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No Looking After the Internet: curatorial experiments and pedagogical failures in engaging difficult images

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Abstract (200 words): What are the possibilities of learning from difficult images in an era in which digital technologies have made photographs of social violence ubiquitous? This article critically reflects on this question through an account of the curatorial experiments, dialogic contests, and pedagogical failures I have encountered in organizing *No Looking After the Internet*: a “looking group” that has met since 2012 which invites participants to look at an image (or a series of images) they are unfamiliar with, and “read” the image out-loud together. Premised on the idea that it is not just what photographs depict that is difficult, but the interpretive process we encounter as viewers, *No Looking* foregrounds the latent knowledge that emerges from grappling with the photographic evidence difficult images offer us. Focusing on two sessions in which participants’ abilities to engage difficult knowledge broke down, the essay presents the first attempt at articulating a visual methodology that asks what we want from photographs in a post-internet age. In so doing, it builds on the psychoanalytically inflected work of pedagogical theorists Deborah Britzman and Roger I. Simon, which is cautiously optimistic about the spectator’s capacity for ethically engaging the suffering of others.

Keywords: pedagogy, photography, curatorial practice, lynching postcards, found photographs, education

Acknowledgments:

No Looking After the Internet was developed out of a curatorial residency at Gallery TPW R&D from 2012–2013, and I am hugely grateful to the staff there for their support of this project. I am especially indebted to Kim Simon for inviting me to experiment in public with her, and for her relentless curiosity and unwavering criticality along the way. Special thanks to Suzanne Carte, Emelie Chhangur, Sam Cotter, Elle Flanders, Jacob Korczynski, Sara Matthews, Alexis Kyle Mitchell, Philip Monk, Sharon Sliwinski, and Leila Timmins for offering their thoughts, company and feedback at many of the sessions that took place there. *No Looking After the Internet* would not have been possible without the generosity of the many co-hosts and collaborators who invited me to host sessions, or graciously agreed to choose images to look at together: thank you to Deanna Bowen, Tom Clark, Michèle Pearson Clarke, Chris Curreri, Rozsa Farkas, Oliver Husain, Jean-Paul Kelly, Jason Lazarus, Annie MacDonell, Liz Park, cheyanne turions and Donald Weber for being willing to think and look out loud with me.

What are the critical and ethical stakes of showing difficult images in an era in which digital technologies have made photographs of cultural violence and social trauma ubiquitous? While this is an important political question for photography theorists, it is also a practical one, faced by curators and university instructors who must contend with the limits of displaying, and asking viewers to learn from, seemingly unshowable photographs.¹ In what follows, I offer a speculative and occasionally polemical response to this quandry through an account of, and critical reflection upon, the curatorial experiments, dialogic contests, and pedagogical failures I have encountered in organizing *No Looking After the Internet*: a “looking group” that met between 2012 and 2016, which invited participants to look at an image (or a series of images) they were unfamiliar with, and to “read” the image out-loud together. Chosen in relation to an exhibition, an artist’s body of work, or an ongoing research project, *No Looking* examined a wide range of images—from vernacular photography to contemporary artworks—without the traditional frameworks of the caption, didactic panel, gallery exhibition, or artist’s talk. Instead, it offered the space and time for immersive looking, asking what we might see when we look at photographs slowly and collectively, unpacking our responses in relation to those of others. My aim in recounting these experiments in relational, collective looking is to illuminate what pedagogical theory might have to offer to students, teachers and curators of photography, and to propose that the strategies that artists use to engage difficult images in the gallery might be mobilized in the classroom, in an effort to not only build the visual literacy skills of students, but to increase our tolerance, as viewers, for learning from difficult images.

An introduction, by way of a flashback: Thirty people crowd around the makeshift hair salon and charity shop that constitutes artist Laure Provoust's installation, *The Wanderer* (2013), on a blustery spring evening in Toronto, but they are not there to look at the London-based artist's clay shoes or to watch the surrealistic film adaptation of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915) that plays in the corner. Instead, they crouch in small groups around stacks of photocopies, scrutinizing their surfaces. On them are a range of photographic portraits, all printed in black and white, and all depicting the same woman. Many of them appear to be self-portraits, and most are staged in the private spaces of a home or an office; in some, the woman holds or cradles small dolls (Fig. 1). Interspersed among the 90 images, there are also still lifes, which—an astute observer might notice—contain objects that appeared in the backgrounds of some of the portraits, or display the troll and baby doll props among paintbrushes, tins and other mementoes.

If there is anything unusual about this archive of images, it is perhaps the attention being paid to them despite their sheer and unrelenting banality. But over the course of two hours of looking at and discussing these photographs, the minute details of their seemingly innocuous subject matter came to take on increasingly urgent meaning for the spectators gathered around them (Fig. 2). Why did this woman take these images, and for whom? Does her short hair and androgynous mode of dress signify a queer sexuality, or was she—as a German expat vigorously argued—just a German woman? What are the ethical implications of looking at these intimate portraits in the present, without their subject and author's permission?

Deprived of any captions that would pin down the author, titles, or dates for these images, the group's questions developed into more fantastical forms of speculation. A

small subset of portraits within the archive shows the same protagonist, but she has lost so much weight, she is nearly unrecognizable. One photograph, taken by her outstretched arms while standing in an apartment hallway, clearly shows a raised collarbone and sinewy tendons in her neck (Fig. 3). A fierce argument breaks out about whether the woman is sick, with a small group of spectators asserting they know, from their personal experience, this is what dying of cancer looks like. Another participant, perched in one of Provoust's barber chairs, cautions that there is no way to know the chronology of these images, and, raising another from the series, suggests she may have gained weight instead. It was at this point that discussion about the orphaned photographs broke down, the meeting was adjourned, and people dispersed.

This interpretive contest about the fate of the woman, and the purpose of her self-representation, seemed to skip right over Roland Barthes's now iconic assertion, in *Camera Lucida* (1980), that the punctum of every photograph is the knowledge that the subject is both about to die, and is already dead by the time the spectator encounters the image. Writing about another portrait—Alexander Gardner's 1865 photograph of a manacled Lewis Payne posed against the hull of a ship on his way to trial—Barthes says that he “observes with horror the anterior future of which death is the stake.”² He goes on to write, “I shudder, like [Donald] Winnicott's psychotic patient, *over a catastrophe which has already occurred*. Whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe.”³ The catastrophe of the photograph that Barthes describes was seemingly the starting point for this group of concerned spectators, who argued with great certainty not only about the subject's already-passed passing, but also about the cause of this death and its attendant suffering. Working from the kind of

personal projection that photography uniquely makes possible, these spectators held onto the photographic meaning they had individually and then collectively developed, even when the photographic evidence—as their fellow spectators noted—was not there to support it.⁴

This scene of troubled interpretation is not new to any of us who teach, curate or research photographs. Indeed, these kinds of mistakes in seeing are legion in the history of photography: mistakes that are often emotionally invested, as Margaret Olin has shown in her analysis of the many errors in Barthes's readings of the images that appear in *Camera Lucida*—the most famous of them the displacement of a gold chain necklace for a strand of pearls worn by Estelle Osterhout in James van der Zee's 1926 portrait.⁵ As Glenn Ligon had reminded us, these mistakes are also politically motivated. In his work *Red Portfolio* (1993, Fig. 4), Ligon re-presents nine textual descriptions of Robert Mapplethorpe photographs written by American conservative spokesperson Reverend Pat Robertson and mailed out to members of the Christian Coalition in 1989, denouncing the exhibition and its financial support by the National Endowment of the Arts. Designed to demonstrate the kinds of obscene artworks American citizens' tax dollars were supporting, Robertson sent a series of postcards to his supporters in a red envelope that described images from Mapplethorpe's retrospective that were "too vulgar to be printed." But one of those photographs—the seventh image, of "naked children in bed with a naked man"—never existed, invented by Robertson's hysterical insistence to imagine what he dared not see (Robertson famously never attended Mapplethorpe's exhibition, nor looked at any reproductions of the photographs).⁶ Ligon's re-appropriation of the

textual confabulation of a non-existent Mapplethorpe image therefore underscores the power of suggestion to conjure untaken photographs into being.

But, unlike van der Zee's iconic portrait, or Mapplethorpe's sexually charged imagery, the photographs that provoked the contest of meaning in Toronto were profoundly banal. Falling under the category of vernacular photography, the self-portraits were found in a junk shop in Berlin by artist Chris Curreri. After chancing upon several images of the same woman in a bin of orphaned photographs, Curreri sought out the totality of the archive, in what he admits was an obsessive need to rescue these portraits from obscurity.⁷ Once collected, however, he did not know what to do with them. Appearing in a range of sizes and on a variety of papers, the photographs appear to have been developed and printed by the subject. There are no dates on their versos, nor names. On one of the 90 prints, a sentence in German appears in pencil on the back: the only clue to the origins of these images. Without their context, Curreri feels he cannot exhibit them as part of his own photographic work, but also feels incapable of throwing them out or giving them away.

Learning that he was charged with these unshowable photographs, I asked Curreri if he would be willing to share them with other spectators under the framework of *No Looking*, which from its inception, had proposed to present photographs to viewers with limited contextual information in the hopes of refusing, or at least forestalling, the impulse to instrumentalize our encounter with troubling images. Drawing on psychoanalytic theories of pedagogy, *No Looking* extended Deborah Britzman and Roger Simon's concept of "difficult knowledge" into the visual realm.⁸ Social traumas, these scholars argue, are incredibly hard to learn from because they challenge the learner's

worldview, demanding a questioning of her very sense of self. Simon, in particular, has analyzed the psychic and temporal cost of this confrontation through his analysis of the many installation designs deployed in James Allen's traveling exhibition of lynching postcards, *Without Sanctuary* (2000), which almost invariably provided a recovery room or space for contemplation and reflection for spectators struggling to integrate the knowledge these images present. Premised on the idea that it is not just *what* these photographs depict that is difficult, but the interpretive process we encounter as viewers, *No Looking* mobilized Britzman and Simon's ideas to ask what makes practices of looking difficult in an Internet age, and foregrounded the latent knowledge that emerges from grappling with the photographic evidence these images offer. In this way, *No Looking After the Internet* took seriously the distinction Shawn Michelle Smith makes between photographic evidence—that which the photograph shows us—and photographic meaning—the knowledge produced by viewers from their encounter with the image (a distinction mounted, importantly, through her close reading of the various and sometimes contradictory deployments of lynching photographs over the last century).⁹ For Smith, photographic meaning is contingent, malleable and notoriously unreliable: “Photographs as *evidence* are never enough,” she writes, “for photographic *meaning* is always shaped by context and circulation, and determined by viewers. Photographic meaning results from what we *do* with photographic evidence.”¹⁰

While digital, streaming and online technologies encourage an instantaneous movement from seeing images to responding to them, *No Looking* aimed to open up the space for deferred meaning making, proposing that room for latency is what is lost in the post-Internet moment—and that galleries and classrooms might offer spaces where this

latent knowledge can be returned to us, as viewers, during our encounter with images. In the rush of uploaded and streaming images that surround us, the barrage of browser tabs open on our laptops, we sometimes think we have seen or already know many of the images we encounter, but we rarely make the time and space to return to an image, or to look at and discuss it with others. As a quality that marks photographic development, practices of spectatorship, and learning, *latency* is a critical keyword in articulating why photographic knowledge seems to always come “too late” to be immediately useful.¹¹ It is a quality that also often provokes frustration and even shame for the spectator and learner, who wishes she had gained this knowledge sooner, seen something more clearly, or said something faster. Using latency not just as theory but also method, I return to the experiments *No Looking* initiated more than six years ago, briefly outlining the genesis of the looking group, describing the range of images that the project has examined, and dwelling on another meeting in which—like Curreri’s session—participants’ ability to engage difficult knowledge broke down. I conclude by thinking about how I have integrated some of these strategies into my teaching as an art historian at the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) University in Toronto, and raise some questions that *No Looking* has left unresolved for me as a curator and educator.

No Looking After the Internet emerged out of a yearlong curatorial residency I undertook at Gallery TPW R&D from 2012 to 2013, at the invitation of curator Kim Simon. Founded in 1977, Gallery TPW—originally the Toronto Photographers’ Workshop—is one of the city’s oldest artist-run centres. A network of not-for-profit organizations and non-commercial galleries and resource centres begun in the 1960s and 70s, artist-run centres are vital components of the Canadian art ecology today, providing

space and support for experimentation, training and the exhibition of new work by contemporary artists and curators from coast to coast.¹² Though it originally focused on traditional forms of photography, in the last decade Gallery TPW it has turned its attention to the expanded field of lens-based practices, alongside performance, choreography, and discursive events. While in a temporary storefront space on Dundas Street West for 18 months, the gallery shifted its energy away from the treadmill of exhibitions, and instead focused entirely on discursive programming, hosting screenings, public discussions, and residencies where writers, artists, and curators experimented with alternate ways of presenting images. As Simon explains it, the R&D idea was at first an ironic stab at the corporate language being adopted by larger cultural and education institutions, particularly universities: TPW R&D was the gallery's "research and development" office while its staff worked to secure a new, sustainable home.¹³ Two strategies came to drive much of R&D's programming, both motivated by a desire to surrender some element of curatorial expertise to audiences: the notion of asking questions about the ethical implications of images out loud—rather than presenting them under the implicit seal of approval of connoisseurship of the curator—and the practice of "doing research in public."

This discursive approach to programming was one that Simon had already tested in her presentation of Artur Zmijewski's films the preceding year, when Gallery TPW repeated the screening of the same set of films—*Them/Sie* (2007) and *Singing Lesson 2 / Gesangsstunde 2* (2002)—four times, with post-screening discussions moderated by a different guest, each with specialties in a different disciplinary field: conceptual video, Polish avant-garde history, education, or public memory pedagogy. The screenings were

designed to think about which kinds of presentation formats make it possible for people to speak honestly about their viewing experiences in a public forum. Themes of repetition and latency were therefore already informing much of TPW's programming: processes that are also important to psychoanalytic thinking. (And, while I do not have time to explore it in this paper, another psychoanalytic theme that runs beneath these pedagogical experiments is that of care: taking care *of* and exercising care *with* images. A participant at a London, UK iteration of the looking group once remarked that she had thought the title of the event was *No "Looking After" the Internet*: a charming and rather apt confusion about the meaning of the name).

The questions I arrived with when I began working at Gallery TPW R&D were about whether shifting the conditions of the encounter with difficult photographs might change viewers' capacities to observe and to articulate their experiences of spectatorship. Why do some images seem impenetrable, even if they are presented with extensive didactic material and public programming? I wondered if, paradoxically, by presenting difficult photographs in an educational context moved viewers too quickly from the experience of looking, to witnessing: to wanting to "do something" with, or to instrumentalize, the image, and whether this movement created a block that prevented the viewer from engaging with the psychic dimensions of looking. What would happen if we limited or removed that context? What if you encountered the image in a way that involved other people right from the beginning? In this way, my approach built on recent debates about the political and civic potential of photography, epitomized by the work of Ariella Azoulay, Thomas Keenan, Sharon Sliwinski, and Mark Reinhardt, which is cautiously optimistic about the spectator's capacity for ethically engaging the suffering of

others, and insists on the profound relationality of the medium in initiating a political contract between subjects and viewers.

Working with Kim Simon, I experimented with a variety of methods to set up a situation where no one is the master of a given image. We borrowed, quite liberally, from the name and format of a reading group that has met in Toronto and Vancouver since 2008, called *No Reading After the Internet*. Organized by cheyanne turions, Amy Kazymierchyk and Alexander Muir, *No Reading* encourages people to come and read a text out-loud, insisting that you need not be an expert of a text to make meaning from it. Our goal was to try to apply this methodology to images, although from the beginning we encountered problems: chief among them the difference that, while it is straightforward to decide collectively where a text begins and ends, it is much more difficult to decide where to start, and stop, looking at a photograph. We held monthly sessions for six months, inviting co-facilitators to help choose the images at each meeting—a choice made in part to try to disperse curatorial authority, but also because I realized early on that inviting people to come and look at an image without some third point of triangulation did not feel generative. An early “test group” reported they felt self-conscious when asked to collectively look at an image without a goal in mind, as though they were being asked to perform their interpretations in front of one another, or were waiting for the convener of the group (the curator), to reveal the “real” meaning of the image.

Material experimentation was also important to our testing out of different modes of encounter. While we looked at Curreri’s archive of orphaned self-portraits as photocopies roughly the size of the original images, we also used bulletin boards and

index cards at a session at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, where visitors were encouraged to caption and also critique photographs of protest from the archives. Other sessions deployed projected images and video clips; small collectible postcards produced by the Ryerson Image Centre that replicated photographs of human rights infractions included in their archival exhibition, curated by Mark Sealy, *HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMAN WRONGS* (2013); snapshot photography; and magazine clippings from the Toronto Reference Library's Picture Collection—an archive that artist Annie MacDonell has been working with in her video and photographic work for the past several years (Fig. 5). The physical spaces in which *No Looking* unfolded also informed our discussions: we often met within or around other artists' installations, such as Laure Provoust's barber shop, Maggie Groat's table made from salvaged fence posts (*Fences Will Turn Into Tables*, 2013), Oliver Husain's phantasmagoric installation of plastic screens (*Pandy Ramada's Bendable Displex*, 2013), and even in public parks. One of the instructions given at the start of every session was to ask participants to not only share what they were seeing, but to be self-reflexive about how the space in which we met influenced their seeing, and the resulting conversation; to note what people were willing to discuss, or not discuss; and to observe aloud when the focus of the conversation drifted. By drawing attention to how space shapes viewing and what we want from images, rather than trying to neutralize or naturalize it, *No Looking* emphasized the situatedness of looking practices. While many meetings addressed representations of physical violence, in other cases the “difficulty” of these difficult images was subtler and had to do with shifts in the circulation of photographs, raising questions about what it means to look at these images in this particular place and time.

What were the outcomes of this experiment in slow looking? I often describe *No Looking after the Internet* as a series of failed attempts at looking at images out loud together. Despite our best efforts to disperse expertise in the setup for meetings, one recurring feature was recourse to the authority of curators or artists when they were in the room. In the two meetings in which authorship was radically absent, the conversation was both generative, and fraught: one was the argument over what happened to the woman in Chris Curreri's archive of self-portraits. The other happened at a meeting co-organized with artist Deanna Bowen. At the time, Bowen's solo exhibition, "Invisible Empires" (2013), was on display at the Art Gallery of York University—a project that traced the presence of the Klu Klux Klan in Canada through archival documents and photographs, video reenactments and photocopies of a petition, signed by thousands of Alberta residents in 1911, requesting that the national government prevent the "serious menace of 'negro' immigration" from the United States. This mass migration was spurred on, in part, by a series of terrorizing acts of racial violence occurring in Oklahoma in that period, circulating as lynching postcards. While Bowen had kept the focus of her artwork on the spectacle of white supremacy, the lynching postcards had been central to her research and we chose one from Allen's *Without Sanctuary* exhibition to look at together: a photograph of a Black mother and her son, hanged from a bridge, upon which dozens of white spectators stand, looking on (Fig. 6).

The discussion about this image was a difficult one, which we expected, but as a photography historian, I was not prepared for the fact that the majority of participants in the group were not even aware of the existence of lynching postcards before the meeting. Several older white men expressed anger at not knowing what they would be looking at,

saying they felt forced to look at this category of photographs and expressing disbelief at their historical popularity. Another white curator was moved to tears in what she described as empathy for the subjects of the image. No one raised the formal qualities of the photograph, and few were willing to identify with the crowd of white men and children gathered as spectators on the bridge. Bowen, who had been observing the group without intervention until this point, responded calmly but forcefully, asserting that ignorance about these images, or the leisure to feel sad about them, were spectatorial positions that only white privilege makes possible. For Black viewers, she argued, it is not possible to ignore, or un-see, these photographs, or to stop the feelings of grief, rage and fear they provoke.

In both of these cases, the challenge to the ego that Deborah Britzman and Roger Simon describe in their pedagogical theories seemed to overwhelm the capacity of participants to engage meaningfully with the experiences of other spectators, which were often quite dissonant from their own. More recently, we have seen a similar evocation of the ways racial difference informs experiences of looking—and in some cases the refusal of white spectators to listen to or acknowledge this difference—in the controversy surrounding Dana Schutz's *Open Casket* (2017), an abstracted painting of the now-iconic photograph of Emmett Till's open casket, displayed at the Whitney Biennial. That these two scenes depict the precarity, racial violence and horrific loss that attend the experience of Black motherhood in North America raises important questions about the limits of looking at, and identifying with, the experiences of other photographic subjects.

Though *No Looking After the Internet* officially stopped meeting in 2016, the project has continued to inform my own work, particularly as a teacher of the history of

photography, and has lived on outside of the gallery space in two important ways. First, in an effort to make the group's methodology travel, and make it useful to others, I enlisted the help of several colleagues in writing a *No Looking* "manifesto" that could be used as a structuring device for future sessions. The document has, until now, never been published, but has served as a way to articulate and record the aims of the series, and to distinguish its function from the more well-known formats of public programming (which aim to make art accessible to a wider public), artist talks (which enlist the authority of the artist as producer to explain the work) and educational workshops (which tend to instrumentalize the artwork for the lessons it might convey about the artist's biography, history, or the mastery of a technique).

No Looking After the Internet: a provisional manifesto

(with input from Amy Kazymierchuk, Jacob Korczynski, Kim Simon, and cheyanne turions)

- *No Looking* is about "not knowing": it is not a lecture, artist talk or public presentation, but an opportunity to make meaning from an image together, as we look at it. There is no right answer, no immanent meaning in the image, only the contingent knowledge we build together.

- *No Looking* is not about mastery: it refuses the idea that any one person can know or fully understand an image, even (and especially) the producer of the image.

- *No Looking* asks what happens after affect: it wonders what kinds of meanings we generate from an image after our immediate, gut reactions and challenges us to sit with our affective responses to an image for longer than might be comfortable.

- *No Looking* refuses instrumentality: it proposes that when we want to *do* something with an image—to take a lesson from it, to define or categorize it—we need to keep looking, keep talking and keep asking questions.

- *No Looking* is contingent: it acknowledges that the image exists before and after the group meets, and will continue to circulate in other times and places. By looking together, we are invited to address other images behind the one that is being discussed, to make meaning between and across images and texts.

- *No Looking* is relational: it is a process of looking collectively and of making meaning out-loud, in relation to the other viewers in the room. It asks that we pay attention to not just what we see, but how we look and

what we are willing to say about what we see in the company of others.

I have also imported many of the strategies Kim Simon and I developed into my classroom at OCAD University, asking students to read images from Google Street View out-loud together. As another archive of endless, author-less and photographer-less images, Google Street View is perhaps the limit case for testing out what makes learning from images difficult in an Internet age, and certainly poses sticky questions about our agency as photographic subjects and our ethical obligations as spectators.¹⁴ Further mining the genre of photography without photographers, I have also asked students to look at the photographs included in Sergio Gonzalez Rodriguez's 2012 book, *The Femicide Machine*, the last section of which is entitled "Instructions for Taking Textual Photographs." It includes twenty "photographs," but no images, that surround the disappearance of Lilia Andrade from Ciudad Juarez. Each photograph is in fact a text, some only a sentence long, some a whole paragraph, of photographs that could exist, might exist, as well as some that seem impossible to capture as a single still image. These include satellite photography, autopsy photographs, CCTV surveillance, family photographs and school ID photos. Although this book is resolutely immaterial in its treatment of photography, it raises important questions about the imaginary and symbolic potency of the photograph as evidence: an evidentiary force that might not even need an object to be meaningful and affective. In a post-Internet moment, when photographic objects feel increasingly difficult to get a hold of, my hope is that the strategies developed in *No Looking After the Internet* might offer us a way to return some of the material conditions to our experiences of looking, and provide some frameworks for being open to

the experiences of others, as spectators and subjects—something the Internet promises—without losing track of the historical specificity of images.

List of Illustrations:

Figure 1: Unknown photographer, date unknown. Courtesy Chris Curreri.

Figure 2: Unknown photographer, date unknown. Courtesy Chris Curreri.

Figure 3: Unknown photographer, date unknown. Courtesy Chris Curreri.

Figure 4: Glenn Ligon, *Red Portfolio*, 1993, nine silver gelatin prints, each 19.7 x 19.7 cm. Courtesy Glenn Ligon.

Figure 5: Participants in *No Looking After the Internet*, in collaboration with artist Annie MacDonell, as part of cheyanne turions's exhibition "a problem so big it needs other people," SBC Gallery, Montreal, Canada, April 2014. Photo: Gabrielle Moser.

Figure 6: George H. Farnum, *The lynching of Laura and Lawrence Nelson on 25 May 1911 in Okemah, Oklahoma*, gelatin silver print/real photo postcard, 5 ½" x 3 ½". Printed and distributed in 1911. George Henry Farnum Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society Research Division.

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¹ On the concept of the “unshowable photograph,” see Azoulay, “Different Ways Not to Say Deportation.”

² Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 96.

³ Barthes, 96, emphasis original. It seems telling that Barthes here draws on the work of another psychoanalytic pedagogy theorist, Donald Winnicott.

⁴ Here I draw on the distinction Shawn Michelle Smith makes between photographic evidence (that which the image shows) and photographic meaning (the contingent interpretations viewers make from photographic evidence). Smith, “The Evidence of Lynching.”

⁵ See Olin, “Touching Photographs: Roland Barthes's ‘Mistaken’ Identification.” For a compelling analysis of the ways Barthes elides maternal relationships in the van der Zee image, overlaying it with a racist and paternalist reading, see Smith, “Race and Reproduction in *Camera Lucida*.” For a convincing analysis of how Barthes suppresses his family’s involvement in colonialism in Africa through his refusal to reproduce the Winter Garden photograph, see Wexler, “The Purloined Image.”

⁶ Meyer, “The Red Envelope: On Censorship and Homosexuality.”

⁷ Personal interview with artist, October 2012.

⁸ Britzman, *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects: Toward a Psychoanalytic Inquiry of Learning*; Simon, “A Shock to Thought: Curatorial Judgment and the Public Exhibition of ‘Difficult Knowledge’”; and Simon, *A Pedagogy of Witnessing: Curatorial Practice and the Pursuit of Social Justice*.

⁹ Smith, “The Evidence of Lynching.”

¹⁰ Smith, “The Evidence of Lynching,” 41.

¹¹ More recently, Stephen Sheehi has adapted the notion of photographic latency to argue that indigenous photographic practices allow the historical, social and economic conditions that produced an image to emerge, after and in spite of its manifest colonial content. See *The Arab Imago: A Social History of Portrait Photography, 1860-1910*.

¹² For a history of Canada’s artist-run centres, see Jacob, *Golden Streams: Artists’ Collaboration and Exchange in the 1970s*.

¹³ Morell, “Pedagogies of Looking: An Interview with Kim Simon and Gabrielle Moser.”

¹⁴ Moser, “Exhaustive Images: surveillance, sovereignty and subjectivity in Google Street View.”