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Leiden  
The Netherlands

## Combining two disciplines: the perspective of an anthropologist-photographer and reflections on the photo camera as a tool for mediation

Gracjasz, A.

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# Combining Two Disciplines

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Aleksandra Gracjasz

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- 1 I would like to express my gratefulness to everyone who have trusted me and my photography skills and who dared to looked into my camera lens during both of my fieldworks. I am especially thankful to the farmers, vendors, owners and clients of *Bazar Natury* for letting me roam around and observe, Milena from *Kooperatywa Eko-Box* for giving me an opportunity to step out from my comfort zone and thus expand my photographic competences, and the inhabitants of a Cuban village where I carried out my master's research for opening their doors and their hearts to me. I also would like to thank Marek Ryćko and Kai Eisentraut for allowing me to use their pictures of myself. The *Food Citizens?* project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant agreement No. 724151).

## Introduction

- 2 I am a self-trained photographer and a university-trained anthropologist. I picked up the camera before I began training as an anthropologist, which means I was already familiar with photography before becoming acquainted with anthropology. My adventure with photography started during my travels during which I became particularly interested in street photography. Perhaps that's why for me the type of photography most alike anthropological practice is street photography. Both involve a focus on people, intent observation, and a level of analytical comprehension: What does this scene tell me? Why is it important? Who are the main characters? Street photography stands in opposition to staged studio photography where a model is fully aware of the camera's gaze and, together with the photographer, has the freedom to shape meaning and convey an agreed upon message. The street photographer, on the other hand, observes and captures the moment in a quick, and sometimes discrete way, before the subject even realizes. As Maurines and Sanuheza explained (2004: 36) "the

photographer sizes up the situation and acts. Mediation between his thought and action is much briefer and sometimes more immediately productive.” Similarly, Collier and Collier pointed out that “photography offers the stranger in the field a means of recording large areas authentically, rapidly, and with great detail, and a means of storing away complex descriptions for future use” (1986: 16). Photographers observe and act instantly, before the scene changes or the subject disappears. This comparison of anthropology to street photography does not reject other associations, for the field of visual anthropology is expanding fast, and people experiment in many different ways and in directions too numerous to cover in this article. Aside from street photography, I also have experience working as an event photographer at music festivals, theatre and music performances, and rehearsals, where my focus is once again on people.

Working with a camera is my comfort zone. When I don’t feel sociable or ready to approach people I hide behind the lens while observing others. When I look and observe, the camera lens serves as an excuse to observe more freely. People see and approach me differently then. They are either curious or ignorant; they either see my photography skills and equipment as something that can be useful to them, or they do not like to be photographed and leave or approach me directly to raise the issue. Imagine a stranger staring at you and changing her body position: she is standing, then bending, then crouching; she is suddenly coming closer or moving further away. Now imagine the same stranger, making the same body movements while holding a camera. Her actions are gaining meaning now that we see she is searching for the perfect frame, the right angle or an interesting composition. At times, when I do not need to hide behind the lens, the camera becomes a tool which allows me to engage with people, especially at the very beginning of my stay in a new place. This practice, or habit, of using a camera as a mediator between a new place, new people, and myself became useful when I started my PhD fieldwork in Gdańsk, Poland and my previous master’s fieldwork in Guantanamo province, Cuba. In the next paragraph, I will further explore the idea of looking through the camera.

## Mediation: Looking Through a Viewfinder

- 3 When looking through the camera, one is aided by a particular technical aspect: the frame of a viewfinder (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Viewfinder versus monitor



The view through a viewfinder (on the left) and through the camera's monitor (on the right). The camera I used in the field, the NIKON D5100 had an option which enabled using the monitor instead of the viewfinder to compose photos. The addition of using the camera's monitor are the lines, which help with composition. Below each of the images there are numbers which correspond to the camera's manually adjustable features, which are, from the left: the shutter speed (here set as 1/15), the aperture (F4 and F4.2) and the ISO (1600).

Photos by Aleksandra Gracjasz.

- 4 Looking through a viewfinder allows one to simply 'find a view'; it permits one to focus on details, to notice those pieces of information that could otherwise escape. David MacDougall also recognized that "to look with a camera is to see with some purpose and leave a trace of that process in the resulting images" (2006: 242). Peering through an already defined frame helps to find a perspective, to observe attentively, and to notice what is actually being looked at – be it architecture, landscape, cityscape or people and their actions. I agree with MacDougall, who said that framing "produces different modes of looking with a camera" (2006: 4). The following pictures show the same object, a block of flats, which demonstrate that when framed differently the results are rather distinct:

Fig 2. Blocks of flats in the Lower Wrzeszcz district of Gdańsk.





Photos by Aleksandra Gracjasz.

- 5 Although these two pictures are of the same building, they are taken from a different angle and framed differently. The first one is composed in a way that gives a sense of the overwhelming size of the block of flats, because there is no visible end. Additionally, it is taken from a lower perspective, so the building seems imposing. The second picture is also a close up, but one can see the end of the block of flats, which makes it apprehensible. Seeing the sky, even a small amount of it, situates the building within a spatial context.
- 6 One could say that looking through a viewfinder, which has an enforced frame, narrows down the perspective and that one therefore risks not seeing the larger picture. However, by focusing on details one can distill a greater message and the viewfinder can be a tool used for such purpose. For instance, one can bring together a collection of details which, when put together creates a whole. See the example below, where I put together close-up pictures of a vegetable stand taken during one of my visits to a local organic food market in Gdańsk (see Fig. 3).

Fig. 3 A collection of close-up images from the food market.



A tight frame allows for focusing on details such as mud and the irregularities of the vegetables, as well as their colors and price tags.

Photo by Aleksandra Gracjasz.

- 7 The images above, when put together, create a collective representation of what vegetables at a market look like. Taking a close look at the vegetables, and the price tags, gives a sense of what type of food market the place is. This collection of pictures shows how combining the practice of a photographer and the focus of an anthropologist creates a specific, deeper meaning. My fieldwork in Gdańsk lasted 15 months, and throughout this time I was able to get to know the context – I worked at one food market for six months and visited several others multiple times so I was able to compare prices. Knowing from my longitudinal observation that the average price of carrots in Poland at the time of my research was around 2,50zł per kilo, the above pictures show that the market in question is an expensive one (8zł per kilo). Additionally, the way in which the vegetables are presented, with mud and irregularities, suggests that this food market is employing a certain aesthetic: one that resembles ‘naturalness’. The tight frame here functions as a zoom, pointing to details. Even when the pictures are then cut out of context, a cohesive image is nonetheless created when they are placed in combination with one another. The contextual information about prices at different markets gathered through the ethnographic method of participant observation adds another layer of meaning to the understanding of food markets, economy, and class in contemporary Poland. It is through the combination of these two roles, as an anthropologist and as a photographer, that I was not only seeing the vegetables, but through the skill of looking I was able to notice and comprehend meanings behind them. The next paragraph will expand on the importance of looking as a relevant mode of vision.

## The Importance of Looking

- 8 Both in Photography and in anthropology, one has to know *how* to look to be able to understand and analyze. In the description of their collaborative project, ethnologist Béatrice Maurines and photographer Angel Sanhueza (2004: 34) introduced the concept of the “differentiated gaze”, in that “each collaborator sees something different in the

field due to the discipline-specific competences and techniques.” In my case, due to being professionally trained as an anthropologist and self-trained as a photographer, I was able to synthesize the “differentiated gaze” within myself. The camera, a technical object with a multitude of settings, allowed me to look rather than see. The camera can assist in the mastering of ‘looking’, if, like anthropologist Cristina Grasseni, we recognize that ‘looking’ is a practice. Grasseni argued that looking is “a culturally situated capacity that is learnt, embodied, and socialized in specific ways in thickly layered material and socio-historical contexts” (Grasseni 2017: 1). Understood as such, ‘looking’ is something that is acquired and can be aided by specific equipment, for example a camera. David MacDougall differentiated ‘looking’ from ‘seeing’ and from ‘thinking’. He emphasized the importance of the ‘skills of looking attentively’. “Looking”, he said, is “something more deliberate than seeing and yet more unguarded than thinking” (2006: 7). Thus, “looking” then allows one to narrow down her focus, which can be aided by looking through a viewfinder, as explained earlier in the article.

- 9 At the aforementioned food market, I often had the camera with me, even before I started working there and, thus, I was training myself in both ‘looking’ and observing. I quickly became known as ‘the girl with a camera’, which already, at first glance, differentiated me from all the other vendors. Many of them did not understand my work as an anthropologist, but quickly became comfortable with me and my camera. Maurines and Sanhueza (2004: 36) also observed that “in the field, the photographer’s role is more accessible and therefore acceptable than the representation of the ethnologist’s role.” In the next paragraph, I will describe how having a camera at the start of my two fieldworks made it easier for me to ‘find my way’ in the field and helped me to engage with research participants.

## Relationality

- 10 I believe that photography helps to relate to people, which for an anthropologist establishing her first relationships in the field can be crucial. This statement stands against Susan Sontag’s argument that taking photographs distances people from reality (1973). In her first essay titled *On Photography* she conveyed her photographic theory that photography is predatory, focused on obtaining what is in front of a photographer, and taking away any possible interaction between the photographer and her surroundings. Rather, I argue that using a camera in the field can aid in establishing new relationships in various ways, including ‘breaking the ice’, creating a sense of familiarity, and opening up conversations – developing first contact, which in anthropological terms means establishing rapport. Visual anthropologist Jonathan Marion talked about how photography facilitated his “*entrée*” to the scene of ballroom dancing, as his role of a photographer was much more accepted than that of “that guy always taking notes” (Marion 2010: 25). The camera opened doors for him and justified his presence. Similarly, for photographer and anthropologist Brent Luvaas, the camera “became the start of an interaction. It fostered engagement for both [him] and [his] interlocutors” (Luvaas 2017: 173).
- 11 Similarly, working with a camera while in the field, allowed me to create entry points. It made my purpose in the field easier to understand, both for me and for my participants, and it made my observation sharper and more directional. I will now provide examples from two different field sites, where the camera became an ‘ice

breaker.' In both cases, after arriving in the field, I started as a photographer, using the camera to get acquainted with my new environment. First, I used the camera to engage with the field, to establish initial connections with my surroundings, to narrow down my view, and in a way 'to focus'. I first used the camera in the same way Dona Schwartz did, who photographed cityscapes so as to make early notes about the surrounding area – in other words, I turned the camera into a note-taking tool (1989). At the same time, I became known as a person with a camera and used it to shorten the distance between me and my research participants.

## The Camera as a Signature Prop and an 'Ice Breaker'

- 12 Between September 2016 and January 2017, I carried out my master's research in a Cuban village, where I studied the religious possession trance rituals of Santería<sup>1</sup>. Initially, I was overwhelmed and oversaturated by everything that was happening around me and the camera helped me find my feet. In the midst of a *bembe* ceremony, when the beats of the drums were at their loudest, when smells and noises were intensified because the night was dark and the little hut did not have much light, the ritual's participants would call me to the altar. There, the central part of the ceremony, a ceremonial animal sacrifice was happening, and I was urged to take a picture and film it. While the photographer in me was keen to capture the essential part of the ceremony, the anthropologist in me decided to stay back, observe, and understand first. After attending several *bembes*, I got used to seeing animals being slaughtered; I knew the meanings behind these acts and the scenarios of the ceremonies. Throughout my fieldwork, participants of the ceremonies came to know me, and understand what my role was, my objectives, and my interests. They knew I was not a sensation-seeking photographer on her travels, but someone who wants to invest her time and energy in understanding their practices. After spending a considerable amount of time in the village I gained the trust of my participants and was then able to use the camera in an unthreatening and non-invasive way. At that point, the camera served me as a point of focus. It was my anchor in the midst of a ceremonial craze. It helped me to look at details as I would often be taken to a special place or a particular altar to photograph it, which led to discoveries and conversations (see Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 Various Santería altars





This is a collection of different Santería altars I was presented by practitioners. The last photo shows one of the women pointing out a specific figure of a saint for me to have a closer look and photograph it.

Photo by Aleksandra Gracjasz

- 13 Later on in my research, my friends from the field would want to pose in front of the camera, and to have a picture taken with me or with their families or friends. Working with a camera was my way of engaging with the community: the camera became my signature prop and I was accepted as ‘the one who always carries a camera’.
- 14 In a very different field site, in Gdańsk, Poland, I carried out my PhD research between January 2019 and July 2020. I studied various forms of collective food procurement practices and one place I would visit frequently were food markets. At the start of the fieldwork, I would go to these markets with my camera in hand. I would walk around

and take pictures of the surrounding area. I would talk to people and ask if I could take a picture of them and their stand. They would sometimes think I was an official of some sort, or that I work for the management of the market. Then, when the picture was taken, when this first barrier was broken, we would start talking about their products, their day at the market and eventually we would establish a meaningful connection (see Fig. 5).

Fig. 5 *Bazar Natury*



One of the first pictures I took at *Bazar Natury*, an ecological food market in the *Wrzeszcz* neighborhood in Gdańsk.

Photo by Aleksandra Gracjasz.

- 15 The picture above was taken during one of my first visits to *Bazar Natury*. It led to a conversation about all the different food products at the stand after which the lady in the picture and I established a friendly relationship. Nearly every time I visited the market we would exchange a few words, maintaining the relationship started by this picture. American photographer and researcher Dona Schwartz (1989) also observed that the camera can be used as an entry point to community life, allowing for spontaneous interactions. During her fieldwork amongst Waucoma families in the United States, she used the camera as “an important means of entering into the social life of the community” which allowed her “to engage in understandable, task-oriented activity in the course of observation” (Schwartz 1989: 125). Taking photographs helped her get to know people in the field. Similarly, since working with a camera is my comfort zone, it was easier for me to get to know people through the camera first.
- 16 Brent Luvaas also used his camera “as a tool of engagement” (Luvaas 2017: 177). Based on his work in Jakarta, he explained how photography, and specifically street photography, helped him accelerate the process of fieldwork. I also felt that I got closer

to some of my research subjects, when in March 2019 I went to take pictures at the Women's March in Gdynia, a neighboring city to Gdańsk (see Fig. 6).

Fig. 6 Me taking pictures



Me taking pictures at the Women's March in Gdynia, March 2019.  
Photo by Marek Ryćko.

- 17 During that protest, I saw a group of people playing samba drums, one of whom I recognized - she was the girl that worked in the vegan shop next door to my house and someone I wanted to befriend as vegan shops were places of interest for my research. I visited the shop several times before, but never got around to having a conversation with her. She also recognized me and we exchanged smiles. The next time I went to that shop we started talking about our participation in the same protest, which was a turning point in our relationship - I ended up interviewing her and her employees, helping her out in the shop, and we became friends and attended a few other protests together.
- 18 My skills as a photographer, and the fact of me owning a semi-professional camera, influenced the way in which field participants would approach me and understand my role. My ability to be both a photographer and an anthropologist could be translated into something useful for my research participants.
- 19 During my fieldwork in Gdańsk, I was also investigating food cooperatives, among which included the Cooperative Eko-Box near Malbork, which is around 60km south-east from Gdańsk. For several months I would join someone in driving around the countryside picking up vegetables from local farmers, packing them into boxes, and distributing them among the cooperative's members. During these journeys I always had my NIKON D5100 with me, which with its 18-70mm lens seems considerably big and

professional (see Fig. 6). After one such trip, I was asked by the manager of the cooperative to take pictures for the cooperative's website. She had a special foldable mini photo box with LED lights (see Fig. 7) but did not have a 'professional camera' to take the pictures.

Fig. 7 Mini Folding Lightbox



Mini Folding Lightbox, a Photography Photo Studio with LED Light.

Image found online at <https://www.aliexpress.com/item/32853411900.html>. (accessed Decembre 8, . 2021).

- 20 I arrived at her home one day and spent a few hours shooting different products that the cooperative had in stock, creating neat product pictures for their website. It was a new experience for me, as I did not have previous experience with product photography. However, knowing the manual settings of my camera (which included ISO, shutter speed, and aperture) allowed me to take satisfying, sharp and well-lit pictures and help out my research participants who did not have to pay a professional photographer (see Fig. 8).

Fig. 8 Cooperative Eko-Box



A set of pictures which I took for the Cooperative Eko-Box. From left to right: a jar of pickled raspberries, red onions, and dried wild mushrooms. These pictures were taken in a mini photo-box with LED lights, with my NIKON D5100 with an adjustable 18-70mm lens and later edited in Adobe Lightroom to make them even more fitting for the cooperative's website.

Photos by Aleksandra Gracjasz.

- 21 The photographs were taken in RAW format which meant they could be easily edited afterwards and saved in a format suitable for the cooperative's website. Therefore, by creating a portfolio of product pictures, I could put my photography (and post-production) skills to use and reciprocate to my research participants who had welcomed me into their professional and personal lives.
- 22 The situation described above required some level of adaptability from my side, which is a quality, or a skill, equally necessary for both anthropological research and photography work. In the conclusion to *The Routledge International Handbook of Ethnographic Film and Video* (Vannini 2020) Paul Stoller recounted his meeting with Jean Rouch which he then translated into five rules that describe "Jean Rouch's vision of the visual and its place in anthropology, the academy, and the public sphere" (Stoller 2020). Rule number two was concerned with having "confidence in your path" and seeing "where it and your imagination will take you" (Stoller 2020: 350). These rules encapsulate the adaptability required both from a photographer and an anthropologist, as both sometimes have to follow "an uncertain path into the unknown" (Stoller 2020: 351). Because I had agreed to take product pictures for the cooperative's website, I could then take a closer look at them, read all the labels, and ask questions about the producers and farmers who provided them. My anthropological work was enriched thanks to my photography skills and the ability to "have confidence in [my] path" (Stoller 2020: 350).
- 23 So far, I have presented several skills which apply to both fields - photography and anthropology. These skills include the mastering of looking as a mode of vision, which can be aided by the use of the camera's viewfinder, the use of the camera as an ice breaker and a tool for building relationships in the field, and the ability to trust your path. The next section will provide an overview of the last 'skill' which synthesizes the practice of the photographer and the anthropologist, namely the heightened awareness of observing.

## Heightened Awareness

- 24 When discussing the differences between seeing and looking in visual anthropological practice, David MacDougall said that “looking” is a unique state which is simultaneously “one of vacancy and of heightened awareness” (MacDougall 2006: 7). Such a state resembles what French visual anthropologist Jean Rouch called *ciné-transe* (‘film-trance’) (1978). Rouch saw the parallel between the possession trance observed among the Songhay-Zarma people of Niger, and filmmaking. When physically and mentally uniting with the camera, the “self” of a filmmaker is altered in the same way as is the “self” of the possessed, at least from the perspective of the people being filmed. Rouch was highly inspired by the ideology and viewpoints of filming and interacting with reality developed by Dziga Vertov. Vertov broke new ground in the fields of cinematography and documentaries with his innovative *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929): a silent documentary montaged with the use of several ground-breaking cinematic techniques. Vertov recognized that seeing through and with the camera is a different kind of seeing, that our body and our senses are modified through the use of the camera. Driven by such an understanding of the camera as anthropomorphized, together with his brother and wife they began the movement of *kinok*<sup>2</sup>, where “the camera was the “kino-eye”, capable of producing a vision freed forever from “human immobility” (MacDougall 2006: 28).
- 25 Rouch was inspired by Vertov and his “cinematic vision”, which “was a particular kind of seeing, using a new organ of perception; the camera” (Rouch 1978: 7) and which expanded his thoughts into *cinema vérité* (‘film truth’). For Jean Rouch, all actions involving the senses are altered by the camera; they morph into new sense-related abilities. Being inspired by the audio-visual language of Vertov, Rouch developed his own vocabulary. He recognized that knowledge of the equipment (including knowing its limits) is necessary and allows one to “film-see” (*cine-vois*). Similarly, knowing the audio recorder’s possibilities one can “film-hear” (*cine-entends*); the movement of the body, which affects the perspective, can be understood as “film-move” (*cine-bouge*); decisions regarding the shots, how they relate and fit together, are then an action of “film- edit” (*cine-monte*); finally, one has no choice but to “film- think” (*cine-pense*) (Rouch 1978: 7). In fact, Rouch recognized that for the work of an anthropologist and that of a filmmaker (and I would expand it to a photographer), the same qualities are necessary, including being “fully engaged in the moment” (Stoller 2020: 349) and “opening one’s ears” (Stoller 2020: 354). The physical object of a camera, which requires manual engagement to set the right settings and change them according to the weather, light, movement, and looking through the viewfinder, which narrows down your view and simultaneously enables focus, helps with “being in the moment”. It requires from the person holding it a certain type of alertness, the *photo-trance* if you wish.
- 26 In their analysis, MacDougall, Rouch, and Vertov referred specifically to the act of filming, which admittedly differs from the act of taking photos. Filming relates to the duration of the action and the final product; filming is a sustained action in a specific spatial and temporal dimension, while taking pictures provides a different form of engagement with time. As presented earlier in this article, photography is often associated with ‘quickness’, ‘rapidity’ and ‘seizing the moment’ (Collier and Collier 1986: 16, Maurines and Sanuheza: 36). Similarly, viewing pictures might take less time

than watching a movie; unless one is “looking” at the pictures, with sufficient time to reflect on their messages. This is possible if the images, especially within the context of anthropological research are treated as more than “‘pictorial’ translations of anthropological ideas”, as explained by social and visual anthropologist Alyssa Grossman (2014:131). In this article, I argue that the physical and mental state which one enters when photographing is equally demanding of one’s full attention and requires the equally developed skill of observing, or ‘looking’, as does the heightened awareness one enters when filming.

- 27 During a typical spirit possession trance, the body of the possessed is overtaken by the spirit, so, in a sense, one could say that the body of a photographer when working is similarly taken over by the camera. The form of connection or ‘unification’ that happens between the equipment – the camera, and the person holding it, which involves the body and its senses, was also observed by other anthropologists, such as Collier and Collier (1990[1986]), and David MacDougall (2006). For visual anthropologists John and Malcolm Collier, “the camera is another instrumental extension of our senses” (1990[1986]: 7), while for David MacDougall “we see with our bodies, and any image we make carries the imprint of our bodies” (2006: 3). Indeed, I agree with MacDougall that the images replicate “the whole of the body's activity, with its physical movements, its shifting attention” (2006: 3). In my work as a photographer and as an anthropologist, just like MacDougall, I also recognized that working with a camera is an embodied practice, which allows one to look differently. The pictures below show me taking photographs at a music festival. In the first picture (Fig. 9), I am leaning forward, hunching my back, and lengthening my neck, as if my body wanted to get closer to the object I am photographing. The camera is an extension of my head and my sight. In the second picture (Fig. 10), I changed my body position, and now crouching to get the right angle and the right perspective my whole body is engaged in order to take the picture.

Fig. 9 Taking Pictures



Me at a music festival in Taucha, Germany, squatting to take a picture from a desired perspective.  
Photo by Kai Eisentraut (<https://www.frontal-light.com/>)

Fig. 10 Taking Pictures – different position

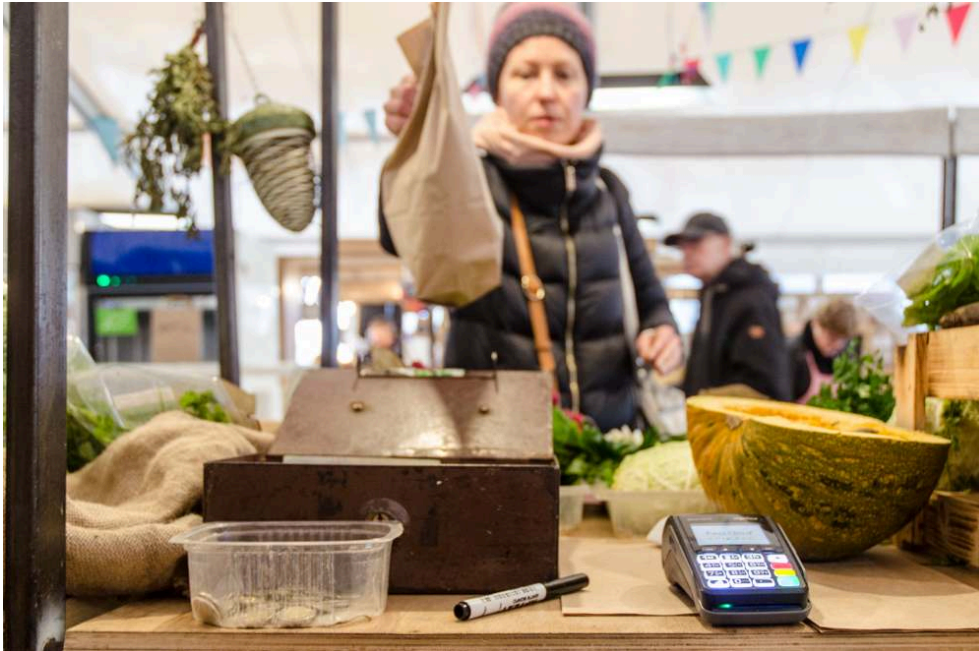


Me at a music festival in Taucha, Germany, squatting to take a picture from a desired perspective.  
Photo by Kai Eisentraut.

- 28 The position of the body is influenced by looking through a camera as it becomes an extension of our sight and of our body. In my ethnographic research, but also in my work as a photographer, I often become one with the camera, to the extent that I do not always have to look through the viewfinder to take a picture. The image below is an

example of such a moment of my physical unification with the object of the camera (see Fig. 11).

Fig. 11 Picture taken at *Bazar Natury*



Picture taken at *Bazar Natury*, an ecological food market in Wrzeszcz, Gdańsk. from the perspective of the counter. To take this picture, I rested the camera on my body, at the height of my belly. This time I was not looking through the viewfinder but trusted my knowledge and took the risk. The person in the picture was later informed about the photo and gave her consent.

Photo by Aleksandra Gracjasz.

- 29 In the above photo, I was able to capture the moment of a customer handing me her shopping to weigh, from the perspective I had where I normally sat behind the counter. At the time, I did not aim for the perfect composition. As I could not see exactly what the frame would be, I trusted my body position and took the risk. All this happened quickly, without prior analyzing as I was interested in this particular moment, where I had to be all at once: a photographer, an anthropologist, and a market vendor. In this case, my body also served as a tripod, steadying and holding the camera for a few seconds, enough to take the picture. In that moment, I was ‘photo-seeing’, ‘photo-moving’, and ‘photo-thinking.’ My body became one with the camera.

## Conclusion

- 30 In this article, I argued that both fields of anthropology and photography can be enriched by the other’s knowledge, skills, and experiences. By drawing from my personal and professional experiences as a photographer and an anthropologist, I presented in three steps how the seemingly different skills overlap and thus blur the boundary of distinction between the practice of an anthropologist and a photographer. First, I presented how the camera becomes a medium to ‘look’ differently, to ‘look’ in more detail. Focusing on the viewfinder, I explained how the camera shapes our vision and thus the meaning conveyed in a photograph. Secondly, I developed the ‘relationality argument’ in which, based on personal experiences, I argued that the

camera can facilitate ethnographic fieldwork and help establish early relationships in the field. Finally, I focused on the aspect of heightened awareness, which I saw as a quality that both anthropology and photography share. I employed the metaphor of *ciné-transe* developed by Jean Rouch, who compared the work of a visual anthropologist to a possession trance. Like Rouch, I experienced that the roles of the anthropologist and the filmmaker (or photographer) can overlap, leading to a collaboration within oneself. At the same time, by drawing on Dziga Vertov's concepts of *kinopravda* and *kinok* I argued that through working closely with a camera, one's body, thoughts, senses, and intentions can become one with the equipment. While in the possession trance, a person hosting a spirit is considered a medium. Similarly, in the work of a visual anthropologist, a body united with the camera is a medium for meanings seen through the viewfinder, and later turned into images.

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### Film

Vertov, Dziga, dir. 1929. *Man with a Movie Camera*. VUFKU (production) 68min.

## NOTES

1. Gracjasz, A. 2017.

2. *Kinok* or *Kino-Eye* (Cine-Eye) is Vertov's original filming technique, which gave name to the movement and group around the method. The technique suggests that the camera lens becomes a new organ for the filmmaker, her new eye which is capable of seeing more than the human eye.

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## ABSTRACTS

While photography has a long history of being used by anthropologists, not much has been written of the use of anthropology by photographers. Based on my personal experiences of two distinct ethnographic fieldworks, I argue that these two practices, photography and anthropology, overlap in several ways and one can combine the skills, techniques, knowledge, insights, and objectives from the two disciplines. Throughout my master's and PhD research I was constantly navigating back and forth between my anthropological and photography skills, which led to a blurring of the boundaries between the two. Both practices fed into each other and my anthropological work gained advantage from my photography. Specifically, anthropology can benefit from the art of photography in a way that expands and deepens meanings and ways of looking. In this article, I will provide examples of how I combined these skills and will present my argument in three steps: firstly, I will focus on mediation; how looking through the medium of a camera affects what and how we see. Secondly, following the idea of "the affective lens" developed by Brent Luvaas (2017), I will delve into how photography helped me bridge distance in the field and facilitated an easier engagement with research participants. Finally, I will spend some time explaining the state of "heightened awareness" presented by David MacDougall (2006) and will expand on it by drawing on Jean Rouch's concept of *ciné-transe* (Rouch 1978). I will also refer to the concept of *kinok* by Dziga Vertov as a useful metaphor for understanding the relationship between the camera and the body.

Si la photographie est utilisée depuis longtemps par les anthropologues, l'utilisation de l'anthropologie par les photographes n'a pas fait l'objet de nombreuses publications. À partir de mes expériences personnelles liées à deux missions ethnographiques distinctes, je considère que ces deux pratiques, la photographie et l'anthropologie, se combinent de plusieurs manières et que l'on peut associer les compétences, les techniques, les connaissances, les idées et les objectifs des deux disciplines. Tout au long de mes recherches de master et de doctorat, j'ai constamment

oscillée entre mes compétences en anthropologie et en photographie, ce qui a favorisé l'estompement des frontières entre les deux. Les deux pratiques se sont nourries l'une de l'autre et mon travail anthropologique a bénéficié de mes photographies. Plus précisément, l'anthropologie peut bénéficier de ce qu'offre la photographie en développant et en enrichissant les significations et les façons de voir. Dans cet article, je fournirai des exemples sur la manière dont j'ai combiné ces compétences et je présenterai mon argumentation en trois étapes: premièrement, je me concentrerai sur la médiation, c'est-à-dire sur la façon dont le fait de regarder par le biais d'un appareil photo affecte ce que nous voyons et comment nous le voyons. Ensuite, en suivant l'idée de " l'objectif affectif " développée par Brent Luvaas (2017), j'approfondirai la manière dont la photographie m'a aidée à combler la distance sur le terrain et a facilité mon engagement avec les participants de la recherche. Enfin, je m'attarderai à expliquer l'état de " conscience accrue " présenté par David MacDougall (2006) et je développerai cette notion en m'appuyant sur le concept de ciné-transe de Jean Rouch (Rouch 1978). Je ferai également référence au concept de kinok de Dziga Vertov comme une métaphore utile pour comprendre la relation entre la caméra et le corps.

A pesar de que la fotografía ha sido históricamente usada por parte de los antropólogos, no se ha escrito mucho sobre el uso de la antropología por parte de los fotógrafos. Basándome en mis experiencias personales de dos trabajos de campo etnográficos distintos, sostengo que estas dos prácticas, la fotografía y la antropología, se solapan de varias maneras y que se pueden combinar las habilidades, las técnicas, los conocimientos, las percepciones y los objetivos de las dos disciplinas. A lo largo de mi investigación de máster y de doctorado, estuve navegando constantemente entre mis habilidades antropológicas y fotográficas, lo que hizo que se desdibujaran los límites entre ambas. Ambas prácticas se alimentaron mutuamente y mi trabajo antropológico se benefició de mis conocimientos en fotografía. En concreto, la antropología puede beneficiarse del arte de la fotografía en el sentido que amplía y profundiza los significados y las formas de mirar. En este artículo, daré ejemplos de cómo combiné estas habilidades y presentaré mi argumento en tres pasos: en primer lugar, me centraré en la mediación; cómo mirar a través del medio de una cámara afecta a lo que vemos y a cómo lo vemos. En segundo lugar, siguiendo la idea de "la lente afectiva" desarrollada por Brent Luvaas (2017), profundizaré en cómo la fotografía me ayudó a salvar la distancia en el campo y facilitó un compromiso más fácil con los participantes en la investigación. Por último, dedicaré algún tiempo a explicar el estado de "atención aumentada" presentado por David MacDougall (2006) y lo ampliaré recurriendo al concepto de ciné-transe de Jean Rouch (Rouch 1978). También me referiré al concepto de kinok de Dziga Vertov como una metáfora útil para entender la relación entre la cámara y el cuerpo.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** photographie, médiation, relationalité, conscience accrue, le corps

**Keywords:** photography, mediation, relationality, heightened awareness, the body.

**Palabras claves:** fotografía, mediación, relacionalidad, atención aumentada, cuerpo

## AUTHOR

ALEKSANDRA GRACJASZ

Leiden University

Aleksandra Gracjasz is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology. She is part of the ERC project led by Professor Cristina Grasseni "Food citizens? Collective food procurement in European cities: solidarity and diversity, skills and scales", investigating emerging forms of food citizenship. She holds an MSc in Cultural Anthropology from Utrecht University (NL) and a BA in Sociology from the University of York (UK).

[a.z.gracjasz@fsw.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:a.z.gracjasz@fsw.leidenuniv.nl).