Title
Toward a Unified Theory of Visual Knowledge in Library, Archives and Information Studies: A Test of the KBI Model Using Documentary Photographs

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Publication Date
2014

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Toward a Unified Theory of Visual Knowledge in Library, Archives and Information Studies:

A Test of the KBI Model Using Documentary Photographs

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Information Studies

by

Melvin Hale

2014
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Toward a Unified Theory of Visual Knowledge in Library, Archives and Information Studies:

A Test of the KBI Model Using Documentary Photographs

by

Melvin Hale

Doctor of Philosophy in Information Studies
University of California, Los Angeles, 2014
Professor John V. Richardson, Jr., Chair

This dissertation makes use of three commonly used qualitative methods, visual ethnography, rephotography and a type of photo-elicitation, to examine an innovative theory of visual knowledge called Know, Believe, and Imagine. KBI is first and foremost an innovative model of visual perception. The discovery of KBI led to an award-winning art practice. This study moves the theoretical foundations of KBI from the studio to a qualitative research setting to determine if KBI can be used for reliable and valid knowledge production.

The invention of the printing press and the resulting mass production of literature in the fifteenth century presaged an immediate institutional commitment to verbal literacy, as embodied
in the field of Library and Information Studies (LIS). However, despite the invention of
technologies that have enabled the mass production of both still and moving images, a parallel
institutional commitment to visual literacy in the social sciences has not transpired. The twenty-
first century is awash in visual imagery due in no small measure to the computer, the Internet,
and graphical user interfaces and remediation associated with computerization.

Visual literacy refers to a group of vision competencies, integrated with other sensory
modes, which are used to make sense of visual experience. Epistemological discourse regarding
knowledge claims from visual records has tended to mimic the reductive paradigms applied to
written scientific discourse, even though it has long been accepted that visual information is
cognitively processed differently than verbal information.

The examination of documentary photographs described in this dissertation examines a
theory of seeing that emerged from art practice, and form the foundation for a discursive system
that accounts for the role that existing knowledge, heuristics, and imagination performs in visual
literacy. This study demonstrates that a knowledge-based approach, associated with research in
cognitive psychology, is better suited for advancing visual literacy and visual epistemologies.

Documentary photographs were examined in two phases using qualitative methods that
provided evidence of the robustness of the theoretical model for meaningful social scientific
discourse. The specific type of documentary photographs used for this research was black-and-
white postcards created in the first half of the twentieth century. While sufficient time has
elapsed to provide significant socio-cultural movement, not so much time has elapsed to render
the artifactual material obsolete, allowing for the construction of rich socio-cultural narratives
grounded in the trace evidence of still images. A pragmatic benefit of this research might
include an increased valuation and access to visual archives, and improved methods for making sense of visual experience.

**Keywords:** visual literacy, visual cognition, visual perception, visual ethnography, rephotography, photo-elicitation, fast and frugal heuristics, KBI theory, photography, postcards, RPPC.
The dissertation of Melvin Hale is approved.

Anne J. Gilliland

Beverly P. Lynch

Susan Slyomovics

John V. Richardson, Jr., Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Eugene and Betty Hale. Although they were divorced when I was barely able to walk, they independently looked after my wellbeing long into adulthood, and supplied me with the wisdom, knowledge and resources to love myself, and to strive to be the best that I can be. I learned courage and tenacity from them, and salute them with this accomplishment. I praise them all the more, because, as Black Americans, they refused to succumb to adversity or fear, and instilled in me a strong unyielding sense of dignity, pride and purpose.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document did not come into being simply because I have been generously gifted with intellect and good fortune. I needed the unwavering support and devotion of my wife, Angelica, who never felt it an imposition to read the roughest of drafts. I relied upon my advisor and chair of my committee, Dr. John V. Richardson, and he was always there in the good times and not so good times that come in the cycle of failure and success that lead to breakthroughs. I would have been doomed without the valuable insight gained from my committee members, which include Dr. Susan Slyomovics, Dr. Anne Gilliland and Dr. Beverly Lynch. They each introduced to me a world of knowledge in the fields of anthropology, archives and literature.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin, you know who you are. Thank you for sacrificing to help us on numerous occasions, often before we even asked for help. I could not have written this document in the dark. Roland Pinder, a longtime friend, came through when I needed help dealing with the distraction of trademark infringement and a federal case while trying to pass qualifying exams and conduct research. I would not have done a good job keeping track of citations, or even with formatting a scholarly paper for that matter, without Dr. Christine Wilson, Director of the Graduate Student Resource Center, and the staff she has assembled in the Writing Center. They are the best at what they do. Peter Wiebens in Graduate Housing did far more than crunch the numbers and collect the rent. He showed tremendous faith and patience when things appeared to be going sideways, which was quite often. Amelia Acker and David Kim, both members of my cohort, were selfless in sharing their insights into scholarly writing, and they helped me get over the hump. If Colin Doty, another member of my cohort, had not informed me of Dr. Slyomovics’ need for a Special Reader, I might never have met her. Mary Niles Maack,
Professor Emerita in Information Studies, left a book in her bookcase outside her door for students to borrow that made a profound impact on me and this dissertation. That book, A Primer in Visual Literacy, was a vital source of foundational information. I needed the encouragement that I always got from talking with the IS department chair, Greg Leazer, who always made time for me when I needed direction. I would like to thank many friends who have read or listened patiently to my commentary on my dissertation and many friends who have helped me with my writing skills. I cannot name them all and shall not risk omission by naming a few.

Thank you all for all your time and patience with me!
VITAE

MELVIN HALE

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Information Studies, UCLA, 2014
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Committee: Dr. John V. Richardson, Jr. (chair), Dr. Beverly Lynch, Dr. Anne Gilliland, Dr. Susan Slyomovics
MLIS, Specialization in Archives, UCLA
MLIS Portfolio Title: Cataloging Large Collections of Real Photo Postcards: The Case When Less is More
M.A., Religion, Andrews University
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Featured seminar speaker for the 7th Annual LA As Subject Archives Bazaar on the subject “Wish You Were Here: Los Angeles in Postcards,” held at the University of Southern California’s Doheny Library (Fall 2012)
Special Reader for Visual Anthropology, Documentary Photography in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles (Winter 2011)
Joint Symposium Presenter at the Huntington Library at the Pasadena Teachers’ Retreat with Dr. Arthur Verge (Fall 2009 and Winter 2012)
Corporate training duties at ROLM, Chi/Cor Information Management Systems, and GRIC Communications

DIGITAL CONTENT AND GALLERY EXPERIENCE

Creator, ArtistLA.com 2006 – Present
Owner and Curator, M Hale Gallery, 189 S. Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, CA 2006 - 2009
Owner and Curator, Gallery-By-the-Sea, Indialantic, FL 2001 – 2004
Creator, Pix2Canvas.com and shop.pix2canvas.com 2000 - Present
FINE ARTS EXPERIENCE AND AWARDS

Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce, Palm Springs, California 2008 - Present
M Hale Gallery, Palm Springs, California 2006 - 2009
Heusso Gallery Art Show, featuring Chuck Caplinger and Melvin Hale 2006

Selected Public and Corporate Collections

Riviera Resort and Spa, Palm Springs, California (60 artworks, 50 photographs)
The Sandor Family Collection (A top 100 art collector in the US) Palm Springs, California
Desert Regional Medical Center, Tenet Healthcare, Palm Springs, California
Redwood Empire Stereocasters, Santa Rosa, California
Aaron Brothers Corporate Offices and various company stores, Headquarters, Coppell, Texas

Award-winner in the 2012 97th Annual National Orange Show All-California Juried Art Exhibition
Award-winner in the 2008 California State Fair Fine Art Competition
Singular artist (of any medium) to win three awards in the 2007 California State Fair Fine Art Competition

September 2007 - The Desert Sun, Palm Springs, California, “Local Artist Wins Big”, Stephanie Frith

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Exhibitor at the LA As Subject Archives Bazaar, an alliance of Southern California research archives, libraries, and private collections hosted by USC Libraries 2009 - Present

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PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

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District Manager, Retail Installations, Sears, San Francisco & Central Valley 2004 – 2006
Director of Product Marketing, NetBoss Division, Harris Corporation, Melbourne, FL 2000 - 2001
Senior Product Manager, DSL, Bell Atlantic Internet Solutions, Reston, VA 1999 – 2000
Senior Product Manager, Internet Services, GRIC Communications, Inc., Milpitas, CA 1994 – 1999
Director of Marketing, Chi/Cor Information Management, Inc., Chicago, IL 1987 – 1994
Senior Network Engineer, Bank of America, San Francisco, CA 1984 – 1987
Senior Systems Engineer, ROLM Corporation, Santa Clara, CA 1981 – 1984

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Created MugBase, an early digital imaging system for law enforcement, 1994
Created the award-winning Xiox Facility Management System (XFMS 4.0), 1993
Created the Metrolink Fiber Management System (MFMS), 1993
Created The Communications Resource Management System (CRMS), 1987
PROLOGUE

The seeds of this dissertation were planted as far back as when I was a student in the third grade. The class was given a project to create a scene of some sort inside a shoebox using construction paper, glue and scissors. I don’t claim to remember what the scene looked like, or what colors were used. I just remember that the teacher really liked it, and that made me feel good about it. My mother liked it too, and saved it for many years. At the writing of this dissertation, I am fifty-nine years old, so a lot of “water has passed under the bridge.” But something about that childhood experience remains.

Over the years, I have made persuasive use of words, both written and oral, but I have always been driven to engage in creative visual pursuits. I worked as a telecom engineer for most of my pre-academic career, designing voice and data networks. I was also a product manager for many years, creating my own graphics, white papers and technical specifications. If I didn’t complete the finished product, I provided detailed information to other graphic artists who completed my vision. I enjoyed making PowerPoint presentations, and showing them to corporate audiences in executive briefing centers and in seminar presentations I conducted in diverse places. I find it difficult to express my ideas without a whiteboard, chalkboard or flipchart. At one time I always carried retractable pointers, followed by laser pointers, as visual aids. I encourage others to “draw it out for me” so I can see what you are talking about.

I am confessing to being a visual thinker. There are upsides and downsides to this condition. The upsides are fairly obvious. The downsides are that it takes me longer to sort out complex concepts and ideas without a mental framework in which to situate them. Words alone don’t always do it for me, and if time is a constraint, I might miss the idea altogether. Fortunately for me, the world has become a more visually hospitable and friendly environment.
Computers have played a large role in this dynamic. When I think about the work that I do in Photoshop, creating artistic color compositions from black-and-white images, I realize how much I am temperamentally suited for the task. I can spend hours and hours working on minutiae on the monitor, and think nothing of it. My wife appreciates the finished product, but on the other hand, feels that the process is akin to watching grass grow.

When I was a System Engineer at ROLM Corporation in the early 1980’s, our group was tasked with sizing the ROLM CBX (Computerized Branch Exchange), one of the first large-scale digital private telephone systems, generically known as Private Branch Exchanges (PBXs), for corporate installations. Part of that work involved determining how many circuit boards and transaction blocks a given system required in order to handle the traffic volume without being wasteful and expensive, or underpowered and frustrating. ROLM corporate headquarters in Santa Clara, California, where I worked, taught system engineering classes for its outlying engineers stationed across the country, and for its distributors. Traffic Engineering was a math intensive course, and passing it was a prerequisite to becoming a certified system engineer. That training was a rigorous weeklong affair taught by experienced system engineers from my department. Upon being hired, I took and passed the course, but I realized right away that the course lacked graphic material to supplement the algorithms, tables and formulas. Trepidation and anxiety was rife among the students, some of whom were repeating the course.

It was clear to me that the course needed some graphical assistance, so I asked if I could teach the class at a future date. Then I set about creating course materials that graphically depicted the various modes of telephony traffic. I supplied the department graphic artist with some hand drawn representations from which he made huge “D” size drawings, 24” x 36” on architectural paper. I then had these drawings reduced to 8½” x 11” handouts. When the time
came, I taught the class. All the students passed, and most said that they enjoyed the class. The graphics, four of which are shown below, made a difficult subject easier to comprehend.

Figure 1.1. Traffic Engineering Course Graphics. Source: Melvin Hale.
The purpose of this Prologue is not to venerate my graphic arts skills, but rather to elaborate on the relationship between data and visual representation as co-collaborators in knowledge production. Knowledge seekers at all levels, from K through 12, to undergraduate and post-doctoral levels, are engulfed by an information deluge via always-on electronically mediated portals actively contending for an audience. Knowledge seekers deserve tools with which to seek, retrieve, evaluate and process this information, which is often graphically mediated. They also deserve to know how to create visual representations such that data and attendant visual representations are coherent and appropriate.

Thomas Cyrs, Professor Emeritus, Education, Management and Development at New Mexico State University, wrote an article in 1997 regarding distance learning using television entitled Visual Thinking: Let Them See What You Are Saying in which he rallied for the inclusion of visual aids for distance learners. He stated that:

“Telecommunications, and especially television in its present analog form and increasingly available digital form, continually push toward higher levels of visual communication. Multimedia, which emphasizes visual communication, is fast approaching our classrooms. To hold the interest of the students of this visual society, distance learning instructors need to begin to think and present ideas visually. As digital technology merges voice, video, and data and integrates them all into multimedia, instructors must design new telecourses and modify existing ones to let students see as well as hear what they are saying.”¹

Cyrs’ commentary is situated in the transitional period between television as the medium for distance instruction and the Internet as the medium, which he hints at as “multimedia” that is

rapidly approaching. He is not content with merely advocating for a more visually rich pedagogy for distance learners, he goes on to elaborate his views on cognitive needs that are satisfied by engaging with visual media, and the relationship between words and images. He provides a definition of visual thinking as “the ability to conceptualize and present thoughts, ideas, and data as pictures and graphics, replacing much of the verbiage we now use to communicate.”

In this conception of visual thinking, images are not merely illustrative matter, as typically represented in the social sciences, subordinated to text. Images, in Cyrs’ conception, can supersede words and replace verbal constructs as conveyors of information, a hierarchy not often inverted in the social sciences. Photographs in particular have been routinely avoided in classic social science discourse, used mainly to serve as presentational and not analytical purposes. Ball and Smith wrote that: “The rule appears to be that sociology is primarily a verbally rather than visually communicated discipline; or to be more precise, that tables, graphs, and histograms appear to be the sociologist’s preferred data.” In the twenty-first century, this perspective towards visuality in any discipline is cause for significant concern.

In the context of the topic of this dissertation, a unified theory of visual knowledge, Cyrs offers a Venn diagram of visual thinking comprised of three overlapping circles that is worthy of examining, if for no other reason than that it graphically bears a strong resemblance to the graphic I developed to depict the unified theory of visual knowledge (page 43), which is Know, Believe and Imagine (KBI). Having fully developed my own model of visual perception several

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2 Ibid.

years before encountering Cyrs’ model of Visual Thinking (Figure 1.2), this offers an opportunity to compare and contrast the concepts, at a high level.

Figure 1.2. Cyr’s Model of Visual Thinking. Source: Thomas E. Cyrs, Visual Thinking.

*Seeing* in Cyrs’ model is visual perception linked with the past experiences of the viewer; *Imaging* involves perceiving different or alternate roles for given objects; and *Designing* involves expressing some idea in visual form, such as a sculpture or a drawing. In the KBI theoretical model, Cyrs’ *Designing* and *Imaging* are collapsed into one category: *Imagine*. Imagine involves all facets of creativity and aesthetic contemplations. Cyr’s *Seeing* in KBI is divided into two parts: *Know* and *Believe*, where *Know* is associated with empirically demonstrable fact, from past or present experience, and *Believe* is associated with knowledge based on a type of “Fast and Frugal” heuristic called Take The Best (TTB). I find Cyr’s use of three overlapping circles to graphically represent visual thinking as uncanny. The fact that our respective definitions are closely related, I find less surprising. Visual perception involves mental states, the boundaries of which cannot be precisely delineated, hence they overlap and are interconnected.

The following quotation from Cyrs is cogent, including its oblique reference to a totem in the discipline of Information Studies:
“The use of visuals of any type can provide more concrete meaning to words and can show connections and relationships among ideas. Thornburg (1992, p. 51) notes, ‘The left-right, top-bottom world of Gutenberg has been joined by an explosion of non-linear and (in many cases) highly interactive information tools in the home.’ Much of this information is highly visualized and demands new ways of thinking other than the use of letter symbols grouped as abstract words.”

“Highly interactive information tools” are now ubiquitous in society in the form of mobile computing appliances. Information is dispersed in “clouds,” allowing access to it from anywhere at any time. The presentation of such information is no longer merely linear, in literary formats. What has remained more constant is the manner in which visualization through sensory means is the medium by which information is consumed. Whether information is symbolically represented by verbal constructs or in non-verbal imagery or a blending of both, what we see is driven by what we need. Colin Ware, Director of the Data Visualization Research Lab at the University of New Hampshire, suggests that visualization is a process of constructing and executing visual queries on the environment in a continuous stream, and that what we see at any given time is determined by what we are attempting to accomplish. Ware goes on to cite studies which suggests that people are unaware of 99% or more of what is in their visual field, the result being that “on the one hand we subjectively think that we see everything; on the other, it seems, we see almost nothing.”

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6 Ibid., 28.
This dissertation outlines an original theory of seeing which defines the irreducible elements of visual perception as that which we Know, Believe and Imagine (KBI). Due to its brevity, it is understood that such a proposition might be considered overly simplistic, and even audacious; but I propose that any theory of visual perception must be economically robust to account for the speed at which visual perception operates. Makridakis, noted author and Emeritus Professor of Decision Sciences at INSEAD, made the following observation about artificial intelligence and visual perception:

“Then why can’t computers be smart? It is one thing to be super fast in processing simple information and another to be intelligent – not to mention the capacity to learn, be creative, solve new problems, or adapt to changes. For instance, the human eye passes to the brain billions of bits of information every second. The brain knows which of this information is important and where it has to concentrate its attention. Someone driving on a mountain road therefore can look out the window for one second and admire the magnificent view. The next second concentration focuses on a passing car; after that the driver can admire the beauty of the snowy mountain top. The information passed to the brain in a few seconds is more than any computer can process in a month. Most importantly, however, the brain can go back and forth effortlessly, knowing what information it needs, where to concentrate, how to evaluate each situation, and what to do. Computers cannot do those tasks. Even the biggest and fastest of today’s computers has a great deal of trouble walking down a stair case.”


Human visual capacity to see and understand what it is seeing is something that we take for granted. At the same time that we are seeing and recognizing we can also be learning and anticipating. Seeing and knowing is a spectacular psychobiological achievement. Chambris and Kosslyn report that brain-scanning technologies have shown that more than two-thirds of the
brain is involved in visual imagery and visual perception. Ware disagrees with Makridakis regarding the processing speed of the brain when compared to modern computers, but consider his comments on memory and theory: “The most critical cognitive resource involved in visual thinking is visual working memory. Theorists disagree on details of exactly how visual working memory operates but there is broad agreement on basic functionality and capacity, enough to provide a solid foundation for a theory of visual thinking.”

KBI is grounded in cognitive processes closely associated with memory while fully integrated with all other human sensory experience.

Visual perception is operationalized in this dissertation as both a process and a result by which Belief leads to agency. Perception and cognition are used interchangeably. True belief is the output of KBI under the most optimal conditions. True belief does not equate to universal truth, rather, it equates to individual truth. True belief is what an individual actually believes is happening at any given instant. It is inaccessible directly to any other individual. While it is impossible to quantify the exact mix of KBI elements in any given decision, KBI theory asserts that these ingredients, Know, Believe and Imagine, are the raw constituents of cognition that constitute Belief. Belief is a theoretical layer above KBI and represents the information feed on which human beings situate agency. This information feed can be impaired and/or distorted by both natural and artificial means. Motives and bias are important considerations in KBI, and are most closely associated in the model with the data set I refer to as Imagine. The brain,

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functioning like the massive super computer that it is, processes KBI visual information, and the output of that process can be as simple as like or dislike, but in an instant, a vast amount of sensory, computational and emotional energy and information becomes ground for individual agency. This is a high-level overview of how I define KBI in reference to cognition, and the context in which I view KBI as a process leading to results.

I make numerous references to culture and visual culture. In classical literature, culture is generally presented as an elitist view of “high” culture, meaning the highest levels of fine art, such as Rembrandt and Beethoven, and “low” culture, its debased counterpart. This study takes the anthropological view of culture as a whole way of life encompassing a broad range of activities in society, including popular literature, music and art. Sturken and Cartwright, in their seminal work, *Practices of Looking*, define culture as “the shared practices of a group, community, or society, through which meaning is made out of the visual, aural, and textual world of representations.” They view culture not so much as things but processes “through which individuals and groups come to make sense of those things.”

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Visual methods entail the use of images to learn about the social world”

Hartel & Thomson¹¹

Science and scientific discoveries can be where you find them, i.e., the legendary apple falling from the tree, or even the discovery of penicillin for that matter. This dissertation, and the theory it proposes, is loosely constructed around found objects: an object designed for one purpose, but found useful for another.¹² The first of these found objects is a genre of documentary photography, the real photo postcard (RPPC), so named at the turn of the twentieth century to denote postcards constructed on specially formatted black-and-white photo paper using the photographic process, not lithographic mechanical printing. The second found object, if you will, was the process for turning black-and-white photographs into award-winning color compositions by this author, an artist and archivist, also known as ArtistLA. The third found “object,” the focal point of this dissertation, is a theory of visual knowledge. This theory emerged from art production. In a book entitled Art Practice as Research, Sullivan states that “visual research methods can be grounded within the art practices of the studio and these are


robust enough to satisfy institutional demands.”\textsuperscript{13} The art practices of this author/artist at the writing of this dissertation have been consistently performed for over seven years.

KBI, also referred to in this paper as the \textit{visual paradigm}, is a \textit{visual epistemology} grounded in the speed of visual perception (Fig. 1.3). The speed at which visual perception operates gives it privilege in a new visual culture.\textsuperscript{14} With the ascendance of the Internet and visual-based social media, at no time in human history has visual culture been so dominant, and that dominance shows no signs of abating. In contemporary K-12 pedagogy, students are being taught to develop composition and communication skills and to think critically and creatively in a visually saturated world.\textsuperscript{15} “K” is knowledge based upon empirical data. “B” is knowledge based upon rapid ecological decisions defined by scholars in the field of cognitive psychology as \textit{Fast and Frugal Heuristics}. “I” is knowledge based upon individual preferences and feelings towards what is seen. “K” represents the highest level of knowing, knowledge which is founded upon objective facts. “B” represents the category of knowing which is associated with rapid decisions that individuals make which they believe to be valid based on limited cues in the environment. In the theory of KBI, this category of decisions, commonly referred to as heuristics, make up the bulk of visual knowing. Heuristic decision-making has become a significant area of study in the field of cognitive psychology:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15}Rebecca P. Butler, “Focus on Visual Literacy.” \textit{Knowledge Quest} 36 (no. 3, January 2008): 58–68.
\end{itemize}
“As reflected in the amount of controversy, few areas in psychology have undergone such
dramatic conceptual changes in the past decade as the emerging science of heuristics.
Heuristics are efficient cognitive processes, conscious or unconscious, that ignore part of
the information. Because using heuristics saves effort, the classical view has been that
heuristic decisions imply greater errors than do “rational” decisions as defined by logic or
statistical models.”

Recent studies have shown that heuristics require little time, information, and
computation, and are also relatively accurate: Martignon, Katsikopoulos, and Woike\textsuperscript{17}, Beebe\textsuperscript{18},
Makridakis\textsuperscript{19}, McDonald\textsuperscript{20}, and Bröder and Schiffer.\textsuperscript{21} “[F]ast and frugal” heuristic procedures
often mimic the accuracy of more complicated inference mechanisms while using only limited
amounts of information and simple inference rules.\textsuperscript{22} “[A] strong body of research in the fast
and frugal tradition shows that in certain contexts, we make complex decisions based on a single
cue, and that this simple strategy, known as Take The Best [TTB], is as good or even outperforms

\textsuperscript{17} Laura Martignon, Konstantinos V. Katsikopoulos, and Jan K. Woike, “Categorization with Limited Resources: A
Family of Simple Heuristics,” \textit{Journal of Mathematical Psychology} 52 (no. 6, December 2008): 353,
265.
\textsuperscript{21} Arndt Bröder and Stefanie Schiffer, “Stimulus Format and Working Memory in Fast and Frugal Strategy
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 362.
computation-intensive decision making.”

The visual paradigm is situated in these cognitive processes which operate virtually at the speed of light, and consists of instantaneous judgments.

“Although computational models of heuristics were proposed before (e.g., Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1993; Tversky, 1972), they were built on the premise that people rely on heuristics because they lack the cognitive capacity to perform rational calculations or are willing to sacrifice accuracy by expending less effort. This view has been challenged by demonstrations that processes embodying bounded rationality, such as limited information search and concompensatory processing, can lead to more accurate inferences than can be achieved by models based on more information and complex computations (Gigerenzer, Todd, & The ABC Research Group, 1999).”

“Imagine” represents unbounded and unfettered aesthetic contemplations. KBI is an ecological and holistic approach to visual perception, situating the seer as the epistemic site and focal point of knowledge production. Seeing is an embodied experience, and the eye is self-aware. Imagine requires no explicit external value(s), but accounts for individual preferences and both founded and unfounded notions. Imagine encompasses that which the viewer reads into the connotations of visual imagery.

The individuality of visual perception problematizes any theory of visual epistemology, and places limits on generalization. In going about their daily lives, people everywhere encounter a built environment, artifacts, persons, and social actions, while conducting their own social performance within this environment based on a variety of beliefs and expectations about

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the nature and workings of the world. There are at least as many ways of seeing and knowing as there are sighted individuals, because seeing involves perception, and each individual has a perception of their own. Bateson suggests that the processes of perception are inaccessible and only its products are conscious. It is the products of perception and vision that are necessary to the living creature. As will be discussed further on, it is the embeddedness of sight that invokes memory and experience.

![The Visual Paradigm](image)

Figure 1.3. Model of the KBI construct depicting its non-linearity. Source: Melvin Hale.

Seeing in this task-oriented context is about engaging with visual imagery, while allowing for, and understanding that visual sights and records can evoke infinite informational conceptions. John Berger in his seminal work, *Ways of Seeing*, puts it this way in the opening paragraph: “The relationship between what we see and what we know is never settled.” For this reason, any theory of seeing must be open-ended and intellectually robust, supporting perhaps, the most qualitative paradigm of all epistemic endeavors, the individual. It must account for the observation that we never see the same thing exactly the same way twice. One

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could question if it is possible to construct such an epistemology, and the validity of such an approach. I believe that it can be constructed, and that KBI is one such approach.

The KBI theory is bolstered by an evolutionary neurological theory developed by Donald Campbell called Blind Variation and Selective Retention (BVSR). Campbell described BVSR this way:

“A blind-variation-and-selective-retention process is fundamental to all inductive achievements, to all genuine increases in fit of system to environment.”

BVSR proposes that through the informal social construction of mental states and explicit formal education, the transmission of knowledge, belief and values are passed onto succeeding generations. The visual paradigm, through independent discovery, will be shown to parallel this theory of human cognitive evolution, namely, visual fitness to the environment. Visual fitness is interchangeable with the term visual literacy. Visual literacy is a mental state of affairs, subject to change and adaptation. It refers to “a group of vision competencies that a person develops and integrates with other sensory experiences.”

**Personnel**

For a number of years, I was involved with graphic arts and made frequent use of Photoshop to manipulate images, primarily simple things like changing contrast, hue and saturation. I filed in 2001 for a US trademark for digital printing called Pix2Canvas (see

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Appendix N). In early 2006, I digitally restored two vintage drawings of botanical images produced as chromolithographs from a rare book printed in the mid-1800s, and in the process I had to recreate the background on which these images were printed (see Appendices A, B, C and D). The only way to create a “clean sheet of paper” was to painstakingly use the lasso tool in Photoshop to cut-out and remove the botanical, and to place it onto an artificial background. The work was tedious because I was working on palm fronds, cactus plants and objects with significant surface texture. Both images took more than a day to digitally isolate.

In April 2006 I bought a gift store in downtown Palm Springs. In the process of creating some vintage art for the store, I mistakenly scanned a black-and-white image as RGB color instead of grayscale. I noticed that the scan had hints of color that I did not anticipate, and did not want. Instead of immediately using the desaturate command to remove the color, I tried to remove the color by changing the tint. From my experience with the botanicals, I then realized that I could digitally “cut out” various areas of the picture like a mosaic, and instead, apply color to each section. The result was my first digital color composition which I named Car in the Cactus (Appendix E). The third colorized composition that I created, in June of 2006, was from a postcard of a street scene in downtown Palm Springs which I named Chi Chi and Cubana (Appendix F). It was an instant success in the store, and eventually went on to win an Award of Excellence in the 2007 California State Fair. That same year I also won two other awards in the State Fair, the only artist of any medium to win the maximum of three awards that year. To place this in context, nearly 2,000 works of art, including sculpture, oil paintings and photography, were entered for awards in 2007, and of those, only 188 were selected. The odds of being selected to win three awards were less than one percent. Kent Lacin, one of the fine art jurists I later spoke with, said that they were impressed with the originality of the concept and the
realism the artwork represented. I won another award in the 2008 State Fair. Since then I have sold over four hundred pieces of fine art to collectors and businesses worldwide.

In March 2008 I was featured as a Trendsetter and Emerging artist in *Art Business News*’ 30th Anniversary edition, one of the premier publications for artists and gallery owners worldwide. For that honor, I was selected as one of four artists from eight finalists, and the only digital artist so honored. My collectors include the Sandor Family Collection, listed as one of America’s Top 100 private art collectors, numerous millionaires, and entertainment company executives. The Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce selected my art for their newly renovated offices in 2008, and I am the only artist they have afforded a permanent display. The Palm Springs Riviera Resort and Spa completed a $70 million renovation of their historic facility in 2008, and selected over sixty of my artworks and photographs for that project. In 2011 my artwork was featured on the HipHop Weekly Magazine website (See Appendix N).

I have included extensive personal background information in this proposal to establish the significance and historic results of applying KBI to art practice, and to establish my extensive experience as a deltiologist and visual artist. Examples of my work are available online at www.ArtistLA.com (Appendix G). I originally called my method *Digital Realism*. The term was intended to reflect a specific genre of digital art production. Whereas the typical conception of digital art invokes images of kaleidoscope-like geometric designs and images born in a dream state, I wanted to ground my work in realism, hence digital realism. As I began my scholarly quest, I began to see my work as a method of deconstruction and recomposition of the visual record, and gave that conception a name: the *Visual Method of Abstraction* (VMA). In the course of my PhD studies at UCLA I found myself developing a theory of seeing and knowing. I call it a unified theory. In its simplicity it encompasses the manner in which human beings
process visual imagery. Visual knowing is a mental state of affairs, always dynamic, and grounded in complex psychobiological processes.

In an attempt to mimic the discursive practices of prevailing scientific and scholarly communications, I endeavored, without success, to document the discovery of KBI in third person literary terminology and reductive epistemological discourse for over a year; failing to produce an acceptable paper. It was like attempting to depict three-dimensional reality using two-dimensional representations. The primary failing was due to the inability of third person literary constructs to convey the directness of the discovery combined with a lack of verbal economy (a key component of the theory), hence the current first person construction and a reliance upon KBI as a discursive system.

Although art production lay the groundwork for the discovery of a novel genre of art (Digital Realism), my graduate studies enabled me to deduce that art production could be expressed as a visual method for knowledge production, VMA. Upon further study, I concluded that *a priori* knowledge, heuristics and imagination constitute a unified theory of visual knowledge. Courses that I have taken at UCLA which have facilitated this transition in conception, from art genre to theoretical proposition, include: Social Science Research Methods, IS 280, Research Methods & Designs, IS 291B, Theoretical Traditions, IS 291A, Anthropological Fieldwork Methods, IS 289, Work/Copy, IS 289 and Information Access, IS 245, among others. The term *know, believe, imagine* emerged from a discussion in the spring of 2010 in IS 291C, Information Ecology with Dr. John Richardson. The discussion was centered on the art of colorizing black-and-white photographs. During that discussion, I recognized the theoretical value of KBI as a discursive system, which was deductively arrived at using a bottom up approach.
For simplicity, the “content” of photographs in this study is operationalized as a trace of its subject. As such, it bears witness in a different manner than say a painting or drawing, which can be considered as a representation of its subject. The meaning we ascribe to these photographic images “depends in part on our attempt to enter by a combination of deduction and imagination into the circumstances of their making.”

I have taken several individual directed study courses that challenged me to think critically and write papers about the social construction and cultural implications of knowledge production and the epistemology and ontology of photographs. The proposed research will demonstrate that KBI, as a theoretical model for seeing and knowing, opens a rich dialog that extends into notions of politics, economics, race, gender, psychology, power and privilege. Photographs as records of seeing and knowing are visual archives, that encompass abundant aspects of social life: Sante, Stanczak, Slyomovics, Debbas, Tagg, Humphreys and Bruce, Alloula, Sontag, Berger, and Collier.

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32 Sante, *Folk Photography*.


In spring quarter 2011 I was a Special Reader for an undergraduate course, UCLA Anthropology 133P – *Visual Anthropology, Documentary Photography*. This course, taught by Dr. Susan Slyomovics, enrolled over 150 students, and centered on the relationships between subject and treatment of images, between art photography and ethnographic documentation. Concepts from this course, and course readings, helped develop my thinking on visual literacy.

“Photography is unlike other arts in at least one respect: it is seldom entirely within the control of the artist, and almost always represents a collaboration with chance…Out in the world, the photograph is at the mercy of a hundred factors: sun, clouds, wind, traffic, vegetation, dogs, cats, urchins, idlers, pedestrians, wires, poles, every sort of human caprice, and above all, the passage of time.”

Real Photo Postcards (RPPC) street scenes (Figure 1.4), the genre used for this study, are documentary in the sense that they were intentionally obtained for historical purposes, even if the history was the history of the moment. “They left behind electrifying real glimpses of scenes that are halfway impossibly remote, that are all the more vivid because they

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42 Sante, *Folk Photography*, 29.
weren’t meant for us."⁴³ While it can be argued that all mechanically acquired images are documentary in that they document something that is actual, as it was happening, the images from which this theory emerged were primarily intended for public consumption. Among collectors of RPPCs, the best and most desirable cards capture aspects of life that have drastically changed, or were in transition at the time they were created.⁴⁴

Real photo postcard street scenes are visual mementos of public spaces. Street scenes as visual documentary evidence represent public social performances by knowing and unknowing actors, and by objects, both animate and inanimate. The phrase “real photo” speaks not to the realness of the photographic depiction, or to notions of reality, but rather to the process by which

⁴³ Ibid., 37.
photographs are made. Real photo postcards (RPPCs), when introduced, often were captioned as real photograph, genuine photo or even actual photograph. RPPCs were produced up until the 1960s, when color lithograph prints called “chromes” began to ascend as the dominate form. Color photographic postcards are almost exclusively mechanically produced lithographs, and not photographic continuous tone prints; they are mechanically printed images comprised of micro dots and space, which when magnified, lack the sharpness and details of RPPCs. RPPCs are referred to in this paper as photo postcards.

Figure 1.5. Real Photo Postcard using the phrase “This is a Real Photograph” as divider. Source: Melvin Hale.

I am a Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellow. I am a member of the SAA, and a member of LA As Subject, an extensive alliance of Southern California research archives, libraries, and collections, which holds an annual event called the Archives Bazaar, hosted by USC Libraries. I have exhibited postcards and art at the Archives Bazaar from 2009 to 2013. In 2011 I was nominated for their First Annual Mamie Clayton Award, and in 2012 I was a featured speaker: Wish You Were Here - Los Angeles in Postcards (Appendix H).
In addition to completing my dissertation, my future plans include publishing a book regarding the social and academic implications of KBI, a major art exhibition featuring Artegraphs, and submitting articles for publication in *The American Archivist* and *The Library Quarterly*, nationally refereed journals. I made presentations at the Huntington Library in 2010 and 2012 as assistant to Dr. Arthur Verge at the Teacher’s Retreat on the topic of historic images from the Second World War. I gave a twenty minute presentation entitled *RPPC Street Scenes as Primary Resource* at the Fourth Annual Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI), held at UCLA, July 9 – 13, 2012. My 2012 MLIS portfolio presentation was entitled “Cataloguing Large Collections of Real Photo Postcards (RPPCs): The Case When Less is More.” In February 2013 I was a guest lecturer in the UCLA “Arts in Focus” graduate class where I presented *Photography as a Theory of Seeing*. I am currently seeking out additional conferences and events for future speaking opportunities.

**Problem Statement**

The ascendance of visual culture, in which visual representations operate as agency for social communication, challenges the field of Library and Information Studies to form a more robust and sustained engagement with the epistemic and ontological aspects of non-literary dimensions of knowledge production, consumption and preservation. Classic studies, such as the *Stroop effect*, have demonstrated that visual and verbal processing systems, though different, do not operate independent of each other and that visual information processing both influences and is influenced by linguistic experience. At present, the field of LIS functions almost exclusively within linguistic traditions and lacks a unified theory of visual knowledge, however, the KBI

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theory proposed in this dissertation could become a significant part of LIS, at a time when visual information is growing as a dominant force in popular culture. LIS practice has been plagued by an ambivalent identity. By extending the domain of Information Studies into visuality the very conception of information studies will be better articulated and understood. Therefore, the role of KBI as a theoretical framework for a unified theory of visual knowledge merits explicating as an innovative visual epistemology.

**Justification and Significance**

The advantage of adopting a unified theory of visual knowledge brings LIS into a scholarly dialog which is finding traction in the social sciences, and strengthens archival practices. Pauwels states that “The further development of visual scientific competencies should be put high on the agenda of visual researchers and in fact on that of virtually all scholars of most disciplines.” He further states that “Visual research in general could benefit from a better theoretical and methodological grounding.” One need only look to the advent of Google Glass and wearable computers to know that a sea change in information presentation has arrived, and that visual information studies is of imminent significance and relevance.

Library patrons on college and university campuses expect to find both traditional books and electronic information readily accessible. In an age where the role of images is virtually on a par with that of literature, KBI offers a simple, but powerful, framework for evaluating and describing image-based materials. A 2007 study which re-examined traditional views of the academic library by college administrators concluded that “The library’s instructional mission is

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even more critical now because students, who readily turn to electronic resources, often are unable to differentiate quality materials from other kinds.”

An earlier study aimed at capturing the attitudes and motivations of students entering the related archival profession found that “educators observed that there appear to be more incoming students who are interested in specific areas such as institutional archives, electronic records, and visual materials.”

KBI can therefore become an important tool for librarians and archivists.

Visual epistemologies support the reliable acquisition of knowledge from visual source material, creating a context in which social knowledge can be constructed and preserved. Documentary photographs defy simple taxonomies, especially if the photographic frame encompasses broad subject content, such as that depicted in street scenes, where numerous subjects, and therefore subject material, are present. Regarding the visual complexity of RPPC street scenes, Sante writes that “A card is considered most desirable if it depicts an archetypal scene of small-town Americana, its image is self-contained and roughly symmetrical, it contains a profusion of signage and objects as well as people (ideally more than one but fewer than ten), and it is clearly labeled as to geographical location.” Most, if not all, of the RPPC street scenes selected for my collection would be graded as desirable based on Sante’s definition. Such visually rich artifacts do not permit simple description because upon close examination they depict a wide swath of community life, commerce, technology, signage, and built environments.

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Despite the number of photographs (thirty) selected for this dissertation, the wealth of potential subject matter they represent is virtually unlimited, rendering the numerical count of exemplars immaterial. In qualitative research, it is not the quantity of informants or data points that matters the most, it is the quality of the source, and the notion of saturation. I address this subject in greater detail in Chapter Four: Methodology.

Preservation of this genre of documentary photographs can support and enable scholarly research in numerous areas, such as:

1. Geographic research,
2. Genealogical studies,
3. Historic preservation/restoration,
4. Social networking phenomena,
5. Archival practice, and
6. Test beds for future research and applications.

**Theoretical Structure**

It is known that there is such a thing as visual knowledge. Visual perception, the act of seeing and knowing, is evidence of visual knowledge. What is not known is whether KBI, a model of visual perception, is applicable to LIS, and the social sciences, as a unified theory of visual knowledge. KBI instantiates a *theory of seeing* articulated by John Berger (see pages 171, 172). Berger states that on an epistemic level, we already know what is present in *any* photograph. Berger’s theory of seeing, grounded in a priori knowledge, is the link between what is known (visual knowledge) and what is unknown (the applicability of the KBI theory of visual perception to LIS and social science). This theory of seeing, as grounded in a priori knowledge, is supported in this dissertation by researchers from a broad spectrum of disciplines, including
anthropology, internal medicine, cognitive psychology, history, visual sociology, computer science, law, information studies and art criticism. KBI situates the basic components of a priori knowledge as know and believe, both of which are computational responses, and imagine, which includes judgments, aesthetic contemplations, and creative acts. Working in concert, and operating cognitively, in many instances, at the speed of sight, know, believe and imagine merge seamlessly to form a unified theory of visual knowledge.

Vision, Goals and Objectives of this dissertation

I would like to see LIS embrace the domain of visual information and KBI. I intend to write several articles and a book about visual knowledge. My immediate goal is to defend my dissertation on visual knowledge. I have a set of concrete objectives which includes the following:

1. To describe knowing (K), believing (B), and imagining (I) as the three main parts of a unified theory of visual knowledge.
2. To analyze in detail K, B, and I.
3. To define a discursive system for visual knowledge.
4. To compare and contrast this theory with other extant theories of visual knowledge.
5. Extrapolating the evidence of a theory of visual knowledge.

These objectives are justified because visual research, theories and methods have lagged far behind the development of those for written/verbal literacy. The objectives of this study are original and innovative. Within LIS no previous research has identified or put forth a unified theory of visual knowledge.
Research Questions

The key research question this paper will address is:

1) What is a unified theory of visual knowledge – specifically, what is the role of knowing, believing, and imaging in visual knowledge?

Additional questions that this research will address are:

2) What is KBI?

3) How does the KBI theory of visual knowledge compare/contrast with other extant theories of visual knowledge?

4) Is the KBI theory applicable to LIS?

These questions are significant because visual information and visual records have become a dominant force in cultural knowledge production, and as yet LIS has not advanced a unified theory of visual knowledge.

Thesis

I believe that the KBI theory of visual knowledge is applicable to LIS topics and problems. LIS is concerned, at a minimum, with the production, classification, consumption, and preservation of records of social knowledge, in all its forms. KBI, which emerged from art practice, is an economical yet robust theoretical framework in which reliable knowledge claims can be constructed from visual imagery, all-the-while granting the subjective nature of visual perception, and the validity of seeing.
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

“Theory is a complex field because it is interdisciplinary.”

The literature review examines a history of visual literacy, its relation to written and verbal literacy, and epistemic differences between written and visual literacy. Within Information Studies there is no landmark research on visual literacy, or a unified theory of visual knowledge on which to situate this study, nonetheless, interdisciplinary contributions from the fields of anthropology, sociology and psychology will be examined. This literature review is primarily organized topically and secondarily in a chronological format.

Background

Photography as a scientific research method was introduced by John Collier. Visual images as a site for cultural knowledge production from anthropological fieldwork was documented in his groundbreaking book, *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*, first published in 1967. In it, he situates photography as a means for reading culture, for illuminating social clues that otherwise might be overlooked, and as tool for engaging researcher reflexivity. He writes that: “A large volume of photographic content is tangible. Any number of analysts can read the same elements in exactly the same manner. To be sure this [reading] takes training, but so does the reading of maps and bacteriological slides.” The second volume, written in conjunction with his son Malcolm, also an anthropologist, became a


handbook on the technical aspects and value of visual methods in social science. Yet, Collier did not offer a visual method for non-academics. His work was primarily devised as a positivist approach to social epistemology and for training academics. “Collier’s initial techniques now stand in contrast to more wholly interpretive approaches, but his expanded book remains lauded for its prescient vision and technical detail.”

The phrase “visual literacy” was coined and popularized in 1968 by John L. Debes III, an employee of the Eastman Kodak Company and co-chair of the first National Conference on Visual Literacy in 1969, and entailed the study of ways of seeing and knowing. Debes states that “when developed, they enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, and/or symbols, natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environment.”

The outcomes and value of visual literacy are enumerated; however, a tangible method for engaging with visual images is not presented.

Soltis, in Seeing, Knowing and Believing, A Study of the Language of Visual Perception, states that “the tendency has been to treat seeing and other modes of sense perception as untrustworthy.” He addresses modes of seeing in a number of linguistic ways, such as notions of identifying, noticing, recognizing, and illusion, but he most forcefully rejects the reductive epistemological discourse used for written scientific arguments as grounds for visual literacy on the basis that such discourse is “conceived in doubt and born in the denial of the validity of direct

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53 Proceedings, 14.

sense perception.” Soltis contends that people rely upon vision daily to make life and death decisions, and view as suspect philosophical notions that disregard the validity of visual experience, and that notwithstanding seeing failures and errors, the sense of sight is a trustworthy phenomena.

Donis A. Dondis, in a book entitled *A Primer of Visual Literacy* writes that visual literacy is “the product of individual knowledge, emotions, values, and beliefs.” The elements of a visual method are presented, but no explicit method is offered. It can be seen over and over in the literature on visual literacy that the basic elements of a visual epistemology are implicitly presented, yet no explicit method is defined. Moreover, in retrospect, the basic constituents of a visual method are not disputed. Those constituents involve that which can be read *out* of an image, and those constituents that can be read *into* an image.

Koestler wrote that the “trouble with putting into words the aesthetic experience aroused by a picture is, as we saw, that so much is happening at the same time; that only a fraction of it becomes conscious, and even a smaller fraction verbalized. ‘The forceps of our minds’, to quote H.G. Wells again, ‘are clumsy things, and crush the truth a little in the course of taking hold of it’… “The essence of the aesthetic experience consists, as I have tried to show, in intellectual illumination – seeing something familiar in a new, significant light.” Like Collier, Koestler recognized that in rich visual records of social culture there are multiple touch points for analysis, and that even familiar sights can offer indefinite opportunities for discovery. Some of these touch points include embodiments of knowledge, metaphors, symbols, artistic

55 Ibid., 15.


expression and calls for justice.\textsuperscript{58} He observes the speed at which visual perception operates, and the inadequacies of language to capture the immensity of visual experience.

\textit{The Phenomenology of Photography and Social Science}

“If the invention of moveable type created a mandate for universal verbal literacy, surely the invention of the camera and all its collateral and continually developing forms makes the achievement of universal visual literacy an educational necessity long overdue.”\textsuperscript{59} In the four decades since this claim was made, little progress has been made towards shifting the balance of academic power towards visual literacy. A more recent point of view concludes that “few if any social science programs take a deliberate approach to observational studies and the attendant challenges of educating students about what it takes to ‘see’ culture and social life.”\textsuperscript{60} The invention of photography, no less than the invention of the printing press, heralded and enabled the automation and mass production of visual information, along with new ways of scientific observation. Yet this invention did not generate the same level of scholarly inquiry and continuing commitment to visual literacy as the printing press did for verbal (written) literacy, neither did it spur, within LIS the development of a unified theory of visual knowledge.

The very word itself, literacy, is bound up with the connotations of \textit{written communication}. The \textit{Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences, Third Edition} defines it this way: “\textit{Literacy} simply is the ability to read and write in the mother tongue.”\textsuperscript{61} In the same

\textsuperscript{58} Hartel and Thomson, “Visual Approaches and Photography for the Study of Immediate Information Space,” 2215.


\textsuperscript{60} Stanczak, \textit{Visual Research Methods}, 56.

article notions of literacy are advanced for cultural literacy, scientific literacy, economic literacy, cosmopolitan literacy, environmental literacy, media literacy, digital literacy, and emotional literacy. No explicit mention is made, neither is there a separate definition of, visual literacy. Whether this is benign neglect or outright rejection, this paper and the KBI model it proposes is offered as an opportunity for LIS to embrace visual literacy as a core component of its canon and mission. While any scientific method is subject to rigorous scrutiny and even falsification, the resulting dialog may shed light on creating superior visual theories, and more reliable ways of knowledge production from seeing and knowing.

A potential consequence of devaluing visual theories and epistemologies as a critical subject of social literacy could be the disregard and irretrievable loss of culturally valuable visual materials and artifacts, along with the potential loss of domain relevance. Library Information Studies, with an academic culture fully enmeshed with the history of the codex and print material has largely ignored the importance of engaging with visual information. Not to belabor the point, or to diminish the genuine contributions of LIS, it is often said in private conversation that Information Studies is primarily constructed around “the fetish of the book.” The book is totem. Many of those outside the discipline have little to no clue as to the domain of LIS. This situation is due in no small part to the vagueness of the term information. “The question 'what is information?' asks for the substantial characteristics of something. But information, taken as a dimension of human existence, is nothing substantial.”62 “The concept of information offers peculiar difficulties to the theoretical scientist. Even at the commonsense level, and however it may be thought of, information is an entity which pervades all human activity. It is therefore peculiarly difficult to observe information phenomena in isolation with the kind of detachment

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62 Rafael Capurro, Conceptions of Library and Information Science (London: Taylor Graham, 1992), 84.
that scientific enquiry traditionally demands.” Visual information, it can be argued, is no less informational than textual and verbal information, yet visual information has failed to be cast as an equal partner in knowledge production.

**Seeing and Knowing**

Vision, the emotive power of visual literacy, is often reckoned as the sensual force in the creative work of scientists. Koestler suggests that “the majority of mathematicians and physicists turned out to be ‘visionaries’ in the literal sense - that is visual, not verbal thinkers.” Koestler suggests that pictorial thought is an earlier and more primitive form of perception, the “language of children”, as opposed to written language and conceptual thought; like the unfolding of a picture strip where words are replaced with images signifying objects, actions, and qualities.” Educational programs offered to children with learning disabilities such as autism almost universally make use of images, icons and symbols to engage communication and promote learning.”

Caleb Gattegno, in his book *Towards a Visual Culture; Educating Through Television*, foretold the impact of mass media on visual literacy: “Man has functioned as a seer and embraced vastness for millennia. But only recently, through television [and photographs], has he been able to shift from the clumsiness of speech…as a means of expression, and therefore of communication, to the powers of the dynamic, infinite visual expression, enabling him to share

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65 Ibid.

with everybody immense dynamic wholes in no time.”67 He then proceeds to foreshadow the powers of the Internet and Web 2.0: “We can foresee the coming of an era where the production of visual material will be as easy as our comprehension of talk but swifter because of the former’s lack of inertia; and through its spatialization by electrons, we shall be able to share vast conscious experiments at once. Today large novels are needed for this.”68 The time of which he wrote is the present. The medium, the Internet, through which visual images are delivered, exceeds even his prophetic vision. Television itself, the medium he was concerned with, can simply be a thread in a multitasking streaming environment. The challenges brought on by a visual culture are substantiated, yet a method for engaging with it remained unidentified.

In the book *Visual Intelligence*, Hoffman proposes that there are innate *rules of visual processing*, and that normally sighted individuals are not taught how to see. “Complex vision is universal because children actually reinvent it, generation after generation – not because they are taught, not because they are generally smart, not because it is useful to them, but because they just can’t help it.”69 Hoffman writes that vision is part of our biological machinery, and it operates in a multiplicity of stages. He acknowledges that visual images offer great challenges: With vision we can “construct visual worlds of great diversity and beauty…and yet be blind to countless possibilities…”70

Falkow turned to Gestalt principles of perception as a means to analyze the most widely used websites in the legal community, and offered this definition of visual literacy: “Visual


68 Ibid.


70 Ibid., 29.
literacy concerns the ability to turn our perception of images into understanding. From the understanding of what we see, we proceed to thought and analysis.”\textsuperscript{71} Quoting Dondis, Falkow writes “Visual knowledge is ‘a primary means of problem solving’ because the process of moving around in mental images... takes us to the point of breakthrough and solution.”\textsuperscript{72} Like Koestler, Falkow referenced the use of mental images to connect with external images, suggesting that visual literacy involves more than the physical eye, it involves the “mind’s eye”, a metaphor for the psychological aspects of seeing. Falkow further suggests that critical seeing and knowing is a routine aspect of problem solving.

\textit{Visual Literacy and Notions of Librarianship}

Art librarians Rockenbach and Fabian, in an article entitled \textit{Visual Literacy in the Age of Participation}, suggest that the coming of Web 2.0 presaged a turn from the paradigm of the Age of Information, ushering in a new Age of Participation in which visual literacy becomes a critical component for success and a new opportunity for relevance.\textsuperscript{73} The Age of Information took hold in the mid-twentieth century as the economic base of the world transitioned from the manufacturing of physical goods to the production and manipulation of data and information, and accelerated with the introduction of the personal computer. It blossomed with the advent of the Internet in the 1990’s, aided by a plethora of software applications and digital technologies which replaced analog technologies and paper-based conventions.

The Internet itself has transformed from a unidirectional transport medium to an interactive hub of social networking, blogging, and data and image sharing. “The old flow of


\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., 436.

\textsuperscript{73}Rockenbach and Fabian, “Visual Literacy in the Age of Participation,” 26.
information has been disrupted.”

Users no longer are content to download information, they want to interact with it and change it to suit individual and group requirements. The Age of Information was passive. The Age of Participation is active. As a consequence, Librarianship is facing technology creep, moving away from controlled and didactic modes, in which users are simply information seekers. Users in the Web 2.0 world want to interact with information. Some of this is being accomplished by allowing user tagging of resources and enabling online chat with librarians. The future is described as becoming even more demanding, and the focus is moving steadily towards visual media:

“The predominant technologies and mass media of our time are primarily visual. In addition to the visual mediums that have been with us for years... proliferation of digital mass media and our individual ability to not only observe but to actively create, use, and share it, is further extended by the emergence of online social networking environments such as Flickr, Yahoo images, YouTube, and Facebook.”

The authors call upon art librarians to lead the way in bringing visual literacy and competencies to the practice of librarianship. “We have addressed the presence of images in our profession primarily through art historical techniques such as close analysis and other forms of systematic looking. This has been adequate for the classroom and the field of art and art history, yet our age calls for a different mode of visual analysis that acknowledges the ubiquity and importance of images in society.” The authors make the case that art librarians are uniquely positioned to be leaders in the turn towards promoting visual literacy. “Because visual literacy is

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74 Ibid.
75 Ibid., 27.
76 Ibid.
a life skill rather than just an academic exercise, it is one of the most important things we can teach students.”

A high school librarian in Crestwood, Kentucky, offers students a course in visual literacy. She describes her motivation as aiding students who are swimming in an ocean of visual images cascading over them in electronic waves from the time they enter the world. “How do we help our students make sense of all this visual content?” The course gives students a chance to express themselves photographically. The students are asked to do critical thinking along with their photo taking. They are taught the basics of establishing good photographic habits, composing a photo, and organizing and storing their collection. The first genre of photography they study is that of photojournalism, “because photojournalists edit minimally after the picture is taken.” Students are taught the value of honest depictions of reality, and the ethical use of digital photographs.

Each of the preceding authors acknowledges the value of visual literacy. Each makes implicit and explicit references to ways of seeing culture and social life. All agree that seeing and knowing is a construction of technical knowledge, values and emotions, and the fusion of a multitude of sensory inputs and cognitive judgments. Some go so far as to criticize the application of literary epistemologies to visual ways of knowing. However, none offers an explicit unified theory for visual knowledge.

77 Ibid., 29.


79 Ibid., 22.
A unified theory of visual knowledge is proposed here that treats seeing, and by extension, records of seeing, as a holistic experience, where there is no empty set, and were nothing is null and void. “The camera by its optical character has whole vision. No matter how select a unit we might wish to photograph, the camera instrument faithfully records this specialized part, and then all the associated parts within focus and scope of its lens.”

For this reason, KBI avoids reductive paradigms that attempt to treat visual perception in terms of epistemologies that are better suited to experiences that can be denoted in variables and data sets. KBI incorporates concepts from the theory of Blind Variation and Selective Retention (BVSR), originated by Donald Campbell, and elaborated upon in the book, Selection Theory and Social Construction. In chapter two, writing on the topic of Universal Selection Theory, Gary Cziko discusses the Complementarity of Different Types of Blind Variation and Selective Retention, which models human thought and creativity, and the development and modification of the brain. In living organisms, certain behaviors, such as a spider weaving a web, appear to be instinctual, having evolved within the genetic code, and where such activities do not require creativity.

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80 Santiago Ramón y Cajal, Advice for a Young Investigator (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 4.

81 Collier and Collier, Visual Anthropology, 2.

82 Heyes and Hull, Selection Theory and Social Construction, 29.
Where such behavior has been “encoded” in the distant past, the model for learned behaviors and for creative behaviors is depicted as shown in Figure 3.1.

![Figure 2.1. Complementarity of Among-Organism and Within-Organism BVSR for Three Different Types of Behavioral Knowledge](image)


The sloping line depicts the effects of eras-long evolutionary influences on organisms which are of the same species, as it concerns their propensity to adapt through instinct, learned behaviors, and finally, by inventiveness. In the model shown in Figure 3.2 the effects of current cognitive evolution is depicted. For purposes of this study, for obvious reasons, I will confine this behavioral model to humans.

KBI holds that visual experiences are continuous and uninterrupted cognitive sensations, and that discursive practices involving visual experience must account for this continuity, allowing for scholarly discourse which accepts the psychological processes that interpret visual imagery, i.e. the visual paradigm, and that cultural knowledge attained from such processes is immediately incremental, in that visual knowledge builds upon existing knowledge. In Figure 3.3, the KBI theory is depicted in conjunction with the theory of BVSR.
The epistemic characteristics of visual phenomena move from empirical, to general, to subjective; from that which emanates from the visual (knowledge and belief) to that which is imparted to the visual (imagination). The visual paradigm, viewed in the context of BVSR theory, considers that by direct experience with the environment, humans develop a visual epistemology that deals with the justification of the beliefs that they hold.

![Figure 3.2: Cziko’s Expanded Model of BVSR depicting cognitive evolution. Reprinted from Heyes and Hull, *Selection Theory and Social Construction*, 2001.](image)

Certain of those beliefs are considered universal, in that all humans expect all other humans to believe the same or similar beliefs. Such a belief is that the sky is blue. While the sky may appear to be other colors at various times, there is universal agreement that devoid of any pollution or clouds or darkness, a clear sky is blue. Such a belief in the context of KBI is justified belief, or fact. It is what one can contend is something we all know. That is not to say, that what is universally held to be fact cannot in fact be false. What that would mean is that humans, on such a topic, would be universally wrong; such as: the previously held belief that the earth was flat. In the middle of the continuum, where the BVSR depicts learned behavior, KBI
articulates this knowledge as heuristic belief. The individual has good experiential reason to hold such beliefs as true, but such beliefs are not universally held, and many beliefs are only assumptive. Finally, where creativity is depicted in Cziko’s model, KBI articulates creative acts in the language of visual experience as what one imagines. What one imagines can be creative. Imagine is where the entire being, including emotions and values, have their expression. Such imaginative activity is not necessarily confined to the individual alone, but may in fact reflect the creative endeavors of a community.

![Visual Cognition Diagram](image)

Figure 3.3. The Unified Theory of Visual Knowledge (KBI). Source: Melvin Hale.

The visual paradigm as a unified theory of visual knowledge seeks to open up to individuals and communities the potential and the benefits of knowing where to situate the various aspects of visual perception. In this way, humans can “open their eyes” to seeing and experiencing culture through the eyes of others. Collier and Collier state that:

“Unquestionably the personal blindness that obscures our individual viewing is related to the detachment that is possible in our urban mechanized society. We learn to see only
what we pragmatically need to see. We go through our days with blinders, dealing with
and observing only a fraction of our surroundings. And when we do see critically it is
often with the aid of some technology.”

In this dissertation, KBI is defined as a qualitative research method for the subjective
interpretation of the content of visual records using the tenets of KBI as ground for rich
descriptions of visual experience, and through the systematic classification process of coding and
identifying occurrences, themes and patterns in visual records. Visuality by means of
intentional depiction of lived experience, whether through photography or painting, reveals
varying levels of subjectivity and bias that cannot be neglected; which is not the same as stating
that all subjectivity or bias is wrong or unwarranted or even unnecessary. Susan Sontag
expresses that the photographer’s quest is to look at everyday life “apotheosized,” seeking the
kind of beauty that “only a camera reveals.” Delaunay suggests that “light” is the only reality.

As such, any notion or theory of visual knowledge must account for the appropriate objective
and subjective constituents of seeing, using as much emotional detachment as possible. I believe
that KBI as a theory of visual knowledge situates these component parts of seeing and knowing
in their proper relation to cognitive processes.

83 Collier and Collier, Visual Anthropology, 2.

84 Hsiu-Fang Hsieh and Sarah E. Shannon, “Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis,” Qualitative Health

85 Sontag, On Photography, 91.

2009), 153.
CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY

“...methods for engaging with visual imagery are sorely lacking within the social sciences community.”

Luc Pauwels

My goal is to assess the validity of KBI as a unified theory of visual knowledge by employing it as a discursive system using documentary photographs. I will evaluate its applicability to LIS in the context of three frequently used social science research methods: visual ethnography, rephotography, and a type of photo-elicitation. The research is conducted in two phases, the first being a pilot study in which I use visual ethnography, rephotography and photo-elicitation. In the second phase I use the photo-elicitation method, and explore the boundary conditions for KBI, depicted as visual data. Qualitative research is characterized by Denzin and Lincoln as a “situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible...At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world.”

KBI as a theoretical model of a unified theory of visual knowledge will make “visible” aspects of culture and society that exists in the photographic record using an economic discursive system that can be employed by both laymen and scholars alike. Photographs, as viewed by American audiences, have typically been viewed as works of art, and/or as documentary evidence of reality. KBI, as a unified theoretical model, encompasses both perspectives.


Visual ethnography, like social ethnography, is concerned with providing the non-participant with a rich, substantial account so as to “bring a given situation to life so that the reader can empathize with it.”89 In this study, the objects of interest in each photograph will be used to situate the social context in which the photograph was taken. “No visual image or practice is essentially ethnographic by nature. Accordingly, the ethnographicness of photography is determined by discourse and content.”90 The richness of the Real Photo Postcard (RPPC) street scene as a genre qualifies it as an ethnographic photograph, offering endless opportunities for commentary; and using KBI as a discursive system, such dialog may be limitless. Although the RPPC street scene was intended for popular consumption, “photographs that were not created with anthropological intent or specifically informed by ethnographic understanding may nevertheless be appropriated to anthropological ends.”91 RPPC street scenes depict a broad variety of cultural life, including signage, fashions, architecture, business and human behavior, and thus provide opportunity for visual ethnographic study.

The visual ethnography used in this study is situated in a type of photo-elicitation. Photo-elicitation is a term and a method originated by John Collier, Jr., and first referenced in a 1957


article in *American Anthropologist*. Douglas Harper, founding editor of *Visual Studies*, describes the method this way:

“Photo elicitation is based on the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview. The difference between interviews using images and text, and interviews using words alone lies in the ways we respond to these two forms of symbolic representation. This has a physical basis: the parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information...These may be some of the reasons the photo elicitation interview seems like not simply an interview process that elicits more information, but rather one that evokes a different kind of information.”

KBI applied as a theory of knowledge does not require a participant other than the interviewer. The interviewee is the photograph (or image) and the inter-viewer, the researcher/viewer, brings to the study a state of mind in which KBI asserts that there is *a priori* knowledge, belief, and imagination. Harper states further on that photo-elicitation operates on a continuum; similar to the KBI theory of visual knowledge. Harper writes: “At one extreme are what might be considered the most scientific, that is, visual inventories of objects, people and artifacts. Like all photographs these represent the subjectivities embodied in framing, exposure and other technical considerations...At the other extreme of our continuum photographs portray the intimate dimensions of the social family or other intimate social group, or one’s own body. Elicitation interviews connect ‘core definitions of the self’ to society, culture and history.”

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94 Ibid., 13.
The continuum posited by the KBI theory of visual knowledge moves from objective fact to subjective judgment, and along that continuum, knowledge of varying degrees of fact and judgment. The resulting ethnographic commentary is grounded in the “eye” of the beholder. As documentary artifacts, scenic postcards offer the inter-viewer the opportunity to search out facts, derive beliefs and impart imagination. The product is rich commentary that situates knowledge in relationship to its psychobiological dimension and the KBI model.

In Phase One, in order to search out the richness of the photographic record, each selected exemplar will be scanned at high resolution and viewed in close detail. Data, in the form of recognizable elements, will be noted. Notes will be taken, both of recognized objects, and potential references to external data. A rich commentary will be written, augmented by detailed enlargements of various areas of interest. Sarah Pink, professor of Social Sciences at Loughborough University, and noted author and researcher on visual methods writes that:

“Any photograph may have ethnographic interest, significance or meanings at a particular time or for a specific reason. The meanings of photographs are arbitrary and subjective; they depend on who is looking. The same photographic image may have a variety of (perhaps conflicting) meanings invested in it at different stages of ethnographic research and representation, as it is viewed by different eyes and audiences in diverse temporal historical, spatial and cultural contexts. Therefore it seems important that ethnographers seek to understand the individual, local and broader cultural discourses in which photographs are made meaningful in both fieldwork situations and academic discourses.”

The deconstruction of the photographic image, which is at the heart of art practice, expressed in a unified theory of visual knowledge, reveals that street scenes capture a myriad of both intentional and unintentional views into social life, and that the photographer was limited in

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95 Pink, *Doing Visual Ethnography*, 67, 68.
determining photographic constituents. Postcards as a class are a record and mirror of movement, of growth, of flux of people and society. Numerous scholars have incorporated postcards in literary studies in the past thirty years, including: Block and Klein, Stevens, and Alloula.

Rephotography is “a method used to monitor physical changes to places and people.” Rephotography, the act of taking a photograph of the same geographic site after sufficient time has elapsed to allow changes in the environment, essentially provides a “before and after” view of a particular place. The placement of the camera and the equipment employed may range from casual to exact. The foundational study for this technique is the Rephotographic Survey Project, headed by photographer, Mark Klett, conducted in the mid-1970s. The most notable current practitioner of this technique is Camilo Jose Vergara, urban documentarian and writer. His affluent younger years growing up in Chile were interrupted by the consequences of an alcoholic father, who lost several generations worth of wealth. As an adult, he feared the loss of material possessions and status that he experienced as a child, despite his apparent success as a writer and photographer. His dedication to rephotography is grounded in his own reflexive subjectivity, the

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98 Alloula, The Colonial Harem.


imaginative dimension of KBI. "In the ghetto I saw the equivalent of houses I could have lived in, and I examined them almost as part of my own life. Yet even though I live in stable middle-class neighborhoods, enjoying a life full of travel and opportunities, I feel that this comfortable existence is transitory, that my real home is in some form of ghetto." The RPPC street scenes that I rephotograph in the pilot phase of the project are not exact replications of the scenes taken in the original photographs, but they are taken from a similar vantage point. In all instances more than sixty years have intervened between the original and the new photograph.

Population and Sample Size

The KBI theory of visual knowledge emerged from art practice in which it was utilized to ground the artistic transformation of black-and-white photographs into realistic color compositions. During the past seven years (2006 to 2013), more than three hundred such compositions have been done. As soon as the first composition was underway, see Appendix E, the decision was made to colorize the photo as it might realistically appear. By the time the third such composition was started, the award-winning Chi Chi and Cubana, the paradigm that is known as KBI was well-defined and has since been consistently invoked. All three of the works of art that won awards at the 2007 California State Fair were completed within the first ten applications of this paradigm.

The following table lists the current artwork shown on the ArtistLA.com website:

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Table 1: Current Artwork on the ArtistLA website (November 2013)
Color compositions on ArtistLA.com with artwork from RPPC street scenes shown in bold type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1940 Buick at Joe DiMaggio’s Grotto</th>
<th>Family Reunion</th>
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<tr>
<td>1940 Miss America Contestants</td>
<td>Filming the Roar of the MGM Lion</td>
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<td>1941 Cadillac at the Ambassador Hotel</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Finishing Touches at Associated Gas</td>
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<tr>
<td>20th Century Fox Studios</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Fisherman’s Wharf</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Day in Hollywoodland</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Girl by the Pool</td>
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<td>A Palm Springs Weekend</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Glorified Ham n’ Eggs</td>
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<td>Arriving at the Chi Chi</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Hollywood Empire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ava Gardner and Burt Lancaster</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Hotel San Clemente</td>
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<td>Baghdad</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Humphrey Bogart</td>
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<td>Bear Creek Lodge</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Jayne Mansfield</td>
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<td>Berthoud Pass Lodge</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Josephine Baker</td>
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<td>Bette Davis</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Josephine Baker in the Banana Costume</td>
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<td>Betty Grable</td>
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<td>Big Bear Lake Village</td>
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<td>Big Rock Beach Café</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Lake Arrowhead Village</td>
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<td>Big Rock Beach Café #3</td>
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<td>Billie Holiday</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Lana Turner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boy Teasing a Crab</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Lena Horne in a Red Swimsuit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buick, Woodie, Breyers &amp; Texaco</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Lloyd’s Different Café</td>
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<td>California Hotel</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Loretta Young</td>
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<td>California State Line</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Los Angeles Miracle Mile</td>
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<td>Camping in the Redwoods</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Los Angeles Railway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carl’s Restaurant</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Lucille Ball</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carole Lombard</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Lucille Ball Revisited</td>
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<td>Casino &amp; Beach</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Malibu Beach Inn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chi Chi and Cubana</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Malibu Pier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chi Chi Performers</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Mumie Van Doren</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chi Chi Performers #2</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Marilyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi Chi Performers #3</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Marilyn in Barcelona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi Chi Showtime</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Mary Ann Mobley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi Chi Starlite Room #2</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Martin L. King, Jr. meets Malcolm X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clara Bow</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Maya Angelou Performing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clara Bow #2</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Mel’s Drive-In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciro’s Nightclub on the “Sunset Strip”</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Melody Lane Revisited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudia in Bakersfield</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Mobilgas Station w/ Mountain Lion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copacabana Beach</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Nat King Cole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copacabana Beach #2</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Nat King Cole in Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotati Inn</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Opening Night at The Chi Chi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowds on the Beach</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Palm Canyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisin the Beach at Copacabana</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Palm Canyon Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Dandrige</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Palm Springs Stage &amp; Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Dandrige #2</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Paramount Pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Dandrige at the Carmen Jones</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Pool at the El Mirador Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premiere in NY</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Pool at the Mission Inn #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Dandrige in Concert</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Pool at the Shadow Mountain Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown San Marino</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Post Office at Idylwild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Wilkinson’s Hot Springs</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Pretty Girl and a 1953 Ford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke Ellington</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Puget Sound – Power &amp; Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed’s Camp on Route 66</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> R-K-O Radio &amp; Motion Picture Studios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entering Westwood Village</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Radio City – Hollywoodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Richardson Grove State Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Bernardino High School</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Sunset Strip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedona</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Beverly Hills Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai Low</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Beverly Wilshire Hotel #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai Low #3</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Big Red Arrow at Valerie Jean Dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleepy Hollow</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Briefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldiers in Palm Springs</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Brown Derby Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun Bathing Floats</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Buffalo Soldiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cotton Club in Miami Beach</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Carmen Club Café</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Desert Gold Date Shop</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Desert Gold Date Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Elbo Room at South Beach Park</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Elbo Room at South Beach Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The El Mirador Tower</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Emerald City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Figueroa Bus on the LA Railway</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Figueroa Bus on the LA Railway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Geyser at Pachuate Bath</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Geyser at Pachuate Bath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hollywood Bowl</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Hollywood Bowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Incomparable Nat King Cole</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The House on the Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mission Inn Pool #1</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Incomparable Nat King Cole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Most Photographed Pool in America</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Mission Inn Pool #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nut Tree</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Most Photographed Pool in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Original Brown Derby Restaurant</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Nut Tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Palladium #2</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Players Club &amp; Chateau Marmont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pool at the La Quinta Hotel</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Pool at the La Quinta Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rossmore Hotel</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Sands Hotel #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sands Hotel #2</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Sands Hotel #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sunset Motel</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Sunset Motel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tepes</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Tepes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Victor Hugo Inn</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> The Village Toggery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Victory Club Café</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Tijuana Tabu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Village Toggery</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Traveling in the Pullman Car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tijuana Tabu</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Tropic Beach – Sutro Baths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveling in the Pullman Car</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Umbrellas on the Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Five and Dime</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Venice Beach Girl Lifeguards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia City, Nevada</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Village Five and Dime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westwood Village</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Virginia City, Nevada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Girl at the LA Public Library</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Young Motorcyle Riders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Motorcyle Riders</td>
<td><em>linebreak</em> Zanzibar and the Hawaii Music Hall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The preceding table lists a hundred and fifty-two colorized compositions. Eighty-six of those compositions were composed from photo postcard street scenes, the subject of this dissertation. I have collected and scanned over one thousand black-and-white photo postcards,
examining each in close detail. It requires on average thirty to forty hours to deconstruct and colorize a street scene because of the complexity of the details. Many of the more richly detailed street scenes required in excess of one hundred hours to compose. I conservatively estimate that I have spent over 4,000 hours creating color compositions in the past seven years.

Ten RPPCs and ten current photographs, which I took, were chosen for Phase One of the research. Ten RPPCs were selected for Phase Two. I believe that this number of photographs offers sufficient subject material to demonstrate numerous facets of the research question, and to search for negative examples which might contradict the thesis. In qualitative studies the focus is on the richness and quality of the data, rather than on the number of participants, i.e. exemplars. Purposive sampling is theory driven, which is the basis of this study, as opposed to theoretical sampling, which relies upon an iterative process in which theories emerge from the data, and sample size is determined by theory saturation. Theories may emerge from studies based upon purposive sampling, but the study originates with a defined theoretical framework.

Qualitative studies are not evaluated on the basis of statistical power, which is the hallmark of quantitative research. “Quantitative researchers often fail to understand the usefulness of studying small samples. This is related to the misapprehension that generalizability is the ultimate goal of all good research and is the principal reason for some otherwise sound published qualitative studies containing inappropriate sampling techniques.”


Guest, Bunce, and Johnson in a journal article entitled *How Many Interviews Are Enough?* write that “Guidelines for determining nonprobabilistic sample sizes are virtually nonexistent. Purposive samples are the most commonly used form of nonprobabilistic sampling, and their size typically relies on the concept of ‘saturation,’ or the point at which no new information or themes are observed in the data.” While the authors are specifically referring to qualitative interviews, the same conception of data can be applied to the type of photo-elicitation I used with documentary photographs in this dissertation. The notion of *theoretical saturation* is widely recommended in qualitative literature, and is, in fact, considered the gold standard, yet the concept has been poorly operationalized other than to collect data until no new information is obtained. The desired target is *data adequacy.*

In qualitative research, however, there are no published guidelines or tests for “data adequacy,” and no empirical benchmarks for when this criterion has been achieved. Janice Morse, founding editor of *Qualitative Health Research,* and professor and presidential endowed chair at the University of Utah, suggests that “Saturation involves eliciting all forms or types of occurrences, valuing variation over quantity.” She goes on to state that:

“This principle is crucial to the understanding of saturation. Further, it is this process that is most confusing to new investigators, because in quantitative methods the significance of numbers is carefully taught, and statistical significance is based on frequencies, averages, and the distribution of data. *Frequency* is central to the analysis, and if a particular instance is too abhorrent, it may even be deleted from the data set as an ‘outlier’ or an error. On the other hand, in qualitative analysis, the converse is true. It is

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105 Ibid., 60.
often the infrequent gem that puts other data into perspective, that becomes the central key to understanding the data and for developing the model. It is the *implicit* that is interesting.”¹⁰⁶

In qualitative research, it is the richness of the data that matters, and the replication of theoretical concepts. Although frequency is a factor, “Frequency counts are out.”¹⁰⁷ The KBI theoretical construct has been tested in art practice using hundreds of photographs over a period of seven years. I commenced my work colorizing black-and-white documentary photographs with no preconceived notions. I was not in search of a theory of seeing. The theory emerged as the basic set of visual queries I was required to “ask” each photo that I composed: “What colors do I know as factual? What colors do I believe are plausible? What do I want to add or subtract to make this image aesthetically appealing as a work of art?” When I have answered these three questions, in the form of a color composition I am finished with the art. I have no further visual queries to ask, and the work is complete. The hundreds of images I have composed into art practice represent *saturation*. Each piece has validated the theoretical model. For seven years the model has needed no adjusting. Since I commenced my work as an academic I have continued to rethink and test the model for soundness and its applicability to social science.

The previously quoted article by Guest et al (*How Many Interviews Are Enough?*) was based on a women’s health study they conducted in 2003 in two West African countries – Nigeria and Ghana. The study used semistructured, open-ended interviews to examine how sixty women who engaged in sex work talk about sex and their perceptions of self-report accuracy in research. A nonprobabalistic, purposive sampling approach was used. The goal was to


¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 148.
interview participants with a high risk for contracting HIV who would be appropriate candidates for HIV prevention programs in the future. The data from the interviews was coded using two data analysts. The following table depicts the outcomes of coding.

Table 2: Table depicting coding results from coding qualitative interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of New Codes</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
<th>Nigeria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37-42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43-48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Analyses of the data, after all sixty interviews were completed, revealed that 94% of the codes were identified within the first six interviews, and that 97% had been identified after twelve. Graphically, it is apparent that even a change in geographic locations did little to alter commonly expressed themes that developed in the early stages of the study. A deeper analysis shows that some of the later codes were not novel in substance, but variations on existing subjects. The researchers suggested that for the purpose of obtaining overarching themes that a sample of even the first six interviews would have been sufficient to enable them to develop meaningful themes and interpretations. While they do not want to promote the notion that assuming that six to twelve interviews will always be sufficient to achieve a desired result, they
concluded that “For most research enterprises, however, in which the aim is to understand common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogeneous individuals, twelve interviews should suffice.”

The purpose of the two phases of research conducted in this study is to determine if a theory of seeing and knowing that emerged from art practice can be employed as an innovative unified theory of knowledge production in the social sciences, specifically in Library and Information Studies. The theory is bolstered by studies conducted in cognitive psychology, sociology and visual anthropology. The role of knowing, believing and imagining in the production of visual knowledge is first examined in the context of a discursive system in which classic social science methods are used to elicit rich narratives from documentary photographs. The emphasis in the first study is on fact finding, and contextual and spatial analysis using ten purposively selected RPPCs and ten repeat photographs. The second study explicitly uncovers the coding scheme used to situate visual data found in ten randomly selected RPPCs, providing ample opportunity to challenge the theoretical tenets of the KBI construct, which are posited as irreducible. Based on my background using documentary photographs, I believe that the thirty principal photographs used in this study are an adequate sample from which valid qualitative results can be obtained. Numerous supporting photographs are also used for specified reasons.

In a study of 560 qualitative research projects conducted by PhD students, which looked at the sample sizes of their studies, Mason observed that:

“There is a point of diminishing return to a qualitative sample—as the study goes on more data does not necessarily lead to more information. This is because one occurrence of a piece of data, or a code, is all that is necessary to ensure that it becomes part of the

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108 Guest, Bunce, and Johnson, “How Many Interviews Are Enough?,” 79.
analysis framework. Frequencies are rarely important in qualitative research, as one occurrence of the data is potentially as useful as many in understanding the process behind a topic. This is because qualitative research is concerned with meaning and not making generalised hypothesis statements.”

In this article, Mason examines the notion of saturation and its uneven application across similar types of studies. He also notes that saturation is claimed in any number of studies without any overt description of what it means or how it was achieved. In some instances PhD students were told by their departments or advisors what would be an acceptable sample size before the research was started. He concluded that saturation was an elastic notion, and that the cut-off point might always inevitably be considered arbitrary. On the cautionary side he suggested that while some PhD researchers may understand the concept of saturation, many seemed to find it easier to submit theses with comparatively large sample sizes to feel more confident when defending their findings to their examiners.

The greatest strength of qualitative methods is their ability to elicit natural and rich descriptions of personal experience from individuals, and groups of individuals. In qualitative research the goal is to allow for transferability rather than wholesale generalization of findings. It is important that methods and results are communicated in ways that enable scholarly judgments and support replication. Wildemuth, in a textbook on social science


110 Ibid., 15.

methods, defines transferability as the extent to which the findings of a particular study can be transferred to another context or setting.\footnote{Wildemuth, \textit{Applications of Social Research Methods to Questions in Information and Library Science}, 133.} I believe that the KBI theoretical construct is transferable to research involving visual literacy, visual epistemology, visual anthropology and visual studies in general. KBI is first and foremost a model of visual perception. Richardson states that “models can play an important role in research. A model provides an important conceptual framework not only to conduct research, but also to communicate findings.”\footnote{John Richardson, Jr., “Good Models of Reference Service Transactions: Applying Quantitative Concepts to Generate Nine Characteristic Attributes of Soundness,” \textit{The Reference Librarian} 50 (no. 2, 2009): 160, doi:10.1080/02763870902756005.} The KBI model seeks to situate visual experience in relationship to knowledge, information and individual perception, and is transferable across disciplines and knowledge domains. I will spend more time addressing transferability further on in this chapter, and in the Conclusion.

While research methods such as opinion polls and structured surveys provide more precision in measuring fragments of user behaviors and beliefs, only qualitative methods, such as visual ethnographies, rephotography and participant observation, allow researchers to shift their focus from objective understanding of information systems with stable/fixed notions of the user to more subjective understandings of technology and users as flexible subjects with varying attitudes and feelings. Social scientists use rich data from informants in qualitative research to discover, formulate and fine-tune substantive theories. Documentary photographs function as the informants in this research. Theory regarding visual literacy emerged from extensive interactions with RPPCs in the context of transforming them digitally from black-and-white
images into realistic color compositions in the studio. The theory will be tested in the context from which it emerged in this dissertation.

The following table, adapted from Lincoln and Guba,\textsuperscript{114} depict ways to relate traditional notions of validity, reliability and objectivity to qualitative research and mixed methods approaches.

Table 3: Notions of validity and generalizability in qualitative research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quantitative methodology (rigor)</th>
<th>Qualitative method (trustworthiness)</th>
<th>Mixed method approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truth Value</td>
<td>Internal Validity</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Validity/Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>External Validity</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td>Generalizability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Synchronic reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutrality</td>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
<td>Objectivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The KBI theory of visual knowledge is a paradigm deduced from art practice, and is postulated as an irreducible formula for visual knowledge construction. The dependability of the KBI construct in art practice is evidenced by hundreds of works of visual art that have relied upon its tenets for their formation. In this sense, KBI has already been tested for falsifiability. This research project seeks to demonstrate that KBI is also foundational as a science-based discursive system for documentary photographs, and potentially for all visual imagery. Michael Ball, visual anthropologist and sociologist articulates the study of photographs as follows: “We investigate visual representations and consider their uses in generating anthropological and sociological accounts…The ways a culture is visually available and the kinds of analysis that can

be made of this visuality.”  

RPPC street scenes, rich in visual data, can serve as the commencement of cultural studies that lead to an array of productive scientific explorations.

The collection was started in 2005. The requirements for accession are:

1. Timeframe
2. Location
3. Diversity
4. Aesthetics
5. Quality
6. Rarity
7. Price

Price, the least important factor, was governed by budget, so I decided to focus the collection on one state; in this case, California. No price is deemed too great for exceptional California exemplars if the budget is sufficient because it is possible that I will not see that particular exemplar again. Quality refers to the clarity of detail, and aesthetic appeal of the photograph as compared to other exemplars. Diversity refers to intrinsic subject matter.

Location, for the majority of the collection, is California, although there are significant sub-categories for Florida, New York, Nevada, and miscellaneous. The timeframe is 1900 through 1960, which is the primary period of production of black-and-white RPPCs.

A visual ethnographic study is not an extensive study, which typically pertains to quantitative research, but rather “an intensive study, intended to discover common properties of or patterns that hold within a population.”  

It requires a researcher who understands enough about the research setting and the phenomena to be able to identify and select the most appropriate participants, which in this study equates to postcard exemplars. The two sampling

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approaches most commonly selected for intensive studies are purposive sampling and theoretical sampling.\textsuperscript{117} Purposive sampling is also called judgmental sampling.\textsuperscript{118}

**Phase One** – Research Pilot

*Non-random purposive sampling*

As a deltiologist, an expert in the field of postcards, I used my judgment to select a sample of ten RPPC street scenes from one geographic location, Hollywood, in the 1935-1950 timeframe, with which to situate a rich visual ethnographic description using the tenets of the KBI theory as a discursive system. The collection contains approximately 100 Hollywood RPPCs. I used the rephotography, photo-elicitation and visual ethnography methods to construct the dialog. This phase of research was completed in December 2012.

Qualitative research tends to use purposive, or judgmental, sampling as its principal sampling technique.\textsuperscript{119} Purposive sampling allows a researcher with expertise in a given subject to “select a sample on the basis of knowledge of a population, its elements, and the purpose of the study.”\textsuperscript{120} One writer described purposive sampling this way:

“Choosing someone at random to answer a qualitative question would be analogous to randomly asking a passer-by how to repair a broken down car, rather than asking a garage

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 130.


\textsuperscript{120} Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, 184.
mechanic - the former might have a good stab, but asking the latter is likely to be more productive.\textsuperscript{121}

In Phase One, the informant is a documentary photograph, and the selections were made on the basis of spatial and chronological relationships. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of the research, due to the complexities of the subject, which cannot be understood by one-dimensional and reductionist practices.\textsuperscript{122} The researcher uses human experience to collect, rationalize, and relay the data.

Hollywood during the time frame under study was a locus for the emerging movie, radio and television broadcast industries. It was a well-defined economic and cultural center, and as such, was expected to exhibit thematic and spatial relationships that can be found in the visual record. A unified theory of visual information uncovers rich evidence of social activity using a discursive system that encompasses visual knowledge dimensions. Pickard points out that qualitative research involves “in-depth rich pictures, not short anecdotal snippets of detail collected from many in order to add detail to the quantifiable evidence collected.”\textsuperscript{123} In Phase One, each exemplar selected represents different perspectives, or views, of Hollywood. In the context of the research question, which is “what is the role of knowing, believing, and imaging in visual knowledge,” the study demonstrates that no aspect of visual knowing exists outside the boundaries of KBI, because KBI is an all-encompassing model. Vernacular descriptions of topical RPPC collections often include the phrase “vintage views,” suggesting that these multiple views offer a visual tapestry of rich historic and cultural information.


\textsuperscript{122} Pickard, \textit{Research Methods in Information}, 115.

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 60.
KBI depicts three conceptions of visual perception. Visual perception calls out for sense-making, and that sense-making takes place within the constructs of KBI and human individuality. No two individuals could possibly construct the exact same story based on photographic subject matter, yet each individual’s story could conform to the tenets of KBI. With respect to the K in KBI, it would be expected that this variable in any narrative can be validated through empirical means; otherwise, it is either B or I.

**Phase Two – General Applicability**

*Random purposive sampling*

In this phase, ten RPPC street scenes were randomly selected for a visual ethnographic examination, using KBI as a coding system. The randomly selected exemplars represent the manner in which the theory can be applied to all the exemplars in the collection, and as a unified theory, to any documentary photograph. While Phase One of the research program focused on documentary photographs of a specific geographic location, selected by purposive sampling, Phase Two examines randomly selected exemplars, and explicitly examines boundary conditions between and within the KBI construct. Facts and falsehoods coexist within human perception, so a unified theory of seeing and knowing must account for misinformation and subjectivity. KBI incorporates the strengths and the frailties of the human actor as an integral component of visual ecology.
CHAPTER 5: REAL PHOTO POSTCARDS AS DOCUMENTARY PHOTOS

The emergence of KBI theory as a critical approach to engaging with visual images, and as analogous to verbal/written literacy has been discussed. The ontology of the photographic image as a record of seeing is briefly examined for its reliability as a recorder of visual reality.

Indexicality of the photographic image has remained the central debate in visual studies:

Visual sociologists and visual anthropologists even more so have tended to overemphasize the iconic (the ‘high resemblance’ of the depiction to the depicted) and indexical (the perceived ‘natural’ or ‘causal’ link with the depicted object) aspects of camera images at the expense of developing a visual language and a methodology to produce and process visual data. 124

Goldstein offers a systematic perspective: “Put in slightly more academic terms, I propose that we treat photographic images in the same way a scientist treats data. No experiment assumes that data are perfect. Indeed, all data are assumed to have a variety of types of error (i.e., deviation from the ‘truth’).” 125

Each of these epistemological debates concerns the validity of the photographic record, yet fails to engage the validity of seeing as a trusted sense. Records of seeing are challenged, and their reliability as trusted documents is placed in doubt. Visual literacy and its insistence


125 Stanczak, Visual Research Methods, 64.
upon engaging visual experiences with the confidence borne of human experience is absent from the historical philosophical framework and debate.

Kirschenbaum suggests that photographs should be approached as “documents in the study of the visual culture of the time in which they were made and collected.” Viewers of photographs are challenged to “see” culture in the familiar and the unfamiliar. “Good photographic images intrigue, present a mystery, or demand to be read.” The visual paradigm is proposed as a method by which photographs can be “read.” In considering the role of the photographer as author, Barthes writes that the author loses himself, and all claims to truth, but “what he obviously gains is the power to disturb the world, to afford it the dizzy spectacle of praxis without sanction.” The photographer as author of the photographic record opens an evocative dialog with the denotations and connotations of the visual world. KBI as a theory can be a forensic-like tool to explore the social context in which photographs are made, and beyond that, to explore what photographs signify.

Vintage postcards as cultural artifact are found objects, intricately linked to social performances, social memory, community, and the ways in which people express themselves in public networks. Real photo postcard street scenes are the subject of these studies on visual literacy. The photograph is the primary feature of the real photo postcard, and while the

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photographic process is an automated process, the photo itself is “highly sensitive to the attitudes of its operator.” I begin by looking at postcard design in general in order to situate real photo postcard street scenes in their historical context.

The postcard phenomena as a physical form of social networking attained its apex, according to numerous experts, in the “golden age of postcards,” reckoned from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1920s, and an astounding 140 billion postcards are estimated to have been mailed worldwide between 1895 and 1920. The onset of World War I severely reduced the availability of printed postcards because many of the printers were German, thus the ‘Golden Era’ ended. But the postcard reemerged after the war, as a significant vehicle for social networking, as it was grounded in convenience and economy.

The first postcards authorized for postal correspondence were government-issued in 1869 by Austria. Four years later, the U.S. Postal Service began issuing cards with an imprinted stamp, and space for writing only on the reverse side. These government-issued cards were called postals. The side of the postcard bearing the stamp box was initially considered the front side, and that with a graphic or picture the back side. The “Private Mailing Card Act of 1898 in the U.S. set postcard mailing rates at one cent, and set the dimensions at 5 ½” x 3 ½” (Figure 5.1). Similar legislation had passed in Europe in 1878 at the World Congress of Universal Postal Unions, so the U.S. was once again a step behind. By 1901 privately issued postcards were

129 Collier and Collier, Visual Anthropology, 4.

130 Stevens, “Postcards in the Library,” 188.

known as “post cards.” The U.S. Post Office began offering Rural Free Delivery in 1898, and soon home mail delivery service was sometimes available to population centers with less than 10,000 residents. In urban areas, mail delivery was available up to three times a day, affording same day service for outbound and inbound correspondence.

In 1907, the Private Mailing Card, with its messages on the back side of the card was replaced by legislation which allowed for a “divided back” on the front of the card, meaning that the message and the addressee and stamp were now consolidated on the back side, and the graphic or photo the front side. Kodak introduced the No. 3A Folding Pocket Kodak in 1902, and the stage was set for both professional and amateur production of real photo postcards.

Many of the mechanically produced postcards printed during the golden era of postcards were based on colorized black-and-white photographs (Figure 5.2). However, each and every one of these lithographic representations came with a compromise to reality. They were constructed of dots and blank space, whereas true photographs are continuous tone.
(2004) contends that real photo postcards offer a more reliable depiction of visual reality, even in monochromatic format, and that although real photo postcards represent less than 10% of the postcards produced, they are of significantly greater artifactual value for museums and collectors.\textsuperscript{132}

![Figure 5.2. Hand-tinted black-and-white photo of Galveston, Texas printed in Germany. Source: Melvin Hale.](image)

Real photo postcards are deemed more desirable as a class, and “good examples” command more than a few dollars.\textsuperscript{133} Harvey Tulcensky, artist and postcard collector, started out with an interest in all forms of postcards, but says: “I immediately noticed that among these ordinary cards were some particularly beautiful ones that were different from the rest, and these


\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 62.
were the real photo postcards, not mechanically reproduced cards.”\textsuperscript{134} The photographic negative from which real photo postcards are created is the same size as the image it produces (Figures 5.3 and 5.4).

![Simulated negative of a real photo postcard of the Palladium actual size](image)

**Figure 5.3.** Simulated negative of a real photo post card of the Palladium actual size). Source: Melvin Hale.

Real photo postcards, by accident or design, are high definition visual images.\textsuperscript{135} Real photo postcards of detailed imagery can be enlarged to reveal minute details unavailable to the naked eye, as this study will demonstrate. Upon this technical condition, and the experience gained from art production, this research claims that the genre of real photo postcards known as


“street scenes” are documentary images that embody a wealth of social information from which researchers can construct significant claims to valuable social knowledge.

Street scenes, as the name implies, are broad views of business districts and roadside attractions. Real photo postcard street scenes offer insight into business activity, commercial development, entertainment venues, population and other aspects of community life. Walker Evans, a pioneer of American documentary photography, and whose renowned work appears in the 1941 Depression-era classic *And Now Let Us Praise Famous Men*, said that postcard street scenes are "a veritable catalog of the American experience." Evans began collecting postcards at the age of twelve, and amassed a collection of over 9,000 exemplars. Street scenes represented the largest category in his collection.

![Real photo postcard of the Palladium](image)

Figure 5.4. Real photo postcard of the Palladium (actual size). Source: Melvin Hale.

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Postcards are often classified with ephemera. “As pieces of paper ephemera, postcards have frequently been dismissed as useful sources of information or as significant research materials.” Ephemera is defined as something short-lived; something that is transitory and without lasting significance. In this respect, the research value of real photo postcards has been conflated with that of paper ephemera. Real photo postcards were usually acquired as souvenirs, which most dictionaries define as something bought or kept as a reminder of a place or occasion.

Figure 5.5. Early hand-tinted lithographed postcard captioned as a ‘street scene.’ Source: Melvin Hale.

The term “street scene” did not originate with real photo postcards. Street scenes or street views appeared as a descriptor at the onset of the postcard phenomena. Street scene postcards were labeled by the name of the prominent street in the scene, or simply by the name of the town or location. An example of an early street scene, entitled as such, is a color lithograph card of San Francisco Chinatown, mailed in 1908 (Figure 5.5). “Although they are

137 Stevens, “Postcards in the Library,” 32.
just beginning to be treated seriously by scholars, postcards are artifacts of several national phenomena, including changes in printing technology, postal regulations, forms of communication, popular culture, and travel.”138

Whether they were postally used or not, postcards were first and foremost viewed as mementos, tangible objects given or kept as a reminder of somebody or something; less than one third of real photo postcards were mailed,139 a statistic reflected in my collection. The majority of the cards I own were never mailed. During the height of the postcard craze, “no ‘drawing room table’ was complete without one of the special albums in which picture postcards could be preserved, and ‘one’s social standing’ could be suggested by the style and quality of the picture postcards in the album.”140 Nonetheless, “Postcards often frustrate information professionals who struggle to value, comprehend, manage, classify, and provide access to postcards.”141

The term documentary, used to describe RPPC street scenes, signifies that the historic record they preserve is informationally rich, visually situating relative physical relationships of homes, local establishments, roads, gardens and people, amid diverse manifestations of social practices. Good documentary images evoke the axiom that: “A picture is worth a thousand words.” They evoke messages that transcend the limitations of dialect and the written word.


139 Vaule, As We Were, 62.


141 Jessica Sarah Holada and Pomona Public Library, “‘Better Than a Letter’: Real Photo Postcards and the Hierarchies of Value Affecting Their Use” (UCLA, 2004), 63.
CHAPTER 6. PHASE ONE - RESULTS BY PURPOSES SAMPLING

“What I am saying is: memories evoked by a photo do not simply spring out of the image itself, but are generated in an intertext of discourses that shift between past and present, spectator and image, and between all these and cultural contexts, historical moments.”

Annette Kuhn 142

In this visual ethnography, vintage photo postcards of Hollywood are compared to color digital photos taken of roughly the same locations in 2011 using an anthropological method called re-photography or repeat photography, which is “a method used to monitor physical changes to places and people.”143 These postcards are captioned according to location, and while some are postally used, most are not. Exact dates for when the photographs were taken are unavailable, however, the visual subject material offers clues for dating the RPPCs within a narrow window using photo-elicitation.

Photographs as primary resource face resistance within scholarly circles. “Logos, the Greek word for language, also carries collateral meaning of thought and reason in the English word derived from it, logic. The implications are quite obvious; language is seen as a means for a higher form of thinking than the visual and tactile modes.”144 Berger advances the argument for photographs as scientific resource by claiming that photographs, as relics from the past offer “direct testimony about the world which surrounded other people at other times. In this respect,


144 Dondis, A Primer of Visual Literacy, 8.
images are \textit{more precise} and \textit{richer} than literature.\textsuperscript{145} Visual representations of knowledge are older than the hieroglyphs in Egypt, predating written texts.

\textbf{Hollywood as Subject}

Hollywood is a cultural mecca for the entertainment industries that have called it home for over a hundred years, and a metonym for cinema. Movie production, radio broadcast, and television all have significant roots in this brightly lit tourist destination situated west north-west of the skyscrapers in downtown Los Angeles. Hollywood, as heartbeat of popular culture in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, is the scene for dramatic historical actions and the stimulant for massive societal transformation. Hollywood is a neighborhood of Los Angeles, the second largest city in the United States, which situates Hollywood as a destination within a destination.

Records of the history of Hollywood are embedded within the products of cinema itself, and further recorded by numerous forms of professional, amateur and scholarly documentation. Motion picture production lent greater meaning to ancient concepts of stage, actors, and performance, bringing into question notions of validity and reality, producing visual evidence of alternative realities by artfully merging that which is real with that which is imaginative. A historical account of Hollywood that embraces the societal cachet, while engaging with and unveiling many of the social, political, ecological and economic forces that operate within it, without exceptional preference, requires a form of documentary record that is at once intimate and disinterested. The real photo postcard street scene ranks high in this regards.

Street scenes are a genre of images akin to landscapes, whether painted or photographed. Where landscapes offer at best, the raw unmolested grandeur of nature from a distance, street

scenes depict the local landscape of civic intervention. Whereas landscapes seek to evoke awe and contemplation at the power and aesthetics of nature, street scenes showcase the power of humans, and the triumph of civilization. Street scenes are about people, place and business development, photos taken in the commercial heart of the community. Photo postcard street scenes often showcase the only remaining visual record of commercial districts that have long since been transformed into a completely new format after the work of the wrecking ball; those that have changed but incrementally, holding on to cherished landmarks and familiar spaces; and those that have disappeared altogether. Photo postcard street scenes of Hollywood are emblematic of all of these dynamics.

Figure 6.1. Real photo postcard of Hollywood, 1946. Source: Melvin Hale.

Historic photographs are tangible artifacts which affix the ephemeral quality of time-based human existence onto a visual framework by which fleeting moments of time can be partially visually retrieved. In the process, however, photographs of distant times and places
tend to alter historical perspectives. Sontag observes that “Photographs turn the past into an object of tender regard, scrambling moral distinctions and disarming historical judgments by the generalized pathos of looking at time past.”¹⁴⁶ Metaphysically, photos represent time past, but not forgotten. “Photography is thus not only intrinsically about death, but about the collection of pieces of the past: in other words, nostalgia.”¹⁴⁷ Photo postcards add a dimension of mobility to visual images. “Travel is the essence of the postcard…It straddles two spaces: the one it represents and the one it will reach.”¹⁴⁸ Postcards from Hollywood offered buyers and recipients a recurring visual and emotional connection to a place where legends were created. The aura of Hollywood is reproduced as visual memento. Berger suggests that paintings and photos permit the owners to own, as it were, an object or place by extension. “They show him sights: sights of what he may possess.”¹⁴⁹

Street scenes as documentary photographs are produced by straightforward methods of photographic development. While avant-garde methods for photograph production were practiced during the time period of the postcards produced in this study, 1940 through 1955, those methods are not representative of the street scene genre. The vast majority of street scene postcards were created using Kodak No. 122 roll film. The competencies of this format make it possible today to examine minute image detail, providing rich visual geo-spatial information.

¹⁴⁶ Sontag, On Photography, 71.


¹⁴⁹ Berger, Ways of Seeing, 85.
Photo street scenes are visual *time capsules*, archives of visual sights, such as people, businesses, signage, vehicles and vegetation. Street scenes can be “unpacked” to yield exceptional views into the ways in which a community once functioned, providing comparisons to the way it functions today, and directions in which it may subsequently move. The notion of the time capsule is a not a modern construct. The Tomb of Tutankhamen and the pharaohs are types of *unintentional* time capsules. The phrase *time capsule* is attributed to George Edward Pendray, 1901-1987. The modern time capsule is an intentional object, a tightly sealed container designed to preserve a cache of historical records to be discovered at some future time. Whereas physical objects make up the constituents of a time capsule, visual traces in a photo postcard are the constituent subjects, each constituent bearing a fixed relationship to all others, the moment of creation.

Hollywood is home to at least two buried time capsules. The Walk of Fame time capsule was buried on October 28, 2010 at the corner of Hollywood Boulevard and Highland Avenue where the Walk of Fame originated in 1960, celebrating its 50th anniversary. It is packed with numerous items of Hollywood memorabilia, including the movie Casablanca script and press kit, a L’Oreal lipstick called Walk of Fame Pink #50 and a vial of Hollywood air. The opening of the Walk of Fame time capsule is scheduled for 2060. The other time capsule, called the Entertainment Industry’s Time Capsule, is buried at the northeast corner of Sunset Blvd. and Vine Street, where the towering green deco industrial palace housing the NBC radio studios once stood, and is in the geographic heart of the location documented by the ten photo postcards in this study. Washington Mutual replaced the razed NBC studio, and is named on the

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commemorative plaque, but in 2009 Chase Bank took over Washington Mutual during the height of the housing and banking crisis.

The plaque covering the sidewalk at Hollywood and Highland (Figure 6.2), where the Walk of Fame time capsule is buried reads as follows:

Figure 6.2. Plaque at Hollywood and Highland. Source: Melvin Hale.

**THIS IS WHERE IT ALL BEGAN**

At this location of August 15, 1958, the first eight stars on the Hollywood walk of Fame were dedicated to Olive Borden, Ronald Colman, Louise Fazenda, Preston Foster, Burt Lancaster, Edward Sedgwick, Ernest Torrence and Joanne Woodward.

The Walk of Fame was completed in 1960

Time Capsule dedicated
November 2010
Whereas the Walk of Fame time capsule is expected to make history in the coming decades, the Sunset & Vine capsule has already made history on three occasions, though not happily so. It was replaced for the third time in 2004 by community leaders who hope that this time its contents will survive until 2037. Tinsel town memorabilia, including a recording of a Jack Benny radio show and a script from "I Love Lucy," were buried in 1954 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Hollywood moviemaking. But fourteen years later, when the container was temporarily unearthed after NBC radio and TV studios at the corner were razed, the contents were found to have disintegrated.

Figure 6.3. Plaque covering sidewalk at Sunset Boulevard and Vine Street. Source: Melvin Hale.

A replacement capsule containing an original script and film print of Gone with the Wind and another Jack Benny audiotape was buried in 1968. At the time, community leaders asked that it be opened in 2004, just as the first one had intended to be. But when it was dug up in
February 2004, a crowd watching at the corner discovered that the replacement contents had disintegrated too, both capsules had fallen victim to moisture invasion. The third capsule, reburied in the same location in 2004 was specially constructed, and guaranteed to last 50 years, or at least until 2037 when this capsule is scheduled to be unearthed for the 150th anniversary of Hollywood. The plaque above the time capsule reads:

On February 13, 2004, the Entertainment Industry’s Time Capsule, buried on this world-famous corner since 1954, was opened to commemorate another 50 years of Hollywood history. It was on this block that Cecil B. DeMille directed Hollywood’s first full-length feature, The Squaw Man, for the Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company, and the site became the birthplace of Paramount Pictures. NBC Radio City was based here from 1938-1964, and today it is home to Washington Mutual.

To mark this special occasion, a new Time Capsule was buried, containing memorabilia reflecting the entire 1st century of Hollywood. In a ceremony co-hosted by Honorary Mayor Johnny Grant, Chairman of the Hollywood Historic Trust, and the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, Washington Mutual was entrusted to house this capsule site, slated to be unearthed in 2037 during Hollywood’s 150th Anniversary Celebration.

For their new capsule, officials purchased a professionally built, hermetically sealed stainless steel box. It is designed so that its lid's twelve bolts do not penetrate the container, potentially admitting water, and its opening is sealed with a moisture-blocking silicone O ring. In addition to containing numerous DVDs of Hollywood blockbusters, and other movie recordings, a DVD player was included to overcome the inevitable permutations and advances of recording technology. Street scene postcards, as witness to history, are visually rich vignettes of the life of a community. Landmarks, people, and geography become inanimate, transferred to two-dimensional traces, forever locked into a landscape chosen by the photographer as an idyllic
representation. Street scenes of Hollywood present the viewer with idealized images of a community that in many ways, both then and now, represents the nexus of popular culture. The postcards in this study, with a single exception, are of locations situated within walking distance, all are within a half mile of each other. The photos were taken by at least three separate photographers, Burton Frasher of Pomona, Bob Plunkett of Los Angeles, and an unknown photographer distinguished only by the style of captions on the postcard. Hollywood provided documentary photographers with fertile ground for postcard production. In a collection of southern California photo postcards, where the primary accessioning criteria was the same for all locales, out of 250 exemplars, over sixty exemplars were of Hollywood, making it by far the most photographed location in southern California during the period under study. Fifty of those sixty postcards are attributable to Frasher and Plunkett. Even so, all of these photo postcards are rare survivors. Sontag would argue that these photographers did more than merely record the past, they helped invent it, “creating a past that we can see through their eyes.”

Unpacking photographs

The Visual Paradigm (KBI) is employed to unpack these Hollywood postcard photographs. It holds that visual knowledge is an individual construct, and that ways of seeing incorporate a priori knowledge, heuristic beliefs, and aesthetic contemplations. The visual paradigm necessitates contextualization for creating knowledge claims from photographs. “Photographs get meanings, like all cultural objects, from their contexts. Even paintings or sculptures, which seem to exist in isolation, hanging on the wall of a museum, get their meaning from a context made up of what has been written about them, either in the label hanging beside

\[151\] Sontag, On Photography, 67.
them or elsewhere, other visual objects, physically present or just present in viewers' awareness, and from discussions going on around them and around the subject the works are about.”

The act of seeing is a sensory fusion of the knowledge of past seeing experience, present visual focus and anticipation of what we expect to see as a result of the first two experiences. In that sense, seeing moves through time in a circular, recursive progression. The sense of seeing is inclusive and multi-dimensional. “We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves. Our vision is continually active, continually moving, continually holding things in a circle around itself, constituting what is present to us as we are.”

The visual paradigm engages with photographic material as holistic. The photo postcard of Hollywood captioned as Vine Street at Sunset (Figure 6.26) featuring the NBC Radio City location, like all photographs, is first and foremost a holistic visual experience. The image depicts where everything visible in the photograph was geo-spatially situated at the instant the image was fixed, which the photographer believed was the best time and manner in which to frame the scene from his perspective. The fact that the photo postcard exists is proof that it was an image deemed good enough to be a postcard, a memorable scene. Postcards participated in local commerce as tangible products. Someone was expected to purchase it, and the vendor most always offered more than one postcard image. The financially profitable photo postcard street scene was only as successful as the holistic aesthetic it conceived in prospective buyers. Would it evoke desirable thoughts and memories of Hollywood? Is it an attractive representation?

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Which Hollywood street scenes would resonate with consumers? Faced with choice and affordability, consumers can be expected to choose one product over another because they prefer some aspect over another, be that for pragmatic reasons, or aesthetics, or both. This competitive commercial component of postcard production motivated the photographer to seek desirable local representations that appealed to potential buyers.

The photo postcards in this study were called upon to depict social life in Hollywood, a place both real and imaginary, which produced movie stars and glamour, defining taboo and sexuality through cinematic design. So in what way can a destination like Hollywood be reduced to a 5 ½” x 3 ¼” photograph? How can knowledge claims be made from RPPCs?

KBI as a discursive system proposes engaging with these documentary images by supplying them with:

1- Notions of Authorship
2- Bibliographic metadata
3- Visual information
4- Scholarly access

The four items delineated above relate to discourse and access, and offer a framework in which contextualization and knowledge distribution can be propagated from photographs. Photographic records that deserve preservation, such as photo postcard street scenes, will become increasingly valuable as artifacts when they are processed as primary resource for scholarly discourse, and that through this discourse, loss of context, the enemy of all photographs, will greatly diminish. The ambiguities of the photographic record, and the changing aspects of the present historic situation, however, offer infinite opportunity for ongoing discourse and discovery.
Phase One of this research instantiates the power of the visual paradigm, photo-elicitation and rephotography. Commenting on photo comparisons, Collier and Collier write that “If the location from which [historic photographs] were taken can be identified, new photographs can be taken from the same spot, and a comparison of the two coverages can alert [researchers] to important patterns of culture and change.” This study of ten street scenes reveals that Hollywood has witnessed enormous growth, and decay, over the last six or seven decades, in ways that were at once foreseeable and also unimaginable, and that this continuing social evolution can be described using the tenets of KBI.

The non-linearity of seeing as it relates to knowledge production in pragmatic terms means that the focus of knowledge investigation using photographs is not orderly, as it is with reading, speaking, or even hearing. In the narratives which emerge from an engagement with the photo postcards will demonstrate, knowledge production springs from varying cues and touch points within the imagery, and if allowed to “run free” can lead to unsuspected if not surprising results. No two investigators would relay the same stories. Yet despite these caveats, the stories that emerge are all products of know, believe, and imagine. It will become obvious that the richness of the stories that can be conceived through the methods used in this dissertation is infinite.

\[^{154}\text{Collier and Collier, Visual Anthropology, 35.}\]
1. HOLLYWOOD FREEWAY LOOKING SOUTH THROUGH THE CAHUENGA PASS

Figure 6.4. The Cahuenga Pass, Gateway to Hollywood, c.1940. Bob Plunkett photo. Source: Melvin Hale.

Figure 6.5. The Hollywood Freeway Looking South towards Hollywood. 2011. Source: Melvin Hale.
The original photograph in Figure 6.4 shows the tracks for the Los Angeles Railway, the region’s original light rail system, winding through the median of this section of the Hollywood Freeway northwest of downtown Hollywood. Hollywood proper is situated in the distance, and the tops of buildings are visible between the hills. Upwards of thirty vehicles can be seen traversing the highway in both directions, and the graceful curves of the tracks and the freeway portray symmetry and efficiency. The freeway is arguably less attractive and functional today.

![Image](image-url)

Figure 6.6. Detail of Figure 6.4 showing the back of the Broadway Hollywood sign on Hollywood and Vine.

In the detail shown above, the back of the huge iconic neon Broadway Hollywood sign on top of the now defunct Broadway Department Store on the corner of Hollywood and Vine is barely visible in reverse. This iconic sign, visible for miles during the day, and neon lit in bright white at night, is visible in five of the ten postcard street scenes selected for Phase One.

The light rail system reduced the number of cars on the roadway, and demonstrated that Los Angeles was at the vanguard of efficient public transportation in the 1940s. The elimination of the light rail system, in the 1950s and 1960s has been blamed on the political influence of automakers, and the tire industry, resulting in significant freeway congestion today.

The KFI radio station billboard information, not clearly visible to the naked eye, says: “Listen to Al Jolson, In the Kraft Music Hall, Every Weekday 6pm. KFI received its operating license on March 31, 1922, and is one of the oldest high power clear channel radio stations in the US. It now operates as a “Talk Radio” station at 640 on the AM band. In the spring of 2006
quarter Arbitron rating, KFI was the most listened to radio station in Los Angeles metropolitan area, averaging approximately 1.5 million listeners during any given weekday. The station was the most listened to news/talk AM radio station in the country, beating out WABC in New York City. A history of KFI can be found at http://www.oldradio.com/archives/stations/LA/kfipix.htm.

![Figure 6.7. Detail of Figure 6.4 showing the KFI billboard.](image)

Al Jolson is remembered, and not fondly, for his blackface act, although he was also considered one of the greatest entertainers of all time. Born around 1886 to Lithuania Jewish parents, Jolson migrated with them to Washington, D.C. His mother died when he was a child in 1895. After two failed marriages and ups and downs in his career, Jolson rebounded during and after WW2. His biographer wrote that “On radio, his presence now guaranteed high ratings. Several guest appearances with Bing Crosby (who was a longtime fan of Jolson) remain classic examples of network radio at its best. In 1947, Jolson returned to hosting the Kraft Music Hall, a series he helped initiate back in 1933. After years of being dismissed as a ‘has been,’ this job was particularly satisfying.”

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2. SUNSET BOULEVARD LOOKING WEST FROM GOWER STREET

Figure 6.8. Columbia Square, c.1943. Burton Frasher photographer. 
Source: Melvin Hale.

Figure 6.9. Sunset Blvd. looking west from Gower Street, 2011. 
Source: Melvin Hale.
A close up detail of Figure 6.8 reveals the iconic sign atop the Broadway Hollywood Building on Vine Street, which spatially helps situate this location as south and east of the location depicted on the previous postcard. Instead of a freeway, there is a busy city street lined with one to two story tall palm trees.

The detail shown in Figure 6.10 and Figure 6.11 shows the signage at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Gower Streets. This section of Business Highway 101 was previously part of the famed Route 66, which continued west to Santa Monica. The business district on the northwest corner, called Columbia Square, included a Bank of America branch. Bank of America’s growth in California was nothing short of phenomenal during this period, and its branches are featured in numerous photo postcards of towns and cities in California during the period, in both small and large cities.

In 1938, NBC and CBS each opened studios in Hollywood to attract movieland's top talent to their networks – NBC at Radio City on Sunset and Vine, and CBS two blocks away at Columbia Square. The Palladium, situated between the two, opened two years later in 1940. The photographer of this postcard, Burton Frasher of Pomona, one of the West’s most prolific RPPC producers, framed the photograph to include CBS, the Palladium and NBC buildings.
The Palladium marquee, hidden deep in the photograph, when enlarged, reveals that the Palladium was featuring the Charlie Spivak Band. This information helps to date this photograph to the 1942 to 1943 timeframe when Spivak reportedly performed there. Spivak had several failed attempts at starting a band in the early years of the Big Band era, 1925 - 1955, but ultimately succeeded in the early 1940’s, with a career lasting through the late 1950’s.\textsuperscript{156}

The close proximity of movie production and radio broadcast studios was not limited to CBS and NBC. If one were to turn right, from this intersection, onto Gower Street from Sunset, in less than a half mile Gower dead ends at Melrose Avenue, on the current lot of Paramount Pictures, the corner where the famed RKO Studios once stood. RKO brought us \textit{King Kong} and \textit{Citizen Kane}, arguably two of the most impactful movies of all time. RKO was where mega

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}
stars like Lucille Ball, Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, John Wayne, Katherine Hepburn and Robert Mitchum had their starts. Joseph Kennedy, patriarch of the Kennedy family, was involved with the formation of RKO in 1927, but he was ultimately bought out by business partners in 1931. Howard Hughes bought RKO in 1948, but RKO went out of business in 1957.

RKO studios, at Melrose Avenue and Gower Street, had a habit of papering the windows of the studio with huge movie posters. The posters shown in the photograph above, Figure 6.13, features the movie Tycoon starring John Wayne and Laraine Day, which was released in 1947. A close up detail is shown below in Figure 6.14, which also indicates that the movie was playing at the Pantages Theatre. RKO invested a record (for them) $3.2 million in the making of the movie, but lost over $1 million when movie-goers stayed home. 

An earlier photo of RKO Studios (Figure 6.15), taken in 1937, depicts the movie Stage Door, starring Katharine Hepburn and Ginger Rogers, which included Lucille Ball. This earlier film did much better than Tycoon at the box office. I included my color composition done in 2010, and a detail from the poster in the window, to provide some idea of how color adds perspective to these old photos, and the level of detail present in real photo postcards.
Returning now to the subject of this section, Columbia Square at Gower and Sunset, Figure 6.16 is an RPPC showing Columbia Square from a vantage point directly across the street on Sunset Boulevard. The studio audience is shown lined up waiting to enter for a live radio broadcast in Figure 6.17. The signage above the door shows the name Orson Welles, who did a hugely popular show at CBS Radio at the time.

![Figure 6.16. CBS at Columbia Square, c. 1940, photographer unknown. Source: Melvin Hale.](image)

On October 30, 1938, Halloween Day, Wells broadcast the sensational radio program called “War of the Worlds.” In it, a huge meteorite is said to have smashed into a New Jersey farm, and that New York City was under attack by Martians. Most people seemed to understand that this was only a hoax, but for some it was all too real, and CBS was roundly criticized for falsely alarming the public. Phone calls flooded newspaper offices, police stations and hospitals. Some individuals even required treatment for shock and hysteria. The format of the show was

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uninterrupted by commercial breaks, adding to the journalistic realism. By the end of the show, however, it was the radio stations that were under attack. More importantly, it was proven that radio was a reliable source for emergency broadcast information. The line of people shown waiting to enter one of Orson Welles’ radio broadcasts is witness to his popularity.

The contemporary photo shows that despite the loss of many of the Hollywood studios from the early days of movies, radio and television, Sunset Boulevard is still a major artery for east-west traffic in Hollywood. The palm trees have grown, and high rises on both sides of the street loom over the older buildings that remain, indicating that business activity in Hollywood has flourished during the past seventy years. One can only wonder if the current passersby have any inkling of the history they are passing.
3. THE PALLADIUM THEATRE

Figure 6.18. The Palladium, c.1950. Bob Plunkett photo.
Source: Melvin Hale.

Figure 6.19. The Palladium Theatre, 2011. Melvin Hale photographer.
The Palladium, located at 6215 Sunset Boulevard, is shown in this photo postcard taken by postcard photographer and artist, Bob Plunkett circa 1950. Reportedly built at a cost of $1.6 million on the lot where the original Paramount Studios stood. The opening act was the Tommy Dorsey band, featuring lead singer, Frank Sinatra. Hollywood glitterati were prominently in attendance. Dorothy Lamour cut the ribbon for the grand opening, and looking on were Jack Benny, Lana Turner and Judy Garland. With a dance floor of over 11,000 square feet, the Palladium could accommodate up to 4,000 attendees. The architect, Gordon Kaufmann, also designed the Greystone Mansion, the Los Angeles Times Building, the Santa Anita Racetrack, and Hoover Dam.

![Image of the Palladium](image)

Figure 6.20. Crowds lined to hear Gene Krupa, c.1946, Bob Plunkett photo. Source: Melvin Hale.

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The Palladium has hosted hundreds of cultural events, including the Lawrence Welk Show, the Grammys, the Emmys, the NAACP Awards and the Country Music Awards, along with concerts by the likes of Bob Dylan, James Brown, Elton John (Figure 6.20), The Sex Pistols, Led Zeppelin, Prince, the red Hot Chili Peppers and Jay Z, to name only a few. It has been host to numerous events for Presidents and International Dignitaries. The property has been updated several times, most recently in 2008; however, it is reportedly suffering from neglect and deferred maintenance. Concern is growing that the property, though supposedly protected by the Hollywood Redevelopment Plan, is likely to be sold to developers who plan to demolish it to build residential and retail space.

Figure 6.21. Marquee listing Elton John and Leon Russell, photographer unknown. Source: Huffington Post online.

Documentary photographs offer the viewer the opportunity to enter into the lived experiences of previous times as well as current events associated with the subjects of those images. KBI as a discursive system evokes contemplations of facts, engagement with the visual

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materiality of built environments and their implication in social performance, and finally in individual reflexivity towards the unfolding of history. A current example of reflexivity in regards to the Palladium revolves around the notion of demolishing the building, and erecting something new in its place. There are at least two sides to this potential controversy; and strong emotions, conceptions, and evidential material on all sides, augmented by historical images.

The presence of visual records in the form of photographs adds a dimension of realness to historical records that literary descriptions alone can only approximate. Little wonder that NBC on the corner of Sunset and Vine, once called Radio City, was never the same when television, with visual images superseded the wonderment of words and sounds. Bob Plunkett’s photo postcards of Hollywood are the most numerous in the ArtistLA collection, although he produced postcards of many locations throughout southern California. The majority of the photographs in this chapter are attributable to him. My collection contains approximately 105 exemplars of Hollywood, of which approximately 55 were taken by Bob Plunkett. Approximations are used because the collection is never static. Although Plunkett did not always sign his postcards, his caption style was fairly consistent. There is no known biography of the man behind the signature, but I will reveal what I have uncovered after extensive research of online resources.

I have known for some time that Mr. Plunkett was an artist, as well as a photographer. Ruderman, an auctioneer who has a mixed media work of art that was created by Plunkett for sale (Figure 6.2), states that “Bob Plunkett was an artist and photographer, working in Los Angeles from the 1940s onward. Among his most famous works are a number of original
illustrations done for Walt Disney. The artwork Ruderman was involved in selling was a 24” x18” collage consisting of a whimsical drawing of Catalina Island, accented with photographs. Ruderman suggests it may have been created as the basis for a postcard. That assumption is correct. The Catalina Island postcard is in my collection, as well as the postcard of the speedboat Miss Catalina 6, and the steamship S.S Catalina, featured on the artwork.

Figure 6.22. Whimsical collage of Catalina Island done by Bob Plunkett, c.1950. Source: RareMaps.com.

The trove of information regarding Bob Plunkett that has come to light uncovered a strange twist involving the Los Angeles Public Library. Following up on Ruderman’s assertion that Plunkett worked for Walt Disney, I searched for such a connection on the Internet. What I

162 Barry L. Ruderman, “Catalina Island -- Original Artwork By Bob Plunkett,” Antique Auction site, RareMaps.com, 2010,
discovered was that Plunkett not only provided artistic services for Disney, he also published a popular line of Disney postcards that were sold in the Art Corner Shop in Tomorrowland at Disneyland from 1957 to 1966. Some were published under the name Bob Plunkett, other’s under his business name, Angeleno Photo Service. An example of a Disney postcard is shown below in Figure 6.23. An insert that came with a set of eight postcards stated that they were designed by the artists at the Disney Studio in Burbank, and sold for forty-five cents.

What is not known is whether Plunkett was one of those Disney artists who created the artwork for the cards, although Ruderman hints at it. What I do know is that Walt Disney ordered 70,000 postcards on March 4, 1959 (Figure 6.24) from Bob Plunkett’s business, the Angeleno Photo Service. The person who signed for the order, Jack Olsen, was the manager of the Art Corner, and the one who saved hundreds of Disney cels from destruction, and first made them available for sale to the public. “The business of selling cels was given new life when Disneyland opened in 1955. This was due almost entirely to the efforts of Jack Olson, a background artist at the Disney Studio who was placed in charge of the studio's retail venues within the park. Olson literally rescued thousands of cels from awaiting garbage dumpsters and turned them into revenue-generating Disneyland souvenirs.”163 Many of those original gels are quite valuable today. The receipt from the Angeleno Photo Service is evidence of the relationship between Plunkett and notable individuals at Disney.

Plunkett’s relationship to Walt Disney and the movie-making industry may help explain his prolific production of Hollywood photo postcards. I have found numerous photographs taken by Plunkett in conjunction with Walt Disney movie production, and well-known celebrities like Lawrence Welk, and other Hollywood venues and artifacts. A rare photo of the Angeleno Postcard Company was found which places the address at the current location of the Los Angeles
Pico Union Library. The house/business was situated at the current site of the parking lot (Figure 6.25).

![Image of a purchase order from Angelono Photo Service]

Figure 6.24. Purchase Order from Walt Disney’s Jack Olsen for 70,000 postcards from Angeleno Photo Service.

Source: Cyberdillo.\(^{164}\)

Figure 6.25. LAPL Pico Union Library Branch on former site of Angeleno Photo Post Card Company.  

Source: Google Maps.

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165 Otto Plunkett, Angeleno Photo Postcard Co, April 29, 2010,  
http://www.flickr.com/photos/ottonomy/4590585140/.

103
As previously stated in this dissertation, knowledge production from documentary photographs as reliable sources of social information can lead in unlimited directions, and down unforeseen paths. A visual ethnography may take unexpected turns. Swartz writes, in a section of a journal article entitled *Using the Ambiguity of Photographs*, that “Because photographs trigger multiple meanings dependent upon the experiences of viewers, what is considered significant may take the ethnographer by surprise, leading to unexpected revelations.”

Following the tenets of KBI, unpacking photographs can result in important historical revelations. Seeing the name of Bob Plunkett on dozens of postcards created a desire in me to learn more about him. Unlike the work of photographer Burton Frasher, whose archives are housed at the Pomona Public Library, with several excellent papers written on his life, no such biographical information exists for Bob Plunkett. As a direct result of the research conducted for this dissertation, however, much more information has been produced. Having collected and even colorized numerous photographs he took, I have obtained a greater sense of the photographer himself, the life that he lived, and the lives that he touched. Photo-elicitation, in this context, satisfied my questioning and investigating, not only of the meaning of the image, but provided insights into the person who brought such information-rich documentary images into existence. “The viewing process is a dynamic interaction between the photographer, the

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168 Bob Plunkett’s son, Otto Plunkett, may be able to provide biographical information, but at present is unavailable.
spectator, and the image; meaning is actively constructed, not passively received.‖169 Despite the fact that little is known of his life, the photographer, Bob Plunkett the person, sitting on the steps of his business at 1030 South Alvarado Street, Los Angeles, with his wife, is now part of this dynamic and growing discursive system.

4. VINE STREET AT SUNSET BOULEVARD

Figure 6.26. Vine Street at Sunset looking north on Vine, c. 1945. Bob Plunkett photographer.

Source: Melvin Hale.

Figure 6.27. Vine Street at Sunset looking north on Vine, 2011. Melvin Hale photographer.
Photo postcard street scenes as visual archives are comprised of numerous visual objects. What follows is a listing of 100 visible elements in the Vine Street at Sunset photo postcard. These elements are extracted from the Photoshop file of Radio City – Hollywoodland, a colorized composition I did that won an award in the 2007 California State Fair (Figure 6.28). The photograph is so detailed that it took three weeks to compose, requiring over 100 hours to complete. It remains one of my most demanding compositions to date, and one of my most popular artworks.

Table 4: 100 Known Elements in the Vine Street at Sunset Photo Postcard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Conditioned sign</td>
<td>hedges</td>
<td>sea gull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>army uniforms</td>
<td>Highway 101 sign</td>
<td>shrubbery on hillside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banners over street</td>
<td>hills in the background</td>
<td>sidewalks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bicycle</td>
<td>Hollywood sign</td>
<td>sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bicyclist</td>
<td>Hollywoodland sign</td>
<td>small building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bicyclist cap, jeans, sweater</td>
<td>instrument case</td>
<td>stars on Plaza Hotel sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>billboard on left</td>
<td>Lockie Music store sign</td>
<td>stop sign/signal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brass ball on flagpole</td>
<td>Magnavox lettering</td>
<td>stop sign/signal pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadway building</td>
<td>main sign on building (far left)</td>
<td>street light globes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadway sign</td>
<td>metallic bldg trim (NBC Building)</td>
<td>street light poles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Derby building</td>
<td>Music City building</td>
<td>street signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Derby lettering</td>
<td>Music City main sign</td>
<td>Taft Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Derby sign</td>
<td>Music City sign</td>
<td>Taft Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building on far left</td>
<td>music symbol</td>
<td>tail lights on vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus lights</td>
<td>musical notes on sign</td>
<td>taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus lower</td>
<td>navy uniforms</td>
<td>telephone sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus stop benches</td>
<td>NBC letters on building</td>
<td>telephone sign arrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus upper</td>
<td>NBC side entrance</td>
<td>The Equitable Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bushes</td>
<td>neon on building far right</td>
<td>The Equitable sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Club billboard</td>
<td>newspaper</td>
<td>tiles on building (left)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Club lettering</td>
<td>one-hour parking sign</td>
<td>top sign (building far left)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitol Records building</td>
<td>palm tree fronds</td>
<td>traffic green light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>car license plates</td>
<td>palm tree fruit</td>
<td>traffic red light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>car turnout</td>
<td>palm tree trunk</td>
<td>traffic signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter's sign</td>
<td>pavement</td>
<td>trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cars (numerous)</td>
<td>People</td>
<td>unnamed buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS KNX radio sign</td>
<td>Plaza Hotel building</td>
<td>USO signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS sign</td>
<td>Radio City lettering on wall</td>
<td>walls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many of the elements listed in the table are seen only under magnification, and are not clearly visible to the naked eye. The most significant of these tiny objects is that of the iconic Hollywood sign on the Hollywood Hills (Figure 6.29). The word, Hollywoodland, was derived from the name given an upscale housing development planned for the area near the iconic sign. The letters are 45’ tall, and minus the “LAND” now measure 350’ long. Pop culture makes frequent use of this landmark. The neighborhood planned in 1923 was just beginning to take shape when the Great Depression hit in 1929, and the upscale housing development and the sign were both abandoned.
Figure 6.29. Detail from Figure 6.26 showing most of the Hollywoodland sign.

The “H” in the Hollywoodland sign in the photo is hidden behind the Taft building, which may or may not have been intentional. At the time of the Plunkett photo, the sign had been unattended for many years, and was falling into disrepair. In 1949 the City of Los Angeles took possession of the sign, repaired it, and disposed of the “LAND,” leaving it as we see it today: HOLLYWOOD.

Figure 6.30. Detail from Figure 6.26 showing people relaxing outside the entrance to the NBC building.

Several unfortunate incidents have been recorded involving the Hollywood sign. The most highly publicized early incident occurred in 1932 when a young twenty-three year old screen actress named Peg Entwhistle jumped to her death from the “H.” Peg had been an inspiration to a young Bette Davis, but the loss of both parents at an early age had purportedly left her emotionally fragile, and even though she was beginning to see success in her career as an actress, after falling on financial hard times, related to the economic climate, she was reportedly
depressed, and took her own life.\textsuperscript{170} An incident related to UCLA and the sign occurred in 1993.\textsuperscript{171}

The most prominent signage in the Plunkett photo is the neon-lit Broadway Hollywood, which stood atop the long defunct Broadway Department store at 1645 N. Vine Street, alongside the neon-lit Plaza Hotel sign atop the former Plaza Hotel. As with the Hollywoodland sign, the Broadway Hollywood sign fell into disrepair after the store was closed in the early 1980s, and neither sign is visible today from where Plunkett must have stood, in the middle of Vine Street. The Broadway Hollywood Department store chain, which was comprised of over thirty stores at its height in the 1980s, but after a series ill-advised mergers and acquisitions it declared bankruptcy in 1991, downsized, and was eventually taken over by Federated Department Stores. “In the final transaction, The Broadway’s historic Los Angeles area stores were converted into Macy’s or Bloomingdale’s by Federated, depending on location.”\textsuperscript{172}

For many years the neon lights on the Broadway Hollywood sign were dark, a nightly reminder of the urban decay that often follows the departure of the once mighty economic engines visible in the postcard image. But the Hollywood community rallied to save the iconic sign from the trash bin of history, as it had rallied to save the Hollywood sign years earlier. “In a


\textsuperscript{171} In 1993 members of UCLA’s Theta Chi fraternity changed the sign to read GO UCLA for the annual UCLA-USC football game, prompting the installation of motion detectors and surveillance cameras in 1994.

ceremony held atop the Klasy-Csupo animation building on Sunset Boulevard at Ivar, a group of Hollywood dignitaries, preservationists, and developers watched in awe as the neon sign atop the Hollywood Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Landmark Broadway Department Store building was relit after many years of neglect.\textsuperscript{173} The date was October 10, 2005. Despite its being semi-hidden from its previous glorious exposure, just seeing those enormous letters shining in the darkened again sky warms the hearts of those who remember it from long ago. Perhaps the best view of the Hollywood Broadway sign in 2011 is from poolside atop the roof of the Broadway Hollywood building, which now has been converted into loft-style condominiums for urban dwellers (Figure 6.31).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{broadway_hollywood_sign.jpg}
\caption{View of the Broadway Hollywood sign from poolside atop the Broadway Hollywood Bldg.}
\label{fig:broadway_hollywood_sign}
\end{figure}

\begin{flushright}
Source: Multiple Listing Service (MLS)
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{173} John Clifford, “PreserveLA - Historic Preservation in Los Angeles - Broadway Hollywood Sign,” 
Because of its close proximity to the action in Hollywood, the Plaza Hotel opened in 1927 to offer convenient accommodations to entertainment moguls and their guests. Clara Bow, one of the top box-office attractions from the late twenties, and the quintessential flapper, the “It” girl, opened a club in the building in 1937 adjacent to the Plaza (Figure 6.32). However, she soon lost interest after becoming a mother for the second time, and the club closed after a year and along with it the end of her public career, for the most part. “In the 1940s and 1950s when many broadcast studios were located on or near Vine Street, the hotel became popular with radio people. George Burns even had offices at the top of the Hollywood Plaza Hotel. The popular radio DJ Johnny Grant did his show from the Hollywood Plaza Bar.”

Figure 6.32. Photo postcard of Clara Bow’s “IT” Club and the Plaza Hotel. Bob Plunkett photographer.

Source: Melvin Hale.


The site where the NBC building once proudly stood, and the time capsule buried on the corner of Sunset and Vine, have been previously discussed. The NBC Radio City building, seen in this postcard, was considered by many as a fine example of “art deco” design. It was demolished in 1964. The Plaza Hotel, with the stars of many current and past Hollywood dignitaries buried in the sidewalk where its dignified awnings once cast a shadow, seems to live on as apartments, though not as an upscale stopover for the privileged. Comparisons of the old and recent photographs reveal that commercial and residential growth, remediated advertising messages, and urban congestion have conspired to radically alter a major crossroad of global pop culture. Hollywood as ephemeral space, the master of props and façade, continues to evolve and to change, leaving behind one form of glamour for another, like the costumes of its leading ladies and men. The W Hotel now permanently obscures any view of the Hollywood sign from Sunset Boulevard and Vine Streets. Even the Borders bookstore seen at the far left in the recent 2011 photo has now vanished, along with the entire Borders bookstore chain, as this historic intersection comes to grips with new and emerging economic, social and technological realities.
5. THE BROWN DERBY RESTAURANT

Figure 6.33. The Brown Derby Restaurant on Vine Street, c. 1950. Bob Plunkett photographer.

Source: Melvin Hale.

Figure 6.34. The façade of the Brown Derby on the W Hotel, 2011. Melvin Hale photographer.
The Brown Derby restaurant on Vine Street, between Hollywood and Sunset Boulevards was arguably the most famous eatery in Hollywood, past or present. The restaurant got its name from the original establishment located at 3427 Wilshire Blvd. in Los Angeles. That building, shown below in Figure 6.35, was a dome, created in the shape of a man’s “bowler” hat. I will show that the uniqueness of the architecture of the Brown Derby as not being completely out of the ordinary in the social context of its time. From the outset the Brown Derby catered to the Hollywood crowd. One of the two owners, Herbert Somborne, was one of Gloria Swanson’s six husbands. The other owner was Bob Cobb. The original iconic restaurant on Wilshire opened in 1926, and was frequented by movie stars like Mary Pickford, Loretta Young and Cecil B. DeMille, and many actors showed up in costume.\(^{176}\)


The bowler was the most popular hat in the American West. It was worn by both outlaws and lawmen alike, including Bat Masterson, Butch Cassidy and Billy the Kid, and it could be expected to attract motorists’ attention, situated as it was across from the Ambassador Hotel, on one of the busiest thoroughfares in Los Angeles. Whimsical architecture was popular at the time, and not at all uncommon for eating establishments in the Los Angeles area. One could point to the Zep Diner, which was built in the late 1920s (Figure 6.36). The Zep Diner was located at 515 W. Florence Avenue, near the intersection with South Figueroa Street.

The Zep Diner was constructed during the Great Depression to offer patrons a fun and unusual dining experience capitalizing on the Zeppelin craze of the 1920s and 1930s. In 1929 publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst had sponsored a round-the-world voyage of the German airship the “Graf Zeppelin,” which landed on August 1929 at an area near present day
LAX called Mine’s Field. Los Angeles had already been favored as the name for the most successful of the United States Navy’s rigid airships, the USS Los Angeles ZR-3 (Figures 6.37 and 6.38), built as war reparations in Germany by the Zeppelin Company. The USS Los Angeles, originally named the LZ-126, crossed the Atlantic and arrived at the US naval base at Lakehurst, New Jersey on the morning of October 15, 1924. The trans-Atlantic flight was considered an aviation triumph not equaled again until Charles Lindbergh’s crossing in the Spirit of St. Louis airplane in May 1927.

![Image of USS Los Angeles ZR-3](image_url)

Figure 6.37. The USS Los Angeles, 1935. C. Lansing, photographer. Source: Melvin Hale.

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In New Jersey, the LZ-126’s lifting gas was changed from hydrogen to helium, which reduced its lifting capacity somewhat, but made it much safer to operate. Unlike the disasters that befell other airships serving in the Navy, such as the Akron, Macon and Shenandoah, the USS Los Angeles served the longest and was decommissioned in 1939 and dismantled in its hangar. The Hindenburg disaster, which destroyed that magnificent airship on May 6, 1937, and ended the popular era of that form of air travel, may have impacted the attraction of the Zep Diner. The building is long gone, and the location is now the drive-thru of a McDonald’s.\textsuperscript{179}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{passenger_cabin_u_s_s_los_angeles_naval_air_station_lakehurst_n_j_8}
\caption{The passenger cabin of the USS Los Angeles. Photographer and publisher unknown.}
\label{fig:zep-diner}
\end{figure}

\begin{flushright}
Source: Airships.net.
\end{flushright}

Another unconventional and whimsical restaurant design belonged to The Tamale (Figure 6.39), located at 6421 Whittier Boulevard, and was also built in the 1920s. The stucco exterior was molded into the shape of a tamale, with a “twist” at either end. The photograph, taken in the 1920s, shows that the menu included hamburgers, hot tamale pie, Spanish rice, chili and malted milk. A website promoting tours of historic sites in Los Angeles states that while “The last of what was once a mini Oddball Row of programmatic structures along Whittier Boulevard between Montebello and East Los Angeles (an oil can-shaped diner and crashed airplane called The Dugout vanished decades ago), the Tamale's twisted ends twitch tight against the newer buildings on either side, and instead of tamales, today it serves up perms and trims.”

![The Tamale](image)

Figure 6.39. The Tamale, c.1920s. Photographer unknown. Source: Esotouric.com.

An effort is currently underway to save The Tamale structure from being demolished.

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Returning now to the charm associated with dining at the Brown Derby Restaurant, the Brown Derby location most often frequented by the Hollywood crowd after its construction was the one on Vine Street, which opened on Valentine’s Day in 1929. The building also housed Western Airlines. It was the second Brown Derby to open in a chain which included establishments in Los Feliz and Beverly Hills. The Beverly Hills restaurant, shown in Figure 6.40, was located on the corner of Wilshire Blvd. and Rodeo Drive, the current site of upscale retailers, and unquestionably one of the most desirable commercial real estate locations in Beverly Hills.

![Image of the Beverly Hills Brown Derby](image)

Figure 6.40. The Beverly Hills Brown Derby, c.1940. Published by Curteich Chicago. Source: Melvin Hale.

Due to its proximity to the studios in Hollywood, the Vine Street Brown Derby became the place of legends. Who would not want to eat in a place where you could rub elbows with Hollywood royalty? The paparazzi hadn’t been invented at the time, and society too had a concept of politeness. People didn’t go out of their way to harass the stars, so a comfortable time
could be had for all. It is reported in several accounts that Clark Gable proposed to Carole Lombard there, and that she accepted. The Vine Street location also had a banquet room and courtyard, so it was the scene of many wrap parties and show business press gatherings. The walls were decorated with caricatures of actors done by an array of artists over the years (Figure 6.41). It was called The Great Wall of Hollywood. The corner booth in this photo is known as Jimmy Durante’s booth. If you look closely you can see his caricature on the lower right. His nose takes up two drawings, the only two-framed caricature there.

Figure 6.41. Jimmy Durante’s booth. Photographer unknown. Source: OriginalHollywoodBrownDerby.com

Because so many celebrities were seen at the Vine Street Brown Derby, wearing the most up to date fashions, there was a saying that “a new outfit worn by some movie star for lunch at the Derby would be a national fashion by dinner.” The Brown Derby was even featured in an episode of *I Love Lucy* in the 1950s (Figure 6.42), in which Lucille Ball, playing the part of a star-struck tourist, in her inimitable way, gawking at William Holden in an adjacent booth, “accidentally” causes the waiter to spill a tray of food on him. Although the scene is shot on a television studio set, it should not be surprising that a comedienne like Lucy Ricardo wouldn’t find a way to incorporate what is believed to be her favorite eatery in Hollywood into her act.

Figure 6.42. Episode of *I Love Lucy* featuring the Brown Derby. Source: DearOldHollywood.blogspot.com.


All of the Brown Derby restaurants from the early days are now gone. A photo of the old Brown Derby and its surrounding business from a rare perspective is pictured below in Figure 6.43. A detail from the billboard advertising cheap airfares is shown to contrast the value of 1950s’ prices with current day fares; the fare to San Francisco: $9.95. The message says that tickets could be purchased across the street at the Plaza Hotel lobby. The billboard itself was installed by Douglas Leigh, Inc., whose owner was a legend in the outdoor advertising business.

Figure 6.43. The Brown Derby as viewed from Hollywood Blvd., c.1950. Bob Plunkett photographer.

Source: Melvin Hale.
Disney acquired the rights to the Brown Derby name and operates several Brown Derby restaurants in their theme parks. The Brown Derby Restaurant on Vine Street closed its doors in 2001, and became derelict for a number of years. A small part of its façade has now been incorporated into the W Hotel which now occupies its spot on the Walk of Fame. The W Hotel opened its doors in January 2010. Although the Brown Derby had become an eyesore, its reduction to a mere visual icon grafted into a luxury hotel and unrecognized for what it once was to most passersby, is seemingly a tragic ending. A final image shows actor Charleston Heston paying tribute to Jack Lane, the artist responsible for penning most of the caricatures on The Great Wall of Hollywood.

Figure 6.44. Tribute to Jack Lane, master caricaturist. Date and photographer unknown.

6. HOLLYWOOD

Figure 6.45. Hollywood, California, c.1952. Bob Plunkett photographer. Source: Melvin Hale.

Figure 6.46. Sunset and Vine, 2011. Melvin Hale photographer.
Photo-elicitation offers the social scientist a powerful method with which to unpack historical records and discover cultural treasures long concealed from plain view. It can launch the diligent investigator on a journey to mysterious and unexpected destinations. The KBI theory situates this journey in terms of cognitive phenomena. By the time I had unpacked only a fraction of the visual data in Figure 6.45, I realized how true the saying is at the top of this page; a saying which I discovered on this leg of the journey.

Due to the fact that Bob Plunkett, and other postcard photographers, had taken numerous photos of this section of Vine Street before and during WW2, the photo in Figure 6.45, in comparison to those earlier photos shows a scene of much greater activity. The sense of action is heightened by the apparent position of cars crossing and waiting to cross the intersection. I see people in all directions, and children as well. Evidence of the economy in an upswing after the war is seen in newer and better automobiles. The pontoon style fenders of pre-war cars that protruded from the body were being replaced by the integrated style of fenders we know today, visible in several models in the photograph, but most notably by the 1950 Buick on the right; the light-colored car with whitewall tires.

In addition to the changing styles, and increased foot traffic, I can see that television has made its arrival on Vine Street. The NBC signage now touts KNBH-TV channel 4, and a newer

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arrival on the block, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), is publicizing KECA-TV channel 7. A new bank sign appears for California Bank alongside the Brown Derby and Western Airlines signs, and high atop the Taft Building is a new competitor for neon glory on Vine Street, the Miller High Life Beer sign. More recent names on Vine Street are visible, including Santa Fe and Gruen Watch. In the 2011 photograph, the iconic Broadway Hollywood neon sign remains as cultural artifact, as previously discussed, but most if not all of the businesses have departed, for a variety of reasons. Banners seen at intervals along the street in 2011 bear witness to the rich cultural historicity of the district, with sayings like “Sunset & Vine, Style, History, Urban Life.” Large advertising signage covers the entire sides of some buildings, and at every turn the eye is met with bold colorful graphic advertisements in various forms.

Figure 6.47. Various details from Figure 6.45.
The following narrative is elicited from the names found on two buildings in Plunkett’s photo. One of the names is well-known while the other name is barely discernable. Both of these names are intertwined with music production and have left behind enduring legacies.

Figure 6.48. Detail from Figure 6.45 showing the original location of Capitol Records.

The iconic circular Capitol Records building at 1750 Vine Street in Hollywood, with its “Googie” architecture influenced by modernism, futurism and the space-age, began construction in 1954 and opened in 1956, and is one of the most instantly recognizable buildings in the world; believed to be the first circular office building constructed in North America. However, the original home of Capitol Records was further south on Vine Street across from the NBC building. Though difficult to see on the postcard, the enlarged detail shown in Figure 6.48 shows the Capitol Records name. “Capitol Records was founded by Johnny Mercer (songwriter) in 1942. His business partners were Buddy DeSylva (film producer), and Glenn Wallichs, the owner of Music City. Music City was opened in 1940 and was the largest music store in LA. It was located on the corner of Sunset and Vine and Capitol Records had a storefront office in the building.”185 A detail from Plunkett’s photograph called “Vine Street at Sunset” is shown below.

in Figure 6.48 showing Wallich’s Music City. It is the same photograph I used to create *Radio City – Hollywoodland*. Although the Capitol Records sign is visible in this photo, but because of the perspective of the shot, it is unreadable. Capitol Records had a second story office at the time.

Figure 6.49. Detail from Figure 6.26 showing the original location of Capitol Records offices (black arrow) and the location of the Capitol Records building (white arrow).

It was not until I came into possession of the photograph in Figure 6.45, and enlarged it, that I was able to make out the writing on the side of Wallich’s Music City as Capitol Records. I reiterate the point here that enlarging photographs and examining the visual material in this manner is a prime technique for accessing the data contained in visual records. Most photographs are *miniature traces* of visual reality, waiting to relinquish their secrets to the diligent investigator. Many a photo locked away, yellowing, fading and disintegrating in a box of archival materials has the potential to reveal important facts that link the present to the past. Without this data, stories told today have the potential to become disjointed, diluted and disconnected from deep reservoirs of prescient human history.
At its inception, Capitol Records provided a west coast alternative to the recording studios of RCA-Victor, Columbia and Decca, which were all based in New York. Crooners which brought fame to Capitol in the 1950s include Frank Sinatra, Les Paul, Nat “King” Cole, Dean Martin, Peggy Lee, Tex Williams and Bing Crosby. Nat “King” Cole did so well that the Capitol Tower became known as “The House that Nat Built.” A noted social website recently posted that “This capitol rules over a music nation. Capitol Records is a major recording label in the US, sporting a roster that includes such artists as Coldplay, Katy Perry, Lily Allen, the Beastie Boys, and the Decemberists. It also distributes R&B and hip-hop through sister label Priority Records, which boasts such top sellers as Snoop Dogg and Cypress Hill.”¹¹⁸⁶

Figure 6.50. The Capitol Records building under construction in 1954 and today.
Source: Melvin Hale and Google Maps.

The allure of the present, in the form of institutional practices, hegemonic cultural influences, and fame, can overshadow the path that society has traveled to arrive at this point in time. In the process, valuable knowledge can lay dormant, become overlooked or even worse, be

lost altogether. The second story which the Plunkett photograph elicited has special cultural
significance in the context of the struggle for racial equality and minority representation. It is a
hopeful story, portraying Hollywood as a place of early opportunity for Black Americans. The
following detail from Figure 6.45 revealed a mystery that introduced me to an incredible cast of
history-making personalities.

![Figure 6.51. Detail from Figure 6.45. Former location of Tom Breneman’s Restaurant.](image)

The detail in Figure 6.51 is better understood by first knowing that the building in the
photo was formerly Tom Breneman’s Restaurant and Nightclub. A detail from a Plunkett RPPC
taken on the steps of the NBC building around 1945 shows how it looked at that time.

![Figure 6.52. Detail from a Plunkett RPPC showing Tom Breneman’s Restaurant, c.1947. Source: Melvin Hale.](image)
The Breneman signage had come down by 1950, the reasons for which will be explained when I discuss the final set of images in Phase One starting on page 160. Notably, the facade had been painted a darker hue. A new name was on the building, and as you can see, it is not easy to make out what it says, even enlarged. At first glance, it appeared to say KIDS ONLY, or KHORY, but I had doubts about those determinations. Then I tried to interpret it as literal as possible. I came up with KID ORY. That name too made no sense, so I did an online search and only then did I realize that I had stumbled upon an extraordinary piece of American history.

“Kid Ory was the first great jazz trombonist, and was in high demand in the 1920s. His New Orleans band (formed in 1912) fostered many young and rising jazz musicians, including: King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Johnny Dobbs, Sidney Bechet, and many others. Ory brought the New Orleans sound to Los Angeles in 1919. He became the leader of the first African American band to record New Orleans jazz music in 1922. This recording included "Ory's Creole Trombone and Society Blues." Ory joined King Oliver's Dixie Syncopators in Chicago in 1925 and played with him until 1927. Kid Ory played on many of the early recordings of King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, and Jelly Roll Morton, and was unparalleled in his mastery of the trombone. He went on to have an extremely successful career, not retiring until 1966.”

What the preceding quotation fails to mention is that Kid Ory was Creole, from New Orleans, and that his band was comprised of some of the greatest African-American musicians of the early 1910s through the 1950s. Kid Ory invented the “tailgate” trombonist style in which the trombone plays a rhythmic line underneath the trumpets and coronets. “[H]is enormous brassy sound, audacious glissandi and loud sense of humor came to define the New Orleans trombone

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sound.”\textsuperscript{188} In the spring of 1922, Ory made a historical set of recordings in Los Angeles named \textit{Ory’s Creole Trombone} and \textit{Society Blue}. The music was performed for Reb Spikes under the pseudonym \textit{Ory’s Seven Pods of Pepper Orchestra}. “The two sides are reportedly the first ever recorded by an African-American jazz group.”\textsuperscript{189} African-Americans Reb Spikes and his brother Johnny owned The Spikes Brothers Music Store at 1703 Central Avenue, and at the time, it was the only place in Los Angeles where recordings of black artists could be purchased.

Reb set up the recording session at Nordskog Records in Santa Monica. Arne Nordskog, the owner, was the manager of the Hollywood Bowl and an opera tenor. The recording machine itself was a rickety contraption built by Frank Locke (Nordskog’s father-in-law) who had no previous experience with audio recording. “It was an imperfect contraption that broke down throughout the session. To make the record, musicians stood in front of a series of mega phones stationed in cubicles that transmitted the music to a vibrating needle, which cut directly into a spinning wax disc while a technician cranked the machine throughout.”\textsuperscript{190} A local radio featured a live broadcast of the band in Los Angeles soon after, perhaps also the first for a New Orleans style jazz band, and promoted the recordings. C.H. Lieby was quoted in the \textit{Examiner} newspaper as saying: “The colored band from Central Avenue on your radio the other evening

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\textsuperscript{190} John McCusker, \textit{Creole Trombone: Kid Ory and the Early Years of Jazz} (Jackson, MS: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2012), 145.
\end{flushleft}
were just splendid. Could hear every instrument as plain as if in the next room.”191 By early July five thousand pressings went on sale, mostly in Los Angeles, and a few in Chicago. In a matter of weeks all five thousand records were gone.

The sales of Kid Ory’s music was a local hit. By comparison, Columbia Records sales of Fo’ Day Blues by the Original Jazz Hounds stamped 4,400 copies on the first run, and 2,500 on the second; and produced similar numbers for Ethel Waters’s Go Back Where You Stayed Last Night. Both were considered successful because they outsold their initial runs. Additional sales of Ory’s Seven Pods of Pepper Orchestra were hampered due to heat damage to the wax recordings when they traveled through the desert en route to New Jersey to be processed and pressed, as there were no pressing plants on the west coast at the time.192

![Figure 6.53. Photograph of Nordskog Records in Santa Monica, c.1920. Source: Doctorjazz.co.uk](image)

Reb had intended to use his own label for Kid Ory’s recording called Sunshine Records. Instead, Nordskog put his label on the 5,000 pressings. Reb resorted to covering all of

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191 Ibid., 148.

Nordskog’s label with his Sunshine label. As can be imagined, many of the rare survivors from this single pressing are found with only the Nordskog labels, as many of the Sunshine labels have come undone. The photo in Figure 6.53 shows the Nordskog Records office in Santa Monica. Kid Ory’s Original Creole Jazz Band is shown in Figure 6.54. The year is not known.

Figure 6.54. Kid Ory’s original band. Source: WashingtonDCjazznetwork.ning.com.

During the Depression, Ory retired from music and invested some of his money in a chicken farm near Los Angeles, which he ran with his brother. But music was in his bones, and he staged a successful comeback in the early 1940s, surprisingly enough at Columbia Center, as a guest musician on the Orson Welles show. “His musical comeback was in full swing by 1942. Based in Los Angeles, Ory convinced some of his fellow Dixieland-era musicians to join him. With the help of Crescent Records producers Marili Morden and Neshui Ertegun, Ory's group

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got their big break working for Orson Welles' radio broadcasts in 1944. In 1946, Kid Ory and his Creole Jazz Band began performing in San Francisco as well as Los Angeles.”

Having thus situated Kid Ory in the vicinity of Sunset and Vine in the late 1940s, it now makes sense that we find his name on the building next door to Capitol Records on Vine Street. What is interesting is that aside from the evidence in the photographic record, I have found no mention of Kid Ory at this location in Hollywood in any biography or related literature. Some of the recordings done by Kid Ory in his illustrious career are shown below in Figure 6.55.

Figure 6.55. Recordings done by Kid Ory. Source: Adapted from trumpetesetrombones.blogspot.com.

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194 Rodriguez, “Kid (Edward) Ory.”
Edward “Kid” Ory was born on Christmas Day in 1886 on Woodland Plantation near La Place, Louisiana, and passed away on January 23, 1973 in Honolulu.\textsuperscript{195} This section ends with one of my favorite photos of Kid Ory and his trombone, and the quotation this section began with.

![Figure 6.56. Kid Ory.](image)

\textit{“A photograph is a secret about a secret. The more it tells you the less you know.”}

7. WORLD FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD AND VINE

Figure 6.57. World Famous Hollywood and Vine, c.1949. Plunkett photographer. Source: Melvin Hale.

Figure 6.58. Hollywood and Vine, 2011. Melvin Hale photographer.
A popular phrase in the nineteen forties and fifties in the film industry, when the Plunkett photo was taken, was “Meet on the corner of Hollywood and Vine.”\textsuperscript{196} It was a way of insinuating that Hollywood and Vine was the center of the Hollywood cinematic and broadcast empire. This corner was famed as the intersection of movers and shakers, and serendipitous encounters between movie star hopefuls and casting directors. One could be “discovered,” it was once thought by simply having “star qualities,” and standing on or near this corner. I doubt that this statement has the same connotation today, but Hollywood and Vine remains a destination for many Hollywood visitors, for its fame remains intact. Besides the granite stars embedded in the sidewalk, there are numerous artifacts, plaques, signs and gift shops near this intersection that offer varying touchstones to Hollywood’s storied past.

Figure 6.59. Detail of license plate on car in foreground with year showing as 1949 from Figure 6.57.

Numerous photographs taken during the earlier period tended to support this notion. Plunkett even names this photo postcard: \textit{World Famous Hollywood and Vine}. The year on the license plate of the well-preserved or restored two-seater in the foreground indicates the year as 1949. Next to it, across the center line are two other notable automobiles, the darker and newest one being a 1951 Pontiac Streamline, and in front of it, a 1948 or 1949 Packard Super Eight Sedan, leading me to believe that the timeframe is the fall of 1950. New cars traditionally went

on sale in the fall, and a 1949 license plate, Figure 6.59, could be valid though December of the following year.

Plunkett’s rare photo provides a glimpse of what existed on what would become the site of the Capitol Records building before construction started in 1954. I have not seen any other photo postcard that provides this particular view of Vine Street looking north across Hollywood Boulevard. Visible, but obscured by trees, in the background are parts of the Hollywoodland sign. I can also see a Rent-A-Car sign and an Auto Park sign, along with some names of restaurants that are illegible. The more current photo shows that the street has become lined with trees, and that the sidewalk has become a Walk of Stars. And of course, the 2011 photograph shows the Capitol Records Building, slightly obscured by a green leafy tree.

In Plunkett’s photo I found yet another buried treasure in the visual archive that street scenes can yield. I was looking intently at the location which was to become the site of the Capitol Records Building to see what was there before it was built. I could not make out a building on the site, but what I found was a billboard advertising Westlake College of Music (Figure 6.60). Similar to the condition of the name Kid Ory, it was difficult to decipher.

Figure 6.60. Detail from Figure 6.57 showing future site of Capitol Records building.
I decided to search for a Westlake College of Music. As with Kid Ory, I succeeded, but not without considerable digging, because as I later discovered, Westlake College of Music ceased to exist sometime in 1961, which is over fifty years ago. What I found suggested that Westlake College of Music had a significant and lasting impact in both jazz and popular music. It was also a place where an innovative and revolutionary method for teaching music had its roots called the Schillinger System,\(^{197}\) which after its author’s early death at the age of 48, has more recently been rediscovered, and re-introduced to a new generation of musicians.\(^{198}\)

“Berklee (Schillinger House) opened its doors in 1945 [in Boston]. The following year, a similar school was established in Los Angeles - the Westlake College of Music, founded by one Alvin L. Learned. The school was named after a park, Westlake Park, which was near its first location.

However, there is not much information to be passed on. Of all the subjects being discussed, Westlake is far and away the one that has been researched the least regarding any information in print, on the Internet or elsewhere; but it was a very prominent school in the jazz world in the 1950s. Remember, the 50s was the heyday of so-called West Coast jazz, and a lot of attention was given to all matters pertaining to jazz on the Coast, especially Los Angeles, and this would include Westlake. I first became truly aware of jazz in the mid-50s. I would guess in junior high school and I can remember reading of both Berklee and Westlake in Down Beat, Metronome, etc., at that time.

Speaking of business, apparently Westlake struggled from a business standpoint from day one. A former student there told me that the school had eight different locations during its


existence, most of them in Hollywood, including one period when it was in the abandoned Screen Cartoonists office building. It moved from Hollywood to Laguna Beach in the summer of 1960, continuing to operate for about one more year.”

In 1999 the LA Times obituary for noted jazz musician Dick Grove, who founded the Dick Grove School of Music in San Fernando Valley, and operated it for twenty years, made reference to the Westlake School of Music. It states that “[Grove] moved to Los Angeles in 1954 and initially taught piano, arranging and harmony at the Westlake School of Music.” At its peak the Dick Grove School of Music enrolled over 450 students, some of whom came from as far away as Australia and paid tuition of up to $8,500. It taught successful people like Henry Mancini, Joyce Collins and Bill Conti. “Even established singing stars such as Michael Jackson, Linda Ronstadt and Barry Manilow took Grove classes.”

The influence of the Westlake School of Music continues to be felt by those who will never know or recognize that it even existed; like many worthy endeavors that toil beyond the heat and glare of the spotlight, living and expiring in the shadow of fame. To reach back and find treasures and stories like these in documentary photographs, using scientific methods of close observation and inter-views, is what can make conducting visual research so satisfying, and significant.


201 Ibid.
Fortunately, I was able to place the names and faces of three individuals who made important contributions to music that were students at the Hollywood Westlake School of Music, one of whom is quite famous. The first two are Jimmy Cheatham and Jerry Stenstrom, shown below in Figure 6.61, and the third is Gordon Lightfoot in Figure 6.62.

Figure 6.61. Jimmy Cheatham and Jerry Stenstrom, former students of the Hollywood Westlake School of Music. Source: Allmusic.com and dmcommunityjazzcenter.org respectively.

Figure 6.62. Gordon Lightfoot, a former student of the Hollywood Westlake School of Music. Source: Tradebit.com
Jimmy Cheatham, often accompanied as soloist by his wife Jeannie on piano, was a gifted trombonist best remembered for work in support of musical greats Chico Hamilton and Duke Ellington, and as a jazz educator and band leader. After serving in the Army from 1942 to 1946, and playing in the military band, “Cheatham studied at the New York Conservatory of Music, followed by a three-year stint at Hollywood's Westlake College of Music. A favored pupil of famed arranger Russell Garcia, he later played in bands led by Gerald Wilson and Benny Carter before returning to Buffalo in 1955 and signing on with saxophonist Bull Moose Jackson.”

In 2005 Jerry Stenstrom was inducted into the Des Moines Community Jazz Center’s Hall of Fame. A busy musician throughout high school and in the military as well, in the Korean War, Jerry was a regular with the Ralph Zarnow and Keith Killinger orchestras. He studied music at Drake before joining the Iowa Air National Guard in 1949. “Jerry attended Westlake College of Music (the country’s only jazz school at the time) in Hollywood, California in 1953. He worked regularly in Los Angeles and recorded at Capitol Records with the Claude Gordon Band, the ‘DOWNBEAT Band of the Year’ at the time.” Returning to Drake University, Jerry taught in the Des Moines Public Schools for 28 years. His greatest musical memory was playing with Count Basie at the Savery Hotel in 1972.


Canadian singer-songwriter Gordon Lightfoot is a five time Grammy nominated recording artist, and recipient of numerous gold, platinum and multi-platinum albums. He achieved international success and fame for a genre of music often referred to as folk-rock. He is also often referred to as Canada’s greatest song-writer. His hits include: If You Could Read My Mind, Rainy Day People, The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald, and For Lovin’ Me. His songs have been recorded by a Who’s Who in the recording industry, from Elvis Presley to Barbra Streisand to Harry Belafonte. In a recent appearance on the program The Grammy Museum After Sundown when asked the question “What kind of music do you listen to? he answered “Everything. I really like jazz. I used to read Downbeat Magazine. I saw an ad in there about a music school in Los Angeles, Westlake College of Music. I ended up living here in L.A. for a bit when I took Music Theory there. I learned how to commit music to paper.” Lightfoot moved to Los Angeles in 1958 where he studied for two years at Westlake College of Music. The school reportedly had a large Canadian contingent.

Documentary photographs such as RPPCs are rich informants. In the Preface of Doing Visual Research, Mitchell describes repetitiveness as a characteristic of visual studies.

“Thus, I found myself writing about old data in new ways. One could regard this as one of the challenges of any kind of qualitative research, but perhaps exacerbated by the fact that the visual is forever in one’s face. It is so easy to look again at a video, a drawing or a photograph and think of something else. I prefer to think of this as one of the strengths of the ‘doing’ of visual research and why, as researchers working in the area of the visual, and particularly with communities, we need to be prepared for the iterative nature of doing visual research.”

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8. HOLLYWOOD & VINE

Figure 6.63. Hollywood & Vine, 1946. Photographer unknown. Source: Melvin Hale.

Figure 6.64. Hollywood & Vine, 2011. Photographer Melvin Hale.
Crossing Hollywood Boulevard and looking south towards the Brown Derby, the earlier photograph, taken by an unknown photographer, shows an abundance of activity at this famous intersection. The writing on the back of the jacket of the man holding what appears to be a publication of some sort on the corner says *Ken Murray’s Blackouts of 1946*. The box behind him has a poster on it advertising *Ken Murray’s Blackouts* at the El Capitan Theatre. In the photo I took in 2011, the W Hotel has replaced the Brown Derby; the bus benches are gone; a palm tree has been planted near the corner; and a monument to Hollywood film production in the form of a spotlight mounted on a granite and metal pedestal bears witness to the historisity of the site, the original symbolic epicenter of the Hollywood empire. The sides of the spotlight have plaques bearing the words “Hollywood & Vine.” The spotlight and plaque invokes memories of movie premiers and award ceremonies from the early years. The spotlight appears to be functional. There are similar spotlights on all four corners of Hollywood and Vine.

Figure 6.65. Detail from Figure 6.63.
Edrington writes that “The Blackouts had been playing at the El Capitan Theater located at 1735 Vine Street in Hollywood since the early days of World War II and was originally intended to be a vaudevillian look at military life (Figure 6.66). By now the war [was over], but Ken Murray's clever showmanship kept the revue alive through the end of the decade. His co-star was Marie Wilson, the buxom blonde with the wide eyes and innocent look who later became My Friend Irma on radio, television and in the movies. Her material in the Blackouts was considerably less innocent — although, compared to what we see on primetime TV nowadays, it seems pretty tame in retrospect.”

A detail from another Plunkett photo postcard shows that the El Capitan was only a short distance from the corner of Hollywood and Vine in Figure 6.67.

Figure 6.66. The El Capitan Theatre featuring Ken Murray’s Blackouts, 1949. Plunkett photographer.

Source: Melvin Hale.

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The name El Capitan Theatre is currently associated with Disney’s renovated movie palace at 6838 Hollywood Boulevard (Figure 6.68), which was known as the El Capitan when it opened in 1926, but became Paramount Theatre in the 1940s. Richard Nixon’s famous televised “Checkers” speech was broadcast from the Vine Street El Capitan Theatre, although it is often confused with the Disney site, where numerous Disney Premieres such as *Wreck It Ralph* have been hosted.
Turning to a detail in Plunkett’s photograph in Figure 6.67, a little hard to see sign in a window on the side of the famous Owl’s Drug Store tells us that this is the studio of Al Jarvis, one of the first radio DJs. “It is generally agreed that the first notable shows to start the trend toward high-profile programs based entirely on commercial discs were presented by Al Jarvis, who invented *The World’s Largest Make-Believe Ballroom* on station KFWB Los Angeles in 1932, and Martin Block, who copied the idea in 1935 for WNEW New York. Each played three or four records in a row by a featured artist, speaking to listeners as if the artist were physically present and playing live. Block’s show became a phenomenon, partly because of his talent for coining slogans for advertisers; by the end of its first year, it had over 4 million listeners and was running for 2.5 hours every day.”206 However, Al Jarvis is considered the father of radio DJs. History being made at the corner of Hollywood and Vine came in many formats, including radio.

![Image](image.jpg)

*Figure 6.69. Detail of Figure 6.63 showing the sign for Al Jarvis’ studio on Vine Street.*

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At the intersection of Hollywood and Vine, the focus of seeing, however, easily turns the mind’s eye to the nascent motion picture industry which nurtured the fame embedded in these sidewalks. A glimpse into that industry, in the context of this visual ethnography, using two documentary photographs is therefore appropriate. The first photograph is from my RPPC collection, and it was marketed by Brookwell Photo (Figure 6.70). The photographer is unknown, although Plunkett is known to have done work under this name. It is the only such photo postcard of a studio backlot in my collection due to their rarity.

Figure 6.70. Motion Picture Sets, c.1940. Photographer unknown. Source: Melvin Hale.

The location is stated in the caption as “Hollywood,” and nothing was written on the verso. The large set resembling a castle in the background provided a clue, so when I set out to search for old movies sets in Hollywood I made that set my reference point. I also looked for films that might have made use of a castle, but that was not fruitful. The search term which
provided the best result was “1940 movie backlots.” That search yielded the photo in Figure 6.71, of the old RKO Pictures backlot, known as the “RKO Pictures 40 Acres Backlot”

![Image of RKO Pictures 40 Acres Backlot](http://wikimapia.org/1223980/RKO-40-Acres-Backlot-site)

Figure 6.71. RKO Pictures 40 Acres Backlot, c.1940. Photographer unknown. Source: http://wikimapia.org.

Wikimapia, the site where I found the photo shown above, stated that the RKO Pictures 40 Acres Backlot was actually 28 acres, and that it was located in Culver City near the present location of Sony Pictures. A visual study of the postcard image and the RKO backlot shows striking similarities. Numerous films and television shows used the backlot over the years, including *Gone With the Wind*, *King Kong*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, episodes of *Star Trek* and *Bonanza*. It was owned at one point by Desi and Lucy Arnaz (Desilu) and Paramount TV. In 1976 it was bulldozed and parceled out for a variety of motion picture and industrial uses.  

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9. DOWNTOWN HOLLYWOOD

Figure 6.72. Downtown Hollywood, c.1940. Photographer unknown. Source: Melvin Hale.

Figure 6.73. Hollywood Blvd. looking west from Argyle Avenue, 2011. Melvin Hale photographer.
The block between Argyle Avenue and Vine Street is one of the most storied locations in old Hollywood, and its stories continue. The before and after photographs reveal that numerous changes have occurred to the built environment since the 1940s. The trolley tracks are gone. On the left side of the street, next to the Taft Building, is the “W” Hotel, which literally wraps around the Taft Building. A business called the “Hitching Post,” Figure 6.74, used to be in that location, along with numerous other small venues, but all have disappeared, swallowed up by changing desire, the ravages of time, and the relentless creep of technological progress. “The Day of the Locust” Director John Schlesinger once said of Hollywood, “[it] is an extraordinary kind of temporary place.”

Figure 6.74. Detail from Figure 6.72 showing some of the previous venues on Hollywood Blvd.

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I am not certain that anyone considers this “Downtown Hollywood” anymore, but the current commercial venues in the area, along with an increase in residential housing and nightlife activities it definitely has an urban hustle and big city vibe. While it appears that activity on the street in the photograph I took looks more sedate, and the number of cars parked on the street are significantly less, that may be due in part to parking restrictions and more off street parking in 2011.

One venue that is prominent in the older photo is the Pantages theatre, formerly known as the RKO Pantages Theatre, one of the most ornate structures built in Hollywood during its glory years in the 1920s and 1930s (Figure 6.75). Although it opened in 1930, right after the stock market crash that led to the Great Depression, the builder, Alexander Pantages, a Vaudeville impresario, spared no expense in its construction. The original plans, done by B. Marcus Priteca (exterior) and Anthony Heisbergen (interior), called for a 12-story building with the first two floors dedicated to the theatre. The lobby features vaulted champagne-colored arches over lavish Art-Deco furnishings with a grand staircase. Construction of the upper 10 floors was halted due to the stock market crash, and a scandal involving Pantages.209 There have been persistent rumors that the rest of the office tower will be built over the theatre, but to date, none of these have come to fruition. Pantages sold the theatre to Fox West Coast Theatres in 1932, and in 1942 Howard Hughes acquired it for his RKO Theatre Circuit. It hosted the American motion picture industry’s annual Academy Award Ceremonies from 1949 through 1959. The


Figure 6.75. The lobby and auditorium of the Pantages Theatre.

Today the Pantages is a busy venue offering live theatre productions. It is owned by The Nederlander Organization which owns and/or operates over twenty stage venues worldwide. Recent productions include The Book of Mormon, La Cage Aux Folles, War Horse, West Side Story, and Evita. The Pantages Theatre represents continuity and constancy in a community where change is the norm.

As with many of the preceding photo postcards, this one concealed a secret, which was the answer to a nagging question that I had for a number of years. My most popular work of art is *Chi Chi and Cubana*, named partly after the supper club that was famous for many years in Palm Springs. “Chi Chi,” as it was called, was rumored to have had its beginnings in Hollywood. I heard this story many times between 2006 and 2009 while I lived in Palm Springs and sold art there, but no one was able to tell me where the original Chi Chi was located in Hollywood, and I was unable to locate literature supporting these claims.

Irwin Schuman's world-class Chi Chi at 217 North Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs was the most popular entertainment attraction in Palm Springs for three decades. Originally a small broiler situated between the local movie house and the El Rey Hotel (with its own famous Cubana Club and restaurant), Chi Chi evolved into a star-studded supper club that dominated an entire block in the heart of downtown Palm Springs. In the fifties and sixties the elaborate 1,000 seat Starlite Room at Chi Chi was the height of glam, hosting two shows a night as the rich and famous partied (see Figure 6.74).

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Chi Chi is where Frank Sinatra and his ‘rat pack’ gathered, and where the blue-eyed singer reportedly stole Ava Gardner's attention from her date, Howard Hughes. The club’s celebrity cachet rocketed with appearances by the likes of Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole, Peggy Lee, Liberace, Jerry Lewis, Lena Horne, Louis Armstrong, Milton Berle, Patti Page, Ella Fitzgerald, Red Buttons, Wayne Newton, Jack Benny and Rosemary Clooney, to name only a few. An in-house orchestra led by Bill Alexander was irresistible to those wishing to dance the night away. Chi Chi was sexy and groovy. "Hina Rapa," a painting depicting a tanned and
topless Polynesian woman, was used prominently on menus and marketing materials (they're all collectors' items now). Schuman sold Chi Chi in 1961 around the time he opened the Palm Springs Rivera Hotel. “The club endured a number of changes and attempted resurrections for a decade afterward, finally succumbing to retail development in the same block where the vacant Desert Fashion Plaza now stands.” The Desert Fashion Plaza Mall too now has been torn down, making way for the planned Museum Market Plaza development. Not until I scanned and enlarged the photograph in Figure 6.72 did I get a definitive answer to my quest for the original Hollywood Chi Chi. Barely visible on a vertical sign a few doors past Vine Street, on the right, are the unmistakably words: Chi Chi. I have added color to make the words more visible.

![Image](image_url)

Figure 6.77. Detail from Figure 6.72 colorized to show the Chi Chi sign (below and left of the Equitable sign).

The mystery of the missing Chi Chi is solved. The stories of the Hollywood Chi Chi that remained long after the physical manifestation had been lost and forgotten, lend a type of authenticity to the persistence of cultural memory. The quantitative aspect of this particular narrative is that I heard this story from numerous individuals during a five year period. It took a found object and qualitative research methods to discover the facts.

10. HOME OF BREAKFAST IN HOLLYWOOD

Figure 6.78. Home of Breakfast in Hollywood, c.1946. Plunkett photographer. Source: Melvin Hale.

Figure 6.79. Vine Street between Sunset and Hollywood Boulevards, 2011. Melvin Hale photographer.
The Art Deco Streamline structure at the center of both photographs is now primarily a façade of its former self, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. The residential and commercial tenants who now call it home are living in the remnants of an architectural artifact that once was home to titans of industry, prominent entertainers and a popular restaurant. With the loss of the NBC building at Sunset and Vine, and the reduction of the famed Brown Derby Restaurant to a relic grafted into the W Hotel, the recycling of this Art Deco building, an unmistakable holdover of Hollywood history, somehow seems less traumatic. The colorful arrangement of a building-within-a-building structure, though visually eclectic, makes functional use of old and new elements. It is fitting somehow that this visual ethnographic comparative study of Hollywood using rephotography concludes with a blending of the past and the present.

The artful and amusing spirit of Hollywood past is captured in the name above the entry: “Glorifried Ham n’ Eggs, From Pan to Mouth.” It’s a creative use of words and images intended to invoke a mouth-watering sensation of a savory breakfast. The earlier photograph accentuates the round-the-clock atmosphere that was manifest in Hollywood. It is one of only a handful of photo postcards taken in darkness. It can be inferred that Plunkett wanted to emphasize the lights and the signage, and perhaps the idea of Hollywood never asleep. In my color composition of this photo, I reimagined the scene as the morning dawn (Figure 6.80), and used it as a study in contrasts between the rising sun and the vestiges of darkness and artificial lights. A blogger comments: “Could a joint with a big neon sign advertising ‘Glorifried Ham N' Eggs’ be a Hollywood hot spot? It could if the owner of the joint happened to be Tom Breneman.”\(^\text{213}\)

Radio entertainment was extremely popular in the 1940s, and radio stations were popping up all over Hollywood. Vine Street was a particular hub for radio because the three major broadcasting networks were within walking distance. Orson Welles, Bob Hope, Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, Al Jolsen, Al Jarvis and Milton Berle were some of the names that ruled the air waves, and their fans flocked to Hollywood, or "Radio City" as it was sometimes called, to be members of their studio audience.

Breneman began his radio career in 1927, and involved himself in singing, acting, writing, producing and even managing radio stations. “With several friends he conceived the idea of his breakfast program and went on the air on Jan. 13, 1941. It was then called ‘Breakfast at Sardi's.’ In the mid-'40s he acquired his own restaurant and changed his show to ‘Breakfast in Hollywood.’ The program was one of the most popular ABC daytime shows.”

The show involved interviews of celebrities such as Jimmy Durante, Andy Devine and Bob Hope. The sponsors included makers of breakfast products such as Kellogg’s, and personal hygiene, such as Ivory Soap (Figure 6.81). By the mid-1940s Breneman had ten million listeners nationwide. Breneman capitalized on his fame by publishing a magazine (Figure 6.82). “United Artists even released a feature film in 1946 based on the Breakfast in Hollywood radio program. The movie starred Breneman, Bonita Granville and Beulah Bondi, and featured musical performances by Nat "King" Cole and Spike Jones.” (Figure 6.83).²¹⁵

Figure 6.81. Kellogg’s PEP ad featuring Tom Breneman and Breakfast in Hollywood. Source: iCollector.com

²¹⁵ Oliver, “Puttin’ on the Ritz - Tom Breneman’s Hollywood Restaurant.”
Figure 6.82. Tom Breneman’s Magazine, Volume 1, No 3, March 1948. Publisher Tom Ferrell, Chicago, IL.

Figure 6.83. Movie poster from the 1946 United Artist Release: Breakfast in Hollywood. Source: Amazon.com.
In the magazine, featured articles include: People are Human, How I Stay Young, Motel for Cats, My Victory over Insomnia, The World’s Only Radio-Restaurant, This Month’s Good Neighbor, You Can’t Live Without Learning, and ‘Dear Tom’…letters from readers. The movie poster shows Breneman wearing a large hat decorated with scenes from the movie, which is itself in character for him, because he was known for wearing outlandish hats when doing his radio show. The collage below shows various Breakfast in Hollywood postcards depicting Breneman with a variety of guests including Bob Hope, and Breneman with his family.

Figure 6.84. Postcards of Tom Breneman with various guests and his family. Source: Melvin Hale.
Tragically, Tom Breneman passed away at the young age of 46. “On April 28, 1948, just before the broadcast of Breakfast in Hollywood was to begin Breneman had a heart attack and died. Garry Moore took over hosting duties but the show quickly failed without Breneman. After the radio program ended Sammy Davis Jr. and investors purchased the building. The next tenant would be ABC which used the space for ABC Radio Center. Eddie Cantor and Frank Sinatra both became disc jockeys at ABC and Louella Parsons did an interview show with celebrities at the Vine Street location.” As testament to its popularity, Tom Breneman’s Hollywood Restaurant was immortalized in numerous photo postcards taken during the 1940s. I have at least fifteen exemplars showing his name either on the sign above the building, on the building itself, or both. It’s hard to believe that he was on Vine Street less than three years.

Figure 6.85. The ticket stub for admittance to Breakfast in Hollywood also doubled as a postcard. Source: Otrcat.com

Hollywood history is bound to global culture. Many of the names and places depicted in this visual ethnography are legendary. I did my best as a researcher in search of valid social scientific data to allow the data to emerge from the images under study, following the tenets of grounded theory. I did not start with a set of conclusions, and the majority of what I discovered was unknown to me at the outset. I intentionally chose to focus on Hollywood using documentary photographs because an abundance of photographs were taken of this geographic location. I also chose Hollywood because Hollywood culture is relevant. Any study of world culture of the twentieth century would be deficient if it omitted a mention of this renowned locale, for Hollywood itself is a paradigm of what we know, what we believe, and what we imagine.

![Tom Breneman’s Star on Hollywood’s Walk of Fame](Projects.LATimes.com)

Figure 6.86. Tom Breneman’s Star on Hollywood’s Walk of Fame. Source: Projects.LATimes.com.

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Lessons Learned from Phase One

KBI as a literary discursive system, originating in the formality of the art studio, anticipates the multi-modal, multi-disciplinary, and multi-cultural nature of visual contemplations, and supports unlimited diversity. Individuals and communities in which disparate and even diametrically opposed standpoints exists can equally situate their own voice using the tenets of KBI. David Howes in a review of the sensory turn in the social sciences commented that “Sensory studies approaches themselves emphasize the dynamic, relational (intersensory – or multimodal, multimedia) and often conflicted nature of our everyday engagement with the sensuous world.”²¹⁸ The research pilot demonstrates that the KBI framework offers unbounded latitude for deriving visual knowledge from documentary photographs.

Both Phases of my research rely upon anthropological methods, which are increasingly sensory. Pink describes sensory anthropology as implying “a ‘re-thought’ anthropology, informed by theories of sensory perception, rather than a sub-discipline exclusively or empirically about the senses.”²¹⁹ In this domain of sensory anthropology “Anthropologists are increasingly attending to arts and media practices and are engaging more closely with public and applied roles. While the former shifts enable anthropologists to re-think the discipline with other anthropologists, all of these moves encourage interdisciplinary collaborations.”²²⁰

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²²⁰ Ibid.
Documentary photographs, like those used in this study, bear traces of material and social culture dating back sixty years or more, during which time there has been an significant increase in scientific knowledge, an evolution of social, political and cultural practices, and a revolution in information practices, most notably remediation of analog resources via the powers of computers and the Internet. KBI provides a robust qualitative framework in which social scientists can situate the study of photographs, and in which photographs are primary resource, not mere illustration. In Phase One, rich narratives emerged from faint traces in the chemical substrate of real photo postcards. When used alongside more traditional methods, KBI adds the qualities of visual perception to the findings.

Sturken and Cartwright, two leading scholars in the emergent and dynamic field of visual culture and communication, write that: “The capacity of images to affect us as viewers and consumers is dependent on the larger cultural meanings they invoke and the social, political, cultural contexts in which they are viewed. Their meanings lie not within their image elements alone, but are acquired when they are ‘consumed,’ viewed and interpreted.”\(^{221}\) The results of Phase One demonstrate that the unified theory of visual knowledge is rigorous enough to satisfy institutional demands in the sense that institutional demands include scientific rigor.\(^{222}\)


CHAPTER 7. PHASE TWO - RESULTS BY RANDOM SAMPLING

“Looking at someone who looks back at you is, in a sense, the beginning of all society.”

Andrea Mubi Brighenti

The sense of sight is a vital component of survival and adaptability in most living creatures. Sight alone is unproductive without an attendant cognitive mechanism or method for processing and making sense of visual stimulus. In humans, the apparatus for sightedness provides focus upon the area at which the eyes are directed, which can range from near to far. Areas outside the immediate subject of attention are afforded less detail, reaching the least amount of visual information at the periphery. KBI as a unified theory of visual knowledge proposes a visual epistemology in which knowledge is produced in three overlapping cognitive constructs called Know, Believe and Imagine (KBI). KBI proposes that these three major cognitive constructs are irreducible, and that there is no fourth major construct. The theory of KBI emerged from art practice in which visual queries were required in order to support the transformation of black-and-white images into realistic color compositions. Each image was presented with the same basic queries in the process of its transformation, and these led to subordinate queries. Visual perception involves an endless stream of visual queries. My experience leads me to accept as true that know, believe and imagine are the most basic visual queries that can be posed to visual imagery.

Phase Two of my research objectifies the tenets of KBI, using empirical analysis to examine implicit and explicit boundary conditions, and the features of the model. If KBI produces valid and reliable results, the theoretical model will demonstrate its capability to encompass all the data points. As a result, KBI will be shown to be *obvious* in the sense that was meant by Descartes. KBI may appear to be obvious in retrospect, but the basic tenets of seeing have been obscured beneath layers of complexities that comprise the psychobiological mechanics of seeing. Extensive research, in both the natural and social sciences, has been done examining and explicating the complexity of seeing, yet it took art practice to illuminate its simplicity. Due in part to the fact that with sightedness the referent is grounded in individual perception, arrived at by qualitative methods, I expect results which support the notion of *general applicability*. General applicability is used here in place of *generalizability*, the desired product of quantitative methods.

In arriving at the theory of KBI, I unknowingly invoked a variation of photo-elicitation. In a typical study in which photo-elicitation is employed, the researcher presents participants in the study with a photograph which she has taken and observes and records their responses. In a 2002 journal article entitled *Talking about pictures: a case for photo-elicitation*, Harper commences the Introduction with the following quote from John Berger’s book, *Keeping a Rendezvous*:

> “The thrill found in a photograph comes from the onrush of memory. This is obvious when it’s a picture of something we once knew. That house we lived in. Mother when young.”

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But in another sense, we once knew everything we recognize in any photo. That’s grass growing. Tiles on a roof get wet like that, don’t they. Here is one of the seven ways in which bosses smile. This is a woman’s shoulder, not a man’s. Just the way snow melts.

Memory is a strange faculty. The sharper and more isolated the stimulus memory receives, the more it remembers; the more comprehensive the stimulus, the less it remembers. This is perhaps why black-and-white photography is paradoxically more evocative than colour photography. It stimulates a faster onrush of memories because less has been given, more has been left out… (1992:192–193).”

Berger suggests that visual cues found in color photographs are less evocative than black-and-white photographs because with black-and-white photographs the mind has more work to do in filling in what has been left out, which most obviously is color. He states that “in another sense, we once knew everything we recognize in any photo,” and further on that black-and-white photographs invoke memory because they are old, and reflect the passage and affects of time.

The type of photo-elicitation I unknowingly employed in art practice was that I was the participant/respondent. I approached the photographs I used with the confidence that I already knew a great deal about what I was seeing because I have had a great deal of experience observing the physical world, and I know a lot about it. I know about architecture, fashion, flora, fauna, automobiles, and built environments. In deciding upon which color(s) to transform any given element or object in a photograph I used the following checklist:

1. What colors do I know or can determine with research?
2. What colors do I reasonably believe are right for the period and object in question?
3. What colors do I want to use for aesthetic reasons despite what I know or believe?

Each question in turn could lead to other questions, but each of these questions were subordinate in a hierarchy of knowledge. I might know, for instance, that a particular object was light-colored, and was definitely not black or a dark shade of color, and then I was left to chose from a palette of lighter shades which fit the time period. My belief heuristic took note of minimal visual cues, and decisions were made accordingly. In certain instances, various objects were deemed detracting, such as litter, trash cans and dents in vehicles, and these were accordingly removed or altered, as my imagination and skill saw fit. Conversely, objects from other sources were brought into a composition, again, as imagination saw fit. Know, believe and imagine as basic visual queries in each instance were powerful enough to permit the completion of each and every composition I attempted. Consider my first color composition which came about by accident in May 2006, called Car in the Cactus (see Appendix E). The cactus I refer to are Saguaro cactus in the Sonoran desert. The final composition was composed of five colors.

Figure 7.1. Car in the Cactus black-and-white. Photographer unknown. Source: Melvin Hale.
Table 5: Table used to codify KBI information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saguaro cactus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonoran Desert</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sky = blue</td>
<td>Arizona or California</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cactus = green</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand or dirt = tan</td>
<td>car = black</td>
<td>car = dark red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushes = dark</td>
<td>green or brown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain = dark</td>
<td>mountain = brown or green</td>
<td>mountain = green</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The color composition which resulted from the preceding data is shown below:

![Image](image.png)

Figure 7.2. Color composition of Car in the Cactus.

Before addressing the theoretical and cognitive boundaries of the KBI theory of unified visual knowledge, consider a more complex image and composition I completed after I had gained considerable skill at the craft of deconstructing and reconstructing photographs, the Palm Springs Hotel Swimming Pool.
In the following table I will not name each and every object or element in the photograph. My intent here is to depict the way in which data is mapped into the KBI model.

Table 6: Coding of Palm Springs Hotel Swimming Pool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swimming pool water = blue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several People</td>
<td></td>
<td>one tanned girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool ladder = chrome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees leaves = green</td>
<td>fruit trees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>orange, yellow, green</td>
<td>oranges and lemons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial tree, right rear</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>bougainvillea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plants around pool</td>
<td>green</td>
<td>bougainvillea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor umbrellas</td>
<td>white fringe - medium color</td>
<td>blue and yellow and white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladies’ swimsuit foreground</td>
<td>medium color</td>
<td>dark red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tile roof = red/orange</td>
<td>white or tan</td>
<td>off white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building in background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain = reddish brown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are socializing</td>
<td></td>
<td>One person with tranquility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Melvin Hale
In the artistic rendition in Figure 7.4, all of the people except for the girl with her foot in the swimming pool have been removed. The addition of color adheres to defined notions of know and believe, but the context of the scene has changed from that of numerous people enjoying a poolside respite, to one where the focus is exclusively on one person, seemingly enjoying the pleasures of the swimming pool alone. The idea was to create a different kind of social drama, which emphasized the serenity of Palm Springs as a desert oasis.

After constructing hundreds of color compositions using the KBI method, with no object or element ever unaccounted for, meaning uncolored, it is apparent to me that the method is sound and reliable. I believe that any adult raised in a Western society has the comprehension to identify, if only generically, the elements in any RPPC street scene. The depth of knowledge is not the issue. Consider the car in the Car in the Cactus photograph. I have no idea of what the make, model or year the car is, but for purposes of colorization, that level of detail is
unnecessary. I know that this is a car, and heuristically, I believe the car to be a 1930s or 1940s vintage. To be realistic, I should restrict my color palette to that era.

Berger suggested that black-and-white photography is paradoxically more evocative than color photos. This notion is borne out by a study of farming practices conducted by Douglas. Photos of current farming practices shown to a group of farmers failed to elicit significant commentary, whereas, documentary photos taken a generation ago elicited verbose rich commentary, leading Douglas to believe that the current images did not “break the frame” of the farmer’s normal views. However, the black-and-white photographs led the farmers to reflect upon structural differences in farming techniques and past personal experiences, and the significance these changes have had in the context of their operations.226

Two questions now can be asked: Does KBI comprise a tightly bound theoretical construct, or is it deficient by lacking constituent concepts, or is it overly developed? Art practice suggests that each element of the finished image can claim to be a product of KBI. “K” was generally constructed by historical research as well as a priori knowledge. “B” was arrived at by considering period colors and styles. “I” filled in the balance by incorporating my own artistic vision. The result is not so much an “accurate” rendition of how that scene actually looked, but rather one that is plausible, albeit possibly more visually appealing. What is notable is that nothing is null and void, meaning, each and every pixel was transformed through use of the theoretical construct. It is undeniably a fictive reality, which it why it is called art, and has received awards for artistic merit; but it is art that is seen as a form of realism. With a few clicks of the mouse, my color compositions could go from realistic to something else entirely, such as a

226 Ibid., 20.
pop art scheme (Figure 7.5), but it would only mean, that as far as color was concerned, more emphasis would be given to Imagine, and less to Know and Believe.

Figure 7.5. *Chi Chi and Cubana* colorized as “Pop Art.” Source: Melvin Hale, © 2013.

My technique for color compositions leans strongly towards “K” and “B,” and less towards “I.” In the context of *The Girl By the Pool*, and the Pop Art inspired *Chi Chi and Cubana*, the functional boundaries of the KBI construct should come into clearer focus. In most of the images that I colorize, simple additions or deletions are involved, such as removing trash in the street, garbage cans, dents in car fenders, missing hubcaps, and small objects deemed to negatively impact the aesthetic appeal of the artistic composition. But in the case of the photos referenced above, the result required a greater degree of imagination as far as color was concerned. I am not reading out of the visual data so much as reading into the visual data. The photograph in Figure 7.6 is based on the photo in Figure 6.4, but a trolley car has been added to
the tracks from a different photograph taken at the location site but a different time; another example of Imagine, only this time not done with color, but with an element in the photograph.

Figure 7.6 Cahuenga Pass Entering Hollywood, c.1940, altered to include a trolley car. Source: Melvin Hale.

Examining the Boundaries of KBI

This dissertation offers a science-based model for visual knowledge production developed from individual experience. Understanding the limitations and subjective nature of individual experience, I turn to David Gooding, in a paper that presents a study of the generation, manipulation, and use of visual representations in different episodes of scientific discovery. Gooding states that while “Science is not the product of individual cognitive agents yet the changing social and technological culture of science does not make the cognitive processing of
individual experience irrelevant.‖ 227 My intention is to add my experience to that of other social scientists exploring the contours of knowledge within visual expression.

The practice of KBI brings it into scholarly discourse in the domain of sensory anthropology. Social scientist Sarah Pink, known internationally for her work involving visual ethnography and social and visual methodology, describes sensory anthropology as implying “a ‘re-thought’ anthropology, informed by theories of sensory perception, rather than a sub-discipline exclusively or empirically about the senses.” 228 In this domain of sensory anthropology, “Anthropologists are increasingly attending to arts and media practices and are engaging more closely with public and applied roles. While the former shifts enable anthropologists to re-think the discipline with other anthropologists, all of these moves encourage interdisciplinary collaborations.” 229 David Howes in a review of the sensory turn in the social sciences commented that “Sensory studies approaches themselves emphasize the dynamic, relational (intersensory – or multimodal, multimedia) and often conflicted nature of our everyday engagement with the sensuous world.” 230 KBI, formulated in the formality of the art studio, anticipates the multi-modal, multi-cultural nature of aesthetic contemplations, and is as neutral as a blank canvas. KBI presents a cognitive model of visual perception that supports discourse regarding photographic imagery in such a manner that it makes allowances for

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229 Ibid.

complete diversity of expression across a broad spectrum of philosophical and theoretical commitments. To argue otherwise would suggest that humans have differing visual cognition.

Photographs like those used in art practice bear traces of material and social culture dating back sixty years or more, during which time there has been an explosion of scientific knowledge, continuous evolution of social, political and cultural practices, and an all out revolution in information practices and technology. Images have the capacity to evoke a multiplicity of individual responses, none of which occurs in a vacuum. Sturken and Cartwright, two leading scholars in the emergent and dynamic field of visual culture and communication, write that: “The capacity of images to affect us as viewers and consumers is dependent on the larger cultural meanings they invoke and the social, political, cultural contexts in which they are viewed. Their meanings lie not within their image elements alone, but are acquired when they are ‘consumed,’ viewed and interpreted.”

The postcard collection I have obtained is itself is an outgrowth of the mesmeric power of documentary images. After acquiring the photo postcards used for the initial artistic compositions I began to take notice of other photo postcards from the period. The RPPCs I like always seem to possess a raw natural beauty. They are informationally rich, aesthetically interesting and culturally useful. In evaluating the informational properties of the collection, each postcard in the collection was selected because it was believed that it represented an accurate record of the time and place of its origin, a photographic time capsule of social data, grounded in the moment of its creation. Such images are fixed and complete, self-contained

traces of the past lingering in the memory of its chemical substrates, rich in historical substance and spatial significance.

From individual experience in art practice, where KBI was an irreducible paradigm for color selection, I now view knowledge production as a similar product. The use of documentary photographs in the form of photo postcards is important because they present a view of the world that is reliable, despite being under the technical influence of a human agent. I examine each photograph code the visible data into the KBI construct. My intention is to look for ways to falsify the KBI construct, or conversely, to confirm its validity.

**Sampling Technique**

In this the second phase of applying the theory of KBI to RPPCs, a random sampling of ten postcards was selected from a population of 235 street scenes. The cards came from sections of the collection named Southern California, Hollywood, Palm Springs, Santa Monica and Malibu, Orange County, Inland Empire, Northern California, Florida, and Miscellaneous Places. The largest sections in the collection are Hollywood and Palm Springs. The collection also includes color “chrome” postcards, and RPPC beach scenes, and scenes of singular places of interest, but these were not included in the selected population. This sample size is large enough in my professional judgment as a researcher to be adequate for demonstrating the boundary conditions of KBI, and the robustness of the model.

An associate placed 235 postcards on a table (Figure 7.7), and shuffled them to rearrange their original associations. This shuffling was a delicate operation because photo postcards cannot be handled roughly. After the postcards were shuffled on the table, they were placed into a box face down, where they were carefully shuffled again (Figure 7.8). In Phase One of this
study, I purposely selected ten postcards that were connected spatially and chronologically in order to use them to construct a rich visual ethnography of a specific neighborhood during a time of major social, political and technological change. In this the Second Phase, randomly selected photo postcards are used to explore the explicit informational boundaries of KBI through photo-elicitation by interviewing them and situating the data on a table.
Figure 7.8. 235 postcards placed face down in a box from which ten were selected.

Figure 7.9. Ten street scenes that were randomly selected for Phase Two of the study.
The ten cards that were selected in the order of their selection, which is the order in which they will be coded, are:

1. Malibu Sport Fishing Pier
2. Palm Springs
3. Catalina Island
4. The Los Angeles Railways’ Figueroa Bus
5. Laguna Beach
6. The Village, Big Bear Lake
7. Sunset and Vine Streets, Hollywood
8. Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs
9. Seventh Street Looking West from Broadway, Los Angeles
10. Ketchikan, Alaska

Coding involves situating visual information found in the photographs on a table like the one shown below:

Table 7: Ten-row coding table used in Phase Two.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The images in this phase were all examined at 1200 dpi. Some data is visible only under magnification.
1. MALIBU SPORT FISHING PIER

Figure 7.10. Malibu Sport Fishing Pier, c.1943. Plunkett photographer. Source: Melvin Hale.

Table 8: Coding for #1. Malibu Sport Fishing Pier.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Photographer: Plunkett</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  c.1943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Fence along beach installed during WW2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Photographed during war</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Motorcycle policeman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Policeman observing speed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Beach not racially integrated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Pier is good place to fish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  No surfing at that time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10  Romantic couples on date</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The people on the beach are sitting behind a fence, which was erected during WW2. This fence offers a potential date range of about four years. Surfing commenced at Malibu in the 1950s.
2. PALM SPRINGS

Figure 7.11. Palm Springs, c.1940. Frasher photographer. Source: Melvin Hale.

Table 9: Coding for #2. Palm Springs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Movie Young People playing, opened 1940</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>c.1940</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Convertible is ‘39 Mercury</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1939 first year for Mercury</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shirley Temple in <em>Young People</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bicyclists were common in PS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Warm weather in PS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Convertibles were popular there</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Movie was flop. Shirley Temple (age 12) terminated by Fox</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Meeting movie stars on the street in PS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Village Drug Store, The Palm Springs Theatre and the Chi Chi Restaurant and Nightclub are represented, starting from left to right on Palm Canyon Drive at Andreas Road.
3. CATALINA ISLAND

Figure 7.12. Catalina Island, c.1950. Plunkett photographer. Source: Melvin Hale.

Table 10: Coding for #3. Catalina Island.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Plunkett photographer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>c.1950</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Island is tourist destination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Wrigley owned most of Island until the 1970s.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Girls around fountain are swimsuit models</td>
<td>Girls in swimsuits are hookers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Island is mainly conserved</td>
<td>Area around island known for “flying fish”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Actress Natalie Woods drowned off Catalina in ‘81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoying the beaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Catching a big fish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this photo a 1950 Chevy truck and 1949 Mercury helped establish the timeframe. The banner says “Welcome to Avalon.”
4. THE LOS ANGELES RAILWAYS’ #8 FIGUEROA BUS

Figure 7.13. Line #8 Figueroa Bus of the Los Angeles Railway, 1926. Source Melvin Hale.

Table 11: Coding for #4. The Los Angeles Railways’ #8 Figueroa Bus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Photographer unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  License plate says 1926</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Bus was a 1924 Fageol Safety Coach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Driver was under 30 yrs old</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Bus, red with gold lettering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Figueroa and 70th St</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Buses replaced rail lines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Bus Line #8</td>
<td></td>
<td>LA with LA Railway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  What it be like to ride on that bus</td>
<td></td>
<td>What it be like to ride on that bus back then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10  Photo cards like this were often one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

232 Mark Theobald, “Fageol Motors Co., CoachBuilt.com,” 2013,

5. LAGUNA BEACH

![Image of Laguna Beach, 1945. Photographer unknown. Source: Melvin Hale.](image)

Table 12: Coding for #5. Laguna Beach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Photographer unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1945</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Movie Spellbound, 1945</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ingrid Bergman, Gregory Peck in Spellbound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Alfred Hitchcock director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Top down, not raining</td>
<td>1941 Ford Super Deluxe Convertible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>1939 International Woodie Wagon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Shell Gas Station</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Restoring a 1939 International Woodie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ice cream on beach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data from this photo card will be used for a graphic depiction of KBI on page 206 using the KBI model.
6. THE VILLAGE, BIG BEAR LAKE

Figure 7.15. The Village, Big Bear Lake. Photographer unknown. Source: Melvin Hale.

Table 13: Coding for #6. The Village, Big Bear Lake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Photographer unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>c.1945</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Postmarked 4-8-1946</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>San Bernardino Mountains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Has a big lake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent winter sports, skiing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent summer resort town</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Up the hill from Lake Arrowhead</td>
<td>Cars will stop for pedestrians</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boating on the lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Getting snowed in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Big Bear is a major ski resort town. I grew up at the base of Big Bear Mountain in San Bernardino from the 1950s through the 1970s. Between Big Bear Lake and Lake Arrowhead is a popular music camp called Arrowbear Music Camp which I attended in 1969. I have a lot of good memories on this mountain.
7. SUNSET AND VINE STREETS, HOLLYWOOD

Table 14: Coding for #7. Sunset and Vine Streets, Hollywood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Plunkett photographer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>c.1950</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ABC Broadcasting in Tom Breneman Bldg.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being a successful trumpeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 KECA-TV (ABC) (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 KECA started on 9-16-49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 1950 Ford</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 NBC now KNBH-TV (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 CBS KNX Radio studios</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Era of television just beginning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being a famous actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Miller Beer neon sign</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being a DJ on radio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coming of television signaled the end of the clustering of Hollywood studios. The production requirements of television demanded larger studios and facilities than for radio. After the departure of these major economic anchors in the 1960s and 1970s, this part of Hollywood would be in decline and transition for several decades.
8. PALM CANYON DRIVE, PALM SPRINGS

Figure 7.17. Palm Springs, c.1943. Photographer unknown. Source: Melvin Hale.

Table 15: Coding for #8. Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Photographer unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Same photographer who shot “Chi Chi Cubana”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td></td>
<td>c.1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Snow on the mountains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Thrift store previously in bldg on corner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dollsville Center currently tenant in bldg on corner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Photo was taken in winter or early spring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1941 Buick on left</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>All buildings on right demolished long ago</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If PS had kept the old buildings and charm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Palm Springs is currently trying to revamp this location, and bring back the old charm.
Table 16: Coding for #9. Seventh Street Looking West from Broadway, Los Angeles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frasher Photographer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loew’s State Theatre (left)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studebaker sign in distance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People waiting for trolley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trolley # 1385 on the tracks</td>
<td>The car in the foreground is an early 1930s Plymouth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People mainly wore hats then</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the buildings pictured in foreground are still standing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earthquake and flood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The biggest news story in Los Angeles in 1938 was the flooding which occurred at the beginning of March. It destroyed over 5,600 buildings and stranded over 800 cars. Orange County and the Inland counties of San Bernardino and Riverside were also massively flooded.
Table 17: Coding for #10. Ketchikan, Alaska.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>BELIEVE</th>
<th>IMAGINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Schallerers photographer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Rotary Club 2000 sign on Ingersoll Hotel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Club formed on 4-22-25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sign says “Salmon Capital of the World” and “Welcome Visitors”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Photo taken from cruise ship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Wooden plank street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 1936 Dodge Humpback Panel Van on right</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Weather was cool or cold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>They have awesome seafood restaurants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is one of the black-and-white photographs that I colorized. I really like the action taking place. People are walking around. A car is moving. The men are engaged in conversation. The perspective of the shot places the viewer right in the middle of the action.
Data Analysis

In documentary photographs, what you see is what you get. Whatever is in the frame of the photograph is what was visible through the lens of the camera at the time that the photo was taken. We all have knowledge of what is in the world, if not specifically, and in great detail, then generically or superficially. Until I did a fair amount of research on the Los Angeles Railways bus, I had no idea who made it, when or where. It definitely is not a model seen on the road today. After a bit of digging, I determined that it was an early 1920s Fageol, which had a great reputation for building quality trucks and buses. However, Fageol was a victim of the Great Depression, and went under in 1932. Ultimately, the truck division assets were acquired by a lumber magnate named T.A. Peterman in 1939. He renamed the product Peterbilt, a name almost universally known today. But before I knew any of the information about the bus, the company who made it, or who acquired it, I still knew that it was a passenger bus, and that is the point.

From the time I was born, I have been constantly learning about the seen and built world in which I live, which is the a priori knowledge that I bring to seeing every day. I possess a varying amount of knowledge about virtually everything I see, which is why Berger confidently states that “The thrill found in a photograph comes from the onrush of memory. This is obvious when it’s a picture of something we once knew. That house we lived in. Mother when young. But in another sense, we once knew everything we recognize in any photo.”

Falsifiability

Any scientific test of a theoretical model must look for evidence which controverts the proposition, or risk being indistinguishable from pseudo-science and metaphysical commentary.
“The hallmark of scientific statements is that they are vulnerable to refutation.”

Karl Popper, who gave considerable attention to this subject, wrote that “the criterion of the scientific status of a theory is its falsifiability, refutability, or testability.”

He later wrote that “[a] statement or theory is…falsifiable if and only if there exists at least one potential falsifier – at least one possible basic statement that conflicts with it logically.”

KBI is falsifiable because it potentially can be refuted by even one possible statement which conflicts with its premise. KBI is testable. In the preceding coding exercise, all the traces of visual information observed in the photographs were able to be plotted on a table representing the KBI construct. None of the data resided outside of the construct, and each category was discreet. The following discussion defines the boundary conditions and lists the salient characteristics of the model.

Know

The rigor of scientific methodology requires I operationalize what I mean by know, and that is why there are two types of knowing, and these comprise the first boundary condition: there is knowing for an empirical fact, which is $K$, and knowing from calculated belief, which is $B$. I would not feel at all content with conflating these two levels of knowledge into one category as know, despite the reliability of heuristic knowledge. In art practice, empirical knowledge placed rigid limits on the exercise of creativity. To know meant I had evidence.

---


Believe

Heuristic knowledge, or calculated belief, imposed a looser set of constraints. I could be creative, but only within the framework of plausibility.

Imagine

Imagine can be considered a “catch-all” category that accounts for all non-fact-based notions, including personal preferences, opinions and creative acts. A sight that is disgusting to one person may be considered attractive and beautiful to another. Neither opinion can be considered factual, but each opinion is nonetheless valid. In the effort to “code” documentary photos, I found it much easier to list elements that I know something about in each photo, but I struggled to fabricate things about which I could only imagine, although conceivably they ought to be unlimited. When I am colorizing a photo the opposite is true. The act of colorizing is itself a creative endeavor, even if the color is known to be fairly accurate and correct. Because everything visible does in fact have a color, even if it is black or white, unless I wanted to leave an area of the artwork completely black-and-white, I have to account for the color of everything, and so far, I have never had to leave an area untouched because the method failed. In art production, guessing is not wrong, it is simply a form of imagine.

The results of the coding, and the results of art practice, support the proposition that KBI is an irreducible paradigm for situating visual knowledge and that it constitutes a unified theory of visual knowledge. Its power lies in its simplicity and comprehensiveness. It was observed through art practice that the queries and answers associated with KBI were sufficient for consistent aesthetic results. One final observation is in order, and that is that the informational characteristics of KBI in explicating documentary photographs indicates that Know and Believe
are sufficient to answer all essential questions of ofness, reinforcing the notion that through a priori knowledge we already know what is in any photograph.

A prescient observation from this test of the KBI theory of visual knowledge is that Know and Believe can be used as a measure of knowledge depth. For instance, in the coding of photo postcard number five, Laguna Beach, I indicate that the “Woodie” parked in front of the theatre is most likely a 1939 International. The 1939 International Woodie Wagon was a rare vehicle, even in its day. It took considerable online searching and a bit of luck to determine what it most likely was, and because I do as yet not have total assurance that the year is correct, I have placed the coded data in the Believe column. It is much closer to Know than it was when I indicated that it was a “Woodie,” but I am not absolutely certain that it is a 1939 International Woodie Wagon because I have not validated that information. The KBI construct is a non-linear continuum which operates on multiple axes. It represents cognitive affairs that are often never settled, but which remain fluid and dynamic. The horizon axis on the model situates the placement of know, believe and imagine. The vertical axis situates depth of knowledge, and in the case of imagine, levels of creativity.

Boundary Conditions

The preceding exercise involving knowledge claims from ten documentary photo postcards reveals explicit boundaries between Know, Believe, and Imagine, the visual paradigm. Know means that empirical research has been, or can be, conducted on the answer to a visual query, and that the result will always be the same, and that the answer is grounded in the visual evidence.
Believe means that the stated answer to a visual query has been arrived at by heuristic or other forms of mental processing, and that the result is based on *take-the-best*, even if the answer is generic instead of detailed and specific, and the result is grounded in the visual evidence.

Imagine means that the stated response to a visual query may not be grounded in the visual evidence per se, but rather in the person viewing and interpreting the visual evidence.

Using the Laguna Beach photo postcard and associated data as an example, I will plot the data on a model of the KBI construct and discuss the implications.

Figure 7.20. KBI Model showing the coded data from the Laguna Beach postcard.

Data which is uncontroverted, or fact, is depicted as *Know*. At the lowest level is the fact that the visual data is recorded on a photograph. I could use any documentary photograph or real photo postcard, and the meaning would be the same. I could say that it is a photograph of some buildings, and cars and people, and again that would be correct. When magnified I can see a Shell gas station in the background, and make note of that. In regards to the cars, I would be correct in stating that there is a convertible and a “Woodie” in the photo. Finally, instead of merely commenting on the buildings generically, I could state that under magnification, I can make out the words South Coast on what is apparently a theatre, and read the name of what is playing there on the marquee, which is *Spellbound*, starring Ingrid Bergman and Gregory Peck.
The name of the director is not shown on the photo, but because that information is factual, and can be regarded as part of what the image elicits; part of the rich narrative which emerges.

In the Believe column, information which is believed to be correct but needs corroboration is listed. It also contains data which is conditional or situationally plausible. The possibility remains, however, that some or all of this information may be false. Believe is an informational holding tank of sorts, with information that may ultimately be resolved one way or the other. If it is found to be true, that information moves into the Know category. If it is determined to be false, that part which is false does not move into Imagine, but it moves into the Know category as a negative fact. For example, now that I know that the convertible is not a Chrysler, I could state in the Know category that the convertible is not a Chrysler. In practice, such a usage of negative fact might be useful when positive factual information is unknown, and it would be important to eliminate conjecture by stating what is known to be false.

Finally, Imagine accounts for data imparted to the visual record that can vary by individual. By that I mean, the data is not in the image, and unlike Alfred Hitchcock, the director of Spellbound, it is not a fact elicited from the image. A giant ice cream cone is seen as signage on one of the buildings on the right. I might say this photo makes me feel like purchasing an ice cream cone on my next visit to the beach. Imagine is just that. It is imaginary and it is subjectively personal. Along the same lines, after seeing the International Woodie, I might consider finding and restoring a similar model. The arrow on the right suggests that imagination also has levels of complexity. Imagine has to do with aesthetic reflections on visual images. I could say, “This photo postcard doesn’t do justice to Laguna Beach in the 1940s. I have much better images.” That would be an opinion, grounded in my own aesthetic contemplations, but that opinion is not an empirical fact.
An Exercise in Imagination

As previously noted, visual perception as depicted by KBI requires little if any imagination, per se. It is first and foremost a pragmatic construct, even utilitarian. But that is not the same as saying that seeing is purely objective or theory-free. On the contrary, Ball states in *Analyzing Visual Data* that “All observation and investigation, lay and analytic, is theory-laden; there are no theory-free views of the world.” KBI simply provides a forensic-like tool whereby visual data can be situated.

I will revisit a Plunkett photo postcard shown below (Figure 6.57) used in Phase One of this dissertation to examine seeing and knowing in the context of imagine.

(Figure 6.57. World Famous Hollywood and Vine, c.1949. Plunkett photographer. Source: Melvin Hale.)

---

I can list the visual objects in the photo above with minimal effort. I see cars, people, office buildings, billboards, the sky and various signages. I have an affinity for street scenes, especially those with automobiles in them, because I am fascinated with cars, which may be related to the fact that I grew up in Southern California amidst its undeniable car culture. By the time I was in Junior High School, I could identify the make, model and year of most cars on the road. I replaced the engine in my first car, a 1959 Pontiac Bonneville Coupe, at age sixteen, by myself, using a rented “Cherry Picker.” I had numerous Chilton Repair Manuals in my possession, and they made clear the identifying differences between model years. I studied cars the way someone might study for the bar exam. I took things apart; either fixed or destroyed them, and owned all manner of tools and diagnostic equipment by age eighteen. I rebuilt an automatic transmission in my bedroom, and it worked when I got done. I pay close attention to cars in postcard street scenes, and I usually have opinions about them.

The postcard referenced above has one particular car that I would like to discuss in the context of Imagine. I have colorized and highlighted it in Figure 7.21 below.

![Figure 7.21. Detail showing a 1948 or 1949 Packard Super 8 Sedan in Packard Ivory.](image)

In the photo above you are looking at a 1948 or 1949 Packard Super 8 Sedan. Both years look identical from this perspective. Packard began producing automobiles in 1899 and ceased producing them in 1958. I am going to discuss why I believe that the 1948 Packard design and
the thinking behind it help destroy the company. More specifically, I will focus on the design aspects, because I have often imagined myself as a car designer. Regarding the demise of Packard Motor Car, Ward writes that “The irony, however, was that Packard disappeared in the greatest car-buying spree that America had ever seen. Everyone was buying new cars in 1955 and 1956, but not many were driving Packards home from the showrooms.” Packard stumbled badly in sales after WW2, and never regained their footing. I personally believe that their 1948 model significantly altered the perception of Packard as a premium motor car company, and that the 1948 was both unattractive and uncharacteristic; a marketing dud.

Figure 7.22. Section of Hosking’s 1929 Map of Hollywood, West Hollywood, Beverly Hills. Source: Melvin Hale.

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In the 1920s Packard was the dominant luxury car in America, at times outselling Cadillac and other competitors combined. They were the pride of the American automobile industry. Packard’s’ Hollywood dealership was virtually next door to the Roosevelt Hotel. The map of Hollywood in Figure 7.22 shows Packard’s advertisement in a conspicuous location. In the 1930s Packard continued to dominate the luxury end of the market, and 1937 was its best year ever. A popular motto for Packard in 1937 was “Ask the Man Who Owns One.”

Figure 7.23. 1937 Packard Convertible restored. 1937 Packard being pampered. Source: Oldcarsweekly.com.

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In 1942 Packard was the last of the major automobile makers to introduce a new car, the Packard Clipper Special, just before the onset of hostilities in WW2, which marked the end of domestic automobile production. As such, though it was competitive with its contemporaries, the Packard Clipper never had a chance to mature.\footnote{Daniel Strohl, “Packard Clipper | Hemmings Daily,” Hemmings Motor News, December 7, 2010, http://blog.hemmings.com.} The photograph below shows the last Clipper to roll off the assembly line on February 9, 1942 when automobile production ceased.

![Last Packard Clipper built before WW2](image)

**Figure 7.24.** Last Packard built before WW2, a 1942 Clipper Special. Source: blog.hemmings.com

The sign on top of the car says: “Here’s the last PACKARD | ‘Til we win the war – | It’s “all out” on ENGINES | To even the score!” The company then focused on creating aircraft engines and marine engines for the war effort.
The 1947 Packard was essentially a 1942 model with a few changes in trim. See Figure 7.25 below.

Figure 7.25. 1947 Packard Clipper. Source: www.flickr.com/photos/argentla/4336310185/

The 1948 Packard (Figure 7.26) was a radical departure in many ways, both inside and out. The sumptuous interiors that once coddled its pampered occupants in the lap of luxury had been downgraded in attempt to enter the mid-range market. While some raved about the new look, it also gained the nickname the “inverted bathtub car” or the “pregnant elephant,” monikers that are not exactly endearing, unless you like riding in a bathtub. I am now going to graphically create what I think Packard should have done, style-wise, and why. Because their main
competitor in the upper end of the market was Cadillac, I believe they should have observed Cadillac’s design trends, while continuing to cater to their traditional well-heeled clientele, the later being of prime importance because Packard was a niche player.

Figure 7.27. 1947 and 1948 Cadillac Sedans. Source: buyoldcars.com and barrett-jackson.com respectively.

The main design cues that Packard missed on its 1948 design, was moving the headlights to the far edges of the car, and opening up the grille, which was too narrow and too tall on the 1947. They also needed to define integrated fenders. General Motors had already made these changes on all their models in 1941, which is considered the signature year for Cadillac styling.

Figure 7.28. 1941 Cadillac Fleetwood 60 Special. Source: flipacars.com

On the following page I will provide my concept of what a modestly restyled 1948 Packard might have looked like in its evolution to becoming a modern post-war automobile.

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The concept car I have created retains 70% of the pre-war Packard Clipper, which though dated somewhat when compared to the 1948 Cadillac, it retains the crisp styling that Packard was known for. Even the 1948 Cadillac had retained pontoon quarter panels at the rear of the car.

Figure 7.29. Melvin Hale’s 1948 Packard Clipper Concept Car in Pacific Blue. Source: Melvin Hale.

The most striking design change I made is to the grille, which I widened, curved, lowered and opened up. In a sense, it is Mercedes-esque, but it retains the Packard lines, only bolder. I moved the headlights as far to the outsides of the fenders as possible, and lowered the chrome spear-like trim on the hood to reach the grille to give the appearance of lowering the car. I would also have retained the sumptuous interior of the 1947 Clipper, shown below.

Figure 7.30. Interior of a 1947 Packard Clipper (updated with seatbelts). Source: SecondChanceGarage.com.
Lastly, I would have freshened up the paint choices for the 1948 Clipper as shown below and on the following pages; twelve colors in all, with four choices of roof colors for those who preferred a two-tone look. I believe that what Packard needed least of all was radical sheet metal, and a gamble on a new set of customers. In the car business, perception plays a large role, and the 1948 Packard re-design, coupled with a reduction in amenities and status, proved fatal.

![Color choices for Melvin Hale’s 1948 Packard Clipper Concept Car. Source: Melvin Hale.](image)

Figure 7.31 Color choices for Melvin Hale’s 1948 Packard Clipper Concept Car. Source: Melvin Hale.
Figure 7.32  Color choices for Melvin Hale’s 1948 Packard Clipper Concept Car. Source: Melvin Hale.
I offer this demonstration of visualization to show that imagination can be manifest in multiple ways and/or levels. Gooding suggests that “Visualization is an integral part of a collective process of theorizing and engineering the world.” In order to create my Packard Clipper Concept Car, I had to have a mastery of a graphics program. Imagine operates on both a horizontal and a vertical axis in the model. The vertical axis represents mental effort. It required considerably more mental and technical effort to create the likeness of the concept car I envisioned than to simply discuss or describe it. The visual image and the metadata together produced a significantly more holistic message. You can literally see what I am referring to. In

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all fairness to Packard, I do acknowledge that other carmakers made similar designs in the postwar era. Nash and Hudson did, and both also disappeared before the 1950s were over. Ford Motor Company’s 1949-51 Mercury Monterey and Lincoln Cosmopolitan were similar, but in my opinion much better designed overall, and today they are some of the most sought after cars in the industry for customizing projects.

Figure 7.34. Other cars made with a “bathtub” design in the immediate postwar era. Source: Melvin Hale.
CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Vision and Memory

In Seeing Objects, The Structure of Visual Representation, Tacca presents a neurophilosophical theory of the structure of visual and mental object recognition, in which she contends that “The visual system provides us with experience and knowledge of the external world. The ongoing flow of information that reaches the retina is filtered and combined so that we can identify the different objects in a visual scene.”

She suggests that objects held in memory bind with incoming neural information, and sights of similar but different objects form new bonds. I refer to these cognitive mechanisms simply as a priori knowledge. This a priori knowledge does not mean that we already know everything about the external world, but we know what the external world is about, and where we should situate “new” sensory information, even if it means extending mental classifications or creating new ones. By adulthood, we are deft at this process, such that it occurs on an unconscious level. “For most people, some degree of competence at observation is a sine qua non of membership of society.”

Mubi Brighenti turns to Kant for a similar observation:

In the Kantian philosophical tradition, the nexus between seeing and understanding is explained through the intervention of a-priori schemata that we use to segment the continuum of sensory experience. Thus there is a circularity between visual perception and knowledge: to perceive something as something – or in Kantian terms, to subsume an object into a concept – we need prior knowledge about how properly to segment the


242 Ball and Smith, Analyzing Visual Data, 1.
phenomenal appearances. Such prior knowledge is a scheme, a procedural rule by which a-priori categories, which are pure forms of thought, are associated with sensible institutions.

In short, expectations guide perception by defining them.\textsuperscript{243}

People believe they know, even if only superficially, where to situate visual information. In the preceding coding exercise, I could have used the Know and Believe columns to reference all my observations. The Believe column is not automatically associated with \textit{lesser} or \textit{suspect} information. Believe may in fact be associated with greater and more detailed information, but it lacks the level of verifiability required for dogmatic information. Depending on the knowledge of the individual, Believe may in fact be more factually-rich than Know, which again requires only the lowest level of knowing. Visual objects which fail to substantially mesh with that which has already been schematized is that which is transposed to a different register of visibility.\textsuperscript{244}

When tested in art practice, KBI as a mental construct for creating color compositions unfailingly functioned as a holistic entity, conforming to the ecological needs of art production. In order to transpose KBI into a model of visual perception, and a unified theory of visual knowledge in LIS, the data would also have to be evaluated according to its fitness for this objective.\textsuperscript{245} In this role, in which semiotic agency is invoked, the KBI model has to demonstrate its flexibility. Gooding writes in \textit{Visual Theories in Science} that “The important

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{243} Mubi Brighenti, \textit{Visibility in Social Theory and Social Research}, 11.
\item \textsuperscript{244} Ibid., 25.
\end{itemize}
feature of any representation is not whether it is a ‘private’ mental image or a ‘public’ expression, rather it is plasticity – how readily it can be adapted to the changing demands of a creative process. Plasticity is needed to explore possibilities and negotiate meanings.”

KBI offers a flexible framework in which meanings can circulate and be negotiated. An example of this flexibility can be found in the example given above regarding the International Woodie Wagon found in the Laguna Beach photograph. I was uncertain when I coded it whether or not it was a 1939 model year, so I placed that information in the Believe column. Upon further research, I discovered a photo of the exact model, designating it as a 1939 model (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1. Photo of a 1939 International Woodie Wagon at the Chateau Frontenac.

The discovery of the photo in Figure 8.1 confirmed what I had arrived at heuristically, now allowing me to move the data from the Believe column to the Know column. This is what

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plasticity and flexibility in the model is all about. Information can move around in the model, yet always be accounted for. Although this model was developed as an amateur endeavor at the time of its conception, it was borne of an ecological analysis.

Star and Griesemer state that “An advantage of the ecological analysis is that it does not presuppose an epistemological primacy for any one viewpoint; the viewpoint of the amateur is not inherently better or worse than that of the professionals for instance.” 247 Star and Griesemer studied several groups of actors who took part in collecting, classifying and reporting data at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of Berkeley, during its early years. The participants included university administrators, professors, research scientists, curators, amateur collectors, private sponsors and patrons. They determined that the definition of boundary objects allowed the various entities to cooperate and disseminate results, although the outcomes were not always based on consensus. They further concluded that “scientific work neither loses its internal diversity nor is consequently retarded by lack of consensus.” 248 My observation of KBI as both an artist and as a social scientist, testing the KBI theory by rigorous methods, is that there is consensus between art and science as it relates to the reliability of the model and the repeatability of the results.


248 Ibid., 388.
Artifact-based Research

The KBI theory emerged from an artifact-based practice. Denzin and Lincoln write that “Artifact-oriented studies can play an important role in alerting scholars and lay audiences to information and materials they may otherwise know little about.” The particular artifact I am referencing here is the real photo postcard, and more specifically the genre of postcards called street scenes. The abundance of material culture, the built environment and social ideology that street scenes store in visual format is exceptional. They are rich sources of social information for the information seeker willing to engage with them, be they amateur or professional. This study highlights the need to preserve and explore them. They represent the phenomenology of a new domain of knowledge. While the taking of a photograph is an intentional act, calling into question the motives of the photographer, Luc Sante reminds us that unlike a bow and arrow aimed at a target, “a camera by its nature ensures that some kind of target will always be hit, if not necessarily the intended target nor in the intended way.” A certain level of randomness is therefore associated with all photographs.

The instantiation of the KBI model allows social scientists to objectify visual information in a multitude of ways that are compatible with visual thinking. Mubi Brighenti suggests the following array of ways of seeing, and how seeing is modulated: “There are so many ways and styles of perceiving, seeing, beholding, looking at, viewing, descrying, glancing, catching sight of, glimpsing, spotting, watching, inspecting, detecting, noting, noticing, recognizing, scrutinizing, making out, picking out, setting eyes on, peeping and spying. Apparently, as

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Wittgenstein put it, there is no *penuria nominum.*”  

Living in an age in which more and more information is being visually disseminated gives urgency for LIS and all social science domains to make peace with the ascendance of non-literary forms. Barnard warns that “Unless an account is given of how that understanding [of visual material] has been arrived at, that material’s power and effectiveness operate without our knowledge, or behind our backs.”  

Before the dawn of the Internet, Lynne V. Cheney wrote, in *Humanities in America: a report to the President, the Congress, and the American people,* “Those who worry about the future of the book in the age of the image have powerful reasons for their concern.”  

My concern as an academic is not that images will replace books, although that is the concern of many. I am concerned that images have yet to be reckoned as the epistemic equal to the written word, in whatever format the written word appears.  

In Phase One of this dissertation I intentionally used as many images as I believed were necessary to create a rich ethnographic narrative that utilized images not as illustration for the written word, but as illumination and foundation. Ball writes that “In the field of anthropology, traditionally words have mediated visuals, such that language has been allowed to do the work of 

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251 Mubi Brighenti, *Visibility in Social Theory and Social Research,* 2.


eyes." In the Preface to *Images of Information*, Wagner wrote in 1979 that “Visual social science isn’t something new…but it might as well be.” I acknowledge that institutional progress has been made since Wagner published his book, but in order to keep up with the volume of visual information made available by computerization and the Internet, academic culture will need to arrive at the speed at which visual culture is moving.

*Research and Rigor*

An appropriate concern in all formats of research is rigor, and that will always be a concern of the utmost importance to the academy. However, even in rigorous environments risks must be taken, and dead ends followed to their logical conclusion in order for progress to be made. Barnard defends the type of qualitative research that I have used to explicate KBI in this manner: “The following paragraphs will argue that the objects of natural science are not the same kinds of things as the objects of social science, that they cannot be studied in the same way and that visual culture is best studied and explained by means of social-scientific traditions.” In social-scientific research those traditions are primarily qualitative.

In a highly quoted book on theoretical psychology, also written in the 1970s called *The Psychology of Knowing*, Quine, writing in a section entitled *Epistemology Naturalized*, states that “Two cardinal tenets of empiricism remained unassailable, however, and so remain to this day. One is that whatever evidence there is for science is sensory evidence. The other, to which


I shall recur, is that all inculcation of meaning of words must rest ultimately on sensory evidence.”  Computers have not obliterated these tenets.  KBI is a theory of visual knowledge grounded in sensory and cognitive evidence and interpretive qualitative analysis.  The test of the KBI theory suggests that it is a valuable tool by which valid and repeatable knowledge claims can be made, and when used in conjunction with other social scientific methods, a powerful discursive system from which rich narratives of social life and culture can be produced.

Reliability and Validity

I touched on this subject earlier, but I will again address it.  In all fields that engage in scientific inquiry, reliability and validity of findings are important.  Reliability is primarily concerned with replicability, either by the same or independent research.  Validity refers to the accuracy of the findings.  For ethnographic research, which is descriptive in nature, reliability and validity might better be accomplished by a “focus on issues of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.”  This study tests the constructs of the KBI theory as a model for visual knowledge and its applicability to LIS, and concludes that it is credible, transferable, dependable, and conformable.

Limitations

This study was confined to studying documentary photographs.  It did not evaluate KBI in the context of other forms of visual imagery.

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258 Peter Hernon and Candy Schwartz, “Reliability and Validity,” Library & Information Science Research 31 (no. 2, 2009) 73.
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

“It is important to keep in mind that visual perception involves all the senses and, also the memory. What we experience as seeing is interconnected with many other things.”

Richard D. Zakia\textsuperscript{259}

Scientific discovery is often made in the context of related discoveries in the same or unrelated fields. The KBI theory of visual perception finds grounding in two disciplines. Berger, celebrated author of \textit{Ways of Seeing}, articulates a social science position. He theorizes that the objects in any photograph are already known. The theory of fast and frugal heuristics, which I use to ground the speedy decisions required for visual perception, originated in cognitive psychology and has found proponents in law, computer science and other fields. Psychologists Gigerenzer and Gaissemaier, noted researchers in the area of Take The Best strategy of decision-making, have taken the lead in this research.

The key research question this dissertation has addressed is: What is a unified theory of visual knowledge – specifically, what is the role of knowing, believing, and imagining in visual knowledge? The findings are that KBI is a holistic and irreducible cognitive model for situating visual information, and it is reliable, flexible and verifiable. It is a unified theory of visual perception that can assist researchers in constructing knowledge claims from documentary photographs, and conceivably other forms of visual experience. The complexity of the biomechanical and psychobiological aspects of vision have been studied at length by researchers in disciplines as diverse as medicine, cognitive psychology and cultural anthropology, making it

difficult to extract from the immensity of those studies a simplified paradigm for seeing and knowing. However, as a by-product of art practice, I was required to construct a simple but powerful set of visual queries to direct my artistic endeavors, and it is my thesis that these three queries form an irreducible unified epistemology for visual perception. Records of seeing provided a stage for empirical and heuristic interpretations, as well as for personal judgments, and within this framework, visual interpretation occurred.

The mass production of literature presaged a turn towards the institutionalization of linguistic literacy, which in turn gave rise to the discipline of Library and Information Studies, and other social science disciplines. As I have shown, linguistic literacy does not operate independently of visual literacy, however, the invention of photography, and the mass production of records of seeing did not launch a parallel movement to institutionalize visual literacy as a potentially equal partner in knowledge production. Instead, photographs have been routinely afforded second-class status in the academy, cast in a scholarly supporting role to literary constructs. Photographs, particularly documentary photographs, are potentially rich repositories of cultural information, but due in part to their non-linear construction and multi-subject matter content, as objects of classification, they have been overlooked and/or used primarily for topical and illustrative purposes throughout the social sciences.

The rise of visual culture, brought about largely through computerization and the Internet, has elevated visuality to a new prominence in social communications. Simultaneously, plastic digital forms of photographic production have eclipsed fixed analog forms, and notions of unreliability have been interjected into the ontological framework for understanding photographs bringing uncertainty into their interpretation. This plasticity makes the need for a simple visual paradigm with which to investigate photographs all the more imperative. The naïve idea that a
photograph is merely a reflection of reality, if ever contemplated, must now contend with more than the subjectivity of authorship. In the Digital Age, the ease with which digital photographs can be subverted has to be considered on both ontological and epistemological levels.

KBI is offered as a theory of seeing and knowing, yet in relationship to the preceding paragraph, it can also be used in a forensic-like manner to interrogate the validity of digital photography. As a digital artist, I know how to subvert digital images, and I also know how to recognize traces of forgery and manipulation in digital imagery, by asking the same three basic questions: What do I know? What do I believe? and What do I imagine? Even if the outcome is still one of uncertainty, I find it useful to employ KBI as a discursive system for situating the visual elements in the discourse of my investigation. I view this forensic function of KBI as a significant contribution to pragmatic uses of the theory.

In visual-based research, the investigator enters a maze of information s/he can make sense of in various ways. The power and benefit of the KBI construct, which describes a state of mind, is that it allows the researcher to pose visual queries, and rapidly situate the results. Real photo postcards were the principal subject of both phases of this study. I employed rephotography, visual ethnography and photo-elicitation, alongside KBI, to create a powerful discursive system which immersed me in historical narratives, and the relevance of those narratives to present day culture. Unlike streaming images, which Mirzoeff compares to weapons, because “So many images [are] being created that there [is] never time to pause and discuss any one in particular,” still images are already paused, waiting to be explored. Sante,

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a devoted collector of postcards himself, states that “You can derive enormous volumes of data from a single postcard…” What makes these images so intriguing and seemingly rich in information? Sante suggests that we see life *somehow unfinished*. I suggest that we see the excess of the everyday on the one hand, and that we also can see what is *not* represented and thus left out of the historical record on the other. Both extremes offer rich opportunity for research.

This study highlights the actuality that visual perception is a non-linear experience. “Moving around in images” is how Falkow describes the mind’s sensory interaction with visual images. Because photographs are capable of storing large amounts of information in a small area, and this is especially true of RPPC street scenes, in my narratives I have encountered a broad array of subject matter. I followed a small portion of what was there; what interested me, and what I believed would be of interest to others. In the process, I discovered a wealth of cultural information that I would never have discovered otherwise. Employing the tenets of KBI, I was able to situate facts, potential facts, and my own voice and opinions. The “I” in KBI allows the researcher to be an integral part of the narrative, not a nameless faceless pseudo disinterested party making *objective* observations. In this sense KBI is *social*.

While my study involved working primarily with old photographs, posing little concern for confidentiality, other visual studies in which KBI can be transferred involve individuals and communities, bringing into focus issues of the ethics, privacy, public policy, politics and law. Visual studies include visual literacy, the built environment, digital technologies, painting, television, performance, video, and material and popular culture. I believe that KBI is a relevant

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261 Sante, *Folk Photography*, 17.
and transferable tool that can be useful in all of these areas, particularly where questions of how
we know what we know are being asked, and where descriptions of visual materials are needed.

The vast amount of visual data that is being produced and consumed in this era calls out
for an efficient process by which to make sense of it. I believe that KBI as a unified theory of
visual knowledge will be useful for Library and Information Studies and social science research
in the future in ways that are not imminently obvious. I have touched upon the value of KBI to
LIS and archival studies. I also envision ways in which it can be useful in anthropology, visual
methodology, psychology, law, history, and autism research. KBI, as an irreducible ternary
construct, certainly resists the notion that visual epistemology operates as a binary mechanism,
which must be accounted for with respect to applications in the physical sciences, and to
artificial forms of knowledge production.

Visual perception is in constant operation in human life. We reckon our day from the
moment we open our eyes, meaning, the moment at which visual perception is in effect. In a
book entitled Visual Cognition, the authors look at various insults to the brain, and their effects
on visual processing, such as the loss of ability to recognize familiar things, and conclude that
aside from such injuries “Throughout our lives...we add to our store of visual appearances of
things, whether through learning to recognize the faces of new acquaintances or learning new
skills or hobbies which introduce us to novel categories of object.”

I expect the KBI theory to become an important tool in making scientific sense of visual experience and visual information.

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Humphreys and Bruce, Visual Cognition, 191.
Appendix A

Original book plate of PLANTS USED IN CLOTHING & CORDAGE showing poor condition of paper.
Appendix B

Revised book plate of PLANTS USED IN CLOTHING & CORDAGE showing new background digitally created.
Appendix C

Original book plate of PLANTS USED AS FOOD showing poor condition of paper.
Appendix D

Revised book plate of PLANTS USED AS FOOD showing new background digitally created.
Appendix E

CAR IN THE CACTUS
First ArtistLA color composition from a black-and-white image (before and after).
Appendix F

CHI CHI AND CUBANA
Third ArtistLA color composition from a black-and-white RPPC (before and after).
Appendix G

ArtistLA.com Homepage, 3-10-2012.
Appendix H

*LA As Subject Archives Bazaar 2012 Poster Excerpt.*

## LOS ANGELES ARCHIVES BAZAAR

Saturday, October 27, 2012  
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY**  
University of Southern California  
3550 Trousdale Parkway  
Los Angeles, CA 90089

**FREE ADMISSION**  
Parking is available at Parking Structure X for $10.  
Enter campus through Gate 3 at USC McCarthy Way. McCarthy Way is between Jefferson and Exposition Boulevards on Figueroa Street. For maps of the campus, go to www.usc.edu/maps. The campus is also accessible via the Expo Line. Stop at either the Jefferson/USC or Expo Park/USC stations.

**CONTACT**  
For questions, contact Tyson Gaskill at (213) 740-2070 or gaskill@usc.edu.

## PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

**SPECIAL EVENT**

A VERY QUICK TOUR OF LOS ANGELES AREA ARCHIVES  
Just as speed dating brings together lonely hearts, this quick-paced series of 5-minute presentations will help connect scholars, students, and history buffs with the archival collections they need. More than a dozen L.A. as Subject members will share one notable item from their archives as a way of introducing their collections. Bring a notepad, watch the presentations, and then head down to the exhibition hall for a second date.

**PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

START YOUR ENGINES: HOW L.A. BECAME THE CENTER OF CAR CULTURE  
Drag races. Drive-thrus. The 405. Detroit may be the car capital of the world, but Los Angeles has long been associated with car culture. Learn about Southern California’s special connection with the automobile as panelists Leslie Kendall, curator of the Petersen Automotive Museum, and Ken Berg, an archivist at the Motorsports Education Foundation, discuss the history of motoring in Los Angeles.

CSI LOS ANGELES: ARCHIVAL CASE STUDY INVESTIGATIONS  
Like the forensic detectives on television, history researchers can be confronted with a baffling number of contradictory sources and dead ends when trying to untangle a mystery. In this discussion, specialists analyze the difficulty in piecing together scanty historical data to tell an electrifying story.

WISH YOU WERE HERE: LOS ANGELES IN POSTCARDS  
Postcards have been used since the nineteenth century as a way to inform friends of a pleasurable vacation destination. Collectors David Boulé and Melvin Hale discuss how Los Angeles, with its year-round sunny weather, has a long tradition of advertising its charms through this inexpensive form of media.
Appendix I

Awards won by Hale in the California State Fair Fine Art Competition

Crystal Award of Excellence, 2007

Awards of Merit
Hale selected by *Art Business News* as a Trendsetter and Emerging Artist in March 2008

**Melvin Hale**

With each piece, digital artist Melvin Hale strives to produce a contradiction. His motto: "Vintagelike you've never seen it" attempts to put a new spin on images of the past by dissecting vintage black-and-white photographs and layering the pieces into a mosaic. The multi-layered pieces are then re-imagined in living color. Hale calls the artistic style Digital Realism, and it oftentimes takes more than 60 hours for him to create a single work.

At the 2007 California State Fair, Hale was the only artist to take home three fine-art awards. He competed against all traditional categories. Judges were taken by his creativity in utilizing modern technology to add lifelike color to vintage images. Coloring images has become Hale's creative passion because he can bring vintage images from the past to life in a way that no one has ever seen. His originals and limited editions are available as stretched canvas giclées and are collected worldwide.

**ARTIST STATEMENT:**

"I find a photograph that tells a story and get a feeling for the essence of the moment in which it was created, which becomes the basis of the artwork. I use known colors whenever possible. The green NBC building on my "Radio City - Hollywood" piece is the actual color of that building more than 60 years ago. The teal blue car in "Chi Chi and Cubana" was an actual color used in the 1940s."

For more information visit: www.ArtistLA.com
Appendix K

*Chi Chi and Cubana* acquired by the Sandor Family Collection


January 2009

Richard and Ellen Sandor have selected several works of art created by Melvin Hale for their personal residence. The Sandors are listed among the top 100 private collectors of art and photography in the United States. Their collections include Warhol, Lange and Van Der Zee. (Breaking News, ArtistLA.com)
Appendix L

Appendix M

*Art*istLA art featured on *HipHop Weekly Magazine* website, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2011
Appendix N

PIX2CANVAS TRADEMARK

Pix2Canvas.com URL acquired through Network Solutions, December 2000.
Bibliography

Method of compilation: The bibliographic citations were accumulated through manual searching, online searches through LISA, ERIC, ISI, the UCLA Library Online Catalog, Web of Science Database and Google Scholar. Search terms included visual literacy, postcards, photographs, memory, and visual literacy. The references are listed alphabetically by author (or authors) and, if possible, with full title and publication data, and presented according to the Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition (CMS) bibliographic format.


http://esotouric.com/about.


http://hollywoodheritage.org/newsarchive/spring01/palladium.html.


