

Editorial

Derek Conrad Murray, Gary Bratchford, Julie Patarin-Jossec, John Grady, and Susan Hansen

This double issue of *Visual Studies* marks a significant period of transition for the journal. In April 2020, Editor Timothy Shortell passed on the Editorship of *Visual Studies* to a new Editorial Team. We thank Professor Shortell for his vision and tireless work as Editor of the journal from 2016-2020.

The new Editorial Board has five members. Derek Conrad Murray, Co-Editor, University of California at Santa Cruz, USA; Gary Bratchford, Co-Editor, University of Central Lancashire, UK; Julie Patarin-Jossec, Specialist Editor: Special Issues and Book Reviews, State University of Saint-Petersburg, Russia/France; John Grady, Specialist Editor: Film/Video and Multimedia, Wheaton College, MA, USA; and Susan Hansen, Specialist Editor: Visual Essays and Images, Middlesex University, London, UK. Each of us is fully committed to pursuing the longstanding engagement of the journal with “the visual”; the integration of imagery into social scientific research and analysis; and diffusing new research and generating debate within the visual studies community. However, we also consider the journal and its community to be an expanding and evolving field, whose boundaries should keep pace with the social, cultural and political challenges of our times.

Sometimes, those realities force us to renew our methods, reconsider our understanding of the world around us, give voice and take a stand. Along with the International Visual Sociology Association, the *Visual Studies* Editorial Team strongly condemns and opposes systems, institutions, and organisations that maintain or extend any and all forms of white supremacy, colonial and racist violence. We fully support existing and future initiatives for action on diversity in publishing and the scholarly fight for social justice and, jointly with the communities we serve, we renew our unconditional commitment to fight discrimination and attacks on evidence-based reasoning of any kind.

As part of our commitment to take action, we recently held an open call for cover image submissions on the theme of Anti-Racism. We received many strong and thoughtful visual submissions. All images submitted are currently featured on the IVSA’s website (visualsociology.org). The image we have selected to feature on the cover of this issue of *Visual Studies*, “BLM LDN DAY 1, 2020” by Olivia Howitt, provides a considered and powerful visual commentary on the theme. This image, and Howitt’s explanatory text, is reproduced, below.



BLM LDN DAY 1, 2020. Hyde Park, London. Photograph ©Olivia Howitt.

Thousands of people peacefully gathered in Hyde Park, London, on 21 June 2020 for the Black Lives Matter protest following the killing of George Floyd – a show of solidarity for justice and peace. Amplified by COVID-19, the atmosphere was intense. For a brief moment the crowds silently parted and a powerful young woman appeared; her stance mirroring the actions on her t-shirt of gold medallist Tommie Smith and bronze medallist John Carlos at the 1968 Summer Olympics held in Australia, who each raised a black gloved fist during the US national whilst on the podium – a symbol of black power and the human rights movement at large. — Olivia Howitt.

In response to these events and images, we invited Alessandra Raengo, Associate Professor in Film, Media, and Theatre at Georgia State University, to contribute her critical reflections to this issue through an interview.

Finally, we deeply regret the passing of Jon Rieger, founding IVSA member. Jon was instrumental in the establishment of this journal, and the IVSA's Rieger Award continues to support emerging visual sociologists from a range of disciplinary backgrounds. We have invited Jon Wagner and Doug Harper to contribute a memorial to this issue.

As an Editorial Team, we are dedicated to continuing to publish high-quality articles, photo essays, and reviews. We also aim to critically develop the interdisciplinary empirical and theoretical focus of *Visual Studies*, and we have accordingly actualised the Editorial Advisory

Board to reflect this aim, and to increase diversity in international representation. We look forward to editing future issues of the journal.