

Visual Sociology Study Group annual report, February 2011

2010 was another busy and productive year for the Visual Sociology Study Group. Charlotte Bates organised and convened two study group panels responding to the theme 'text and image' at the BSA Annual Conference in April 2010. In the first, Stephen Parkin revealed the taken for granted conditions of risk and harm and the effect of spatiality on shaping behaviour using a textual and visual model that incorporated a Bourdieusian notion of 'injecting habitus'; Martina McKnight and Lisa Smyth critically engaged with photography as a method of accessing the everyday lives of mothers of pre-school children; and Janroj Keles explored the visual and written texts of a group of Kurdish workers in London who had been asked to use photography to interrogate their own understandings of 'community'.

In the second panel, Terence Heng introduced the photograph as a visual poem, exemplified through his work on ethnic marginalisation in Singaporean Chinese weddings, and Charlotte Bates discussed the ways in which video can capture the sensorial body, having used video both illustratively and substantively in her work on illness and the body, asking participants to 'show and tell' about their everyday lives.

Throughout the year, Terence Heng continued to develop and update the study group website for use by all members and visitors to the site (<http://www.visualsociology.org.uk/>), and David Gauntlett continued to build links between the Study Group and the AHRC and the BBC, as well as to create short videos for YouTube, highlighting the value of visual sociology and visual methods. He also completed writing the book, *Making is Connecting*, to be published by Polity in March 2011, and continued to work with Lego on tools for communicating about experiences in three dimensions. Both Paul Sweetman and David Gauntlett have continued to work with the British Library as invited members of the Library's *Personal and Everyday Film Working Group*, exploring the possibilities and issues associated with the archiving and use of personal film in an era of user-generated content.

Paul Sweetman worked with artist Laura Hensser and colleagues at the John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton, on *City Portraits*, a major new art installation and associated research project, featuring full-length, life-size portraits of Southampton residents on banners located in and around the City's newly refurbished Guildhall Square. In place until from July to November 2010, the artwork was intended to celebrate the lives and diversity of the City's inhabitants, as well as to interrogate Paul's concern with issues of ethics and anonymity and representation and recognition in visual research, most notably the idea that anonymity and confidentiality must always be granted to research participants, and that visual methods are necessarily problematic in this regard. It thereby contributed to Paul's ongoing work on the possibilities of an ethics of recognition rather than one of protection or concealment. Paul moved to a new post as Senior Lecturer in Culture, Media and Creative Industries at King's College

London on 1 January 2011, and at the same time Charlotte Bates moved to a new post as Post Doctoral Research Fellow at the School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford.

Terence Heng recently completed the first PhD in Visual Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London. His thesis topic was a visual exploration of ethnicity-making amongst Chinese Singaporeans as expressed through their wedding rituals.

Future plans for the study group include a one-day seminar at the University of Westminster in early summer 2011, details of which will be announced nearer to the time.