013); Brzyski (2007); Dadi and Hassan (2001); Dave-Mukherji (2014); D'Souza and Casid (2014); Elkins (2010); Mercer (2005); Mirzoeff (2014); Nelson (2014); O'Brien et al. (2012); Roxburgh, McWilliams, and Emani (2017); Smith (2011); Tiampo (2011).

[3] More information is available on www.firstdayfirstimage.com.

[4] The definition of the Middle East that we use here is in line with Islamicate methodologies and moves away from area studies. In 1974, Marshall Hodgson coined the term Islamicate as a way of opening up the borders posed by modern scholarship. Hodgson identifies the issue in using the terms Islam and Islamic in unspecific ways, arguing that the more we speak of Islamic art, Islamic literature, or Islamic sexuality, the less we are actually speaking about Islam as a faith. The Islamicate is then not referring directly to the religion of Islam itself, but to the social and cultural complexities historically associated with Islam. It is also inclusive of non-Muslims living within the same regions. Geographically this also opens up the limits of only studying places such as "Middle East" and encompasses other geographic regions where Islam is dominant both religiously and culturally, such as Iran and parts of Asia and Africa (Hodgson, 1974, pp. 57–59).

[5] Orientalism is defined as the West's patronizing representations of "The East" and the overall exoticization of the societies and peoples who inhabit countries in Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East. According to Said (1978), orientalism is inextricably tied to the imperialist societies who produced it, which makes much Orientalist work inherently political and central to power.

[6] Mahmood Oskooui, family photograph (ca. 1920s), Iran. Glass Negative. Ali Behdad's Private Collection. Please note this picture is depicted in: Behdad (2016, p. 104).