

**International Studies Association (ISA) 16-19 March 2011, Montreal  
Call for Participants for a Proposed Panel:**

**(Ab)using Images? Methodological approaches to the study of  
perception and visuality in critical security studies**

*Panel Abstract*

The “reality” of an event is the product of perception, both as the event materializes in time, and after the fact, when visuals/images are often all that remain; as representations – if not evidence – of the event have taken place. The creation and propagation of images has radically changed in recent years. On the one hand, soldiers in battle are on the receiving end of streams of visual data, from drone and satellite feeds, while on the other hand, visuals are easily uploaded to YouTube or Facebook by eyewitnesses, soldiers or insurgents, for dissemination throughout popular culture settings or platforms. Today a wide selection of photos and videos shape how we perceive, practice and study security critically. Distinct from photographic representations, practices of visibility and surveillance also represent a growing area of interest for critical security studies.

While there is a growing discipline of surveillance studies (Haggerty and Ericson 2006; Lyon 2001; Murakami Wood 2010), a body of work in cultural studies from the 1980s (Sontag) as well as recent theoretical work on photography and the impact of images (Campbell 2003a; 2003b; 2004; Butler 2007), there has not been strong push for a methodology of studying visuals in (international) critical security studies

With the facilitation of this panel we are hoping to answer a number of questions:

- How are images used in the field of critical security studies and security practices?
- Is it possible to create a methodological toolbox for studying visuality and perception?
- What are different methods to study visuals in critical security studies?
- How do we break the spectator relationship between the audience and the object/visual? Is this desirable? Is it possible to critically interpret visuals?
- What implications would new methodologies have for rationalist social science?
- What implications would new methodologies have on training soldiers to distinguish and react to higher densities of perceptual information?

People with backgrounds in cultural studies, media studies, surveillance studies with interest in critical security studies are highly encouraged to submit abstracts – limited to a maximum of 200 words as per ISA requirements – along with ISA requested information regarding institutional affiliation by Thursday May 27<sup>th</sup> with the aim of meeting the ISA deadline of June 1<sup>st</sup>. Panels on this theme will be proposed for the International Political Sociology section. Abstracts should be submitted to both:

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