

Annotated Bibliography

Introduction

My annotated bibliography explores the ongoing research into the romanticisation of war through photography, cinema and popular culture. The selected texts examine how images become associated with particular historical moments, and how photography can shape our understanding of the past through a philosophical, historical and theoretical lens.

Collectively, these sources inform the conceptual framework of my creative practice, one that questions the relationship between photographic evidence and fiction. Using the visual language of archival photography, I aim to explore how constructed images can recreate and romanticise the past, while questioning the authenticity and cultural significance we assign to historical photographs.

In engaging with these thinkers, I aim not simply to recreate historical imagery, but to understand how these images continue to influence our perception of war and the people involved in it.

Nemerov, A. (2013) *Wartime Kiss: Visions of the Moment in the 1940s*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Nemerov explores American photography and cinema during the 1940s, examining how images of wartime life became associated with romance, intimacy and national identity. Using Eisenstaedt's photograph of a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square as a central reference, Nemerov considers the cultural significance of this moment and how its meaning extends beyond the original photograph.

The strength of this text lies in its exploration of the relationship between photography and cinema. Nemerov examines how familiar visual imagery can shape our understanding of history, allowing particular moments to become symbolic representations of an entire period. This provides a useful framework for understanding how romanticised images of war are constructed, although its focus on American culture limits its engagement with other historical perspectives.

This text directly informs my photographic practice by providing a way to understand how cinematic imagery and historical photography overlap. It helps me explore how I can construct

photographs that resemble archival images, using romanticised representations of wartime life to question the relationship between historical evidence and fiction.

Verria, L. and Galdorisi, G. (2012) *The Kissing Sailor: The Mystery Behind the Photo that Ended World War II*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press.

Verria and Galdorisi investigate the history behind Eisenstaedt's photograph of the sailor kissing a nurse, examining the identities of the subjects and the circumstances surrounding the image. The authors explore how the photograph became an iconic representation of the end of the Second World War, developing a cultural significance that extends beyond the moment it originally captured.

The text provides an interesting case study into how photographs become embedded within collective memory. The image is often understood as a spontaneous expression of celebration and romance, yet its wider historical context complicates this seemingly simple interpretation. Although the book focuses on a single photograph, this allows for a detailed examination of how an image can acquire meaning through its circulation and repeated interpretation.

The text informs my research into how historical photographs become romanticised through popular culture. It allows me to question how viewers interpret an image based on its established cultural significance, and how my own constructed photographs might use familiar visual conventions to produce a similar sense of historical authenticity.

Sontag, S. (1977) *On Photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

In *On Photography*, Sontag explores the relationship between photography, reality and representation. She questions the authority attributed to photographic images, examining how photographs influence our understanding of the world and how the act of photographing can transform the meaning of what is captured.

Sontag's framework provides insight into the assumption that photography offers an objective record of reality. The strength of the text lies in its examination of the cultural and political significance of photographic images. However, its broad discussion of photography means that it does not focus specifically on the romanticisation of wartime imagery.

The text provides a theoretical foundation for my exploration of constructed photography. By recreating the visual language of historical documentation, I aim to question why photographs are often accepted as evidence of an event. Sontag's ideas allow me to consider how composition, context and cultural expectations influence the viewer's interpretation, particularly when an image is deliberately constructed to resemble something historical.

Sontag, S. (2003) *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Sontag examines how photographs of war and suffering influence our understanding of conflict. She considers how images are presented, circulated and interpreted, questioning whether photographs can communicate the reality of suffering or whether their repeated consumption can distance viewers from the events they depict.

The strength of this text lies in its direct engagement with war photography and the ethical implications of representing conflict. Sontag highlights how images can influence public perception, while also acknowledging the limitations of photography as a means of understanding historical events. Although the text focuses more on suffering than romanticism, this contrast is valuable when examining the idealised representations of war found in popular culture.

This text informs my practice by encouraging me to question what is excluded from romanticised representations of wartime life. While I am interested in the visual appeal of historical imagery, Sontag's writing allows me to consider the tension between the cinematic beauty of an image and the reality of the conflict it represents. This helps establish a more critical approach to my constructed photographs.

Zelizer, B. (1998) *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Zelizer examines photographs taken during the liberation of Nazi concentration camps and their role in shaping collective memory of the Holocaust. She explores how these images became central to public understandings of the events, considering how photographs preserve historical moments while also influencing the ways those moments are remembered and interpreted.

The strength of this text lies in its examination of the relationship between photography and historical memory. Zelizer demonstrates how particular images become representative of wider historical events, while other experiences and perspectives can become less visible. The book focuses on the photographic representation of atrocity rather than romanticised wartime culture, but this provides an important counterpoint to the imagery I am exploring.

The text informs my research into the ways photographs construct our understanding of the past. It allows me to consider how repeated visual conventions can establish a sense of historical authenticity, even when the original context of an image is incomplete. This is relevant to my practice, where I aim to construct photographs that appear archival while questioning the relationship between memory, representation and photographic truth.