

Thinking about photography as an ethnographic means for field research raises many considerations on its possibility of connecting two disciplinary areas both of which are complex and continuously changing: anthropology and the culture of image. If considered from an overall point of view, the communicative nature of visual language constitutes an important factor in the anthropological research, as the latter is aimed to understand and interpret voices belonging to other cultures.

Thus building up a specific competence in photography, within an interaction with the anthropological knowledge, means linking the theme of visual perception with the activity of knowing the “Other”, through the use of the shooting tool.

The program I am specifically developing has begun with the presentation “Photography in anthropological research”, which I reported at the round table that took place in Prato in 2004, and has then been carried on with the Visual Anthropology Workshop, divided in two different sessions (method and technique, Padova, 2008) and the Photographic Anthropology Workshop (Monselice, 2008). I integrated an analysis of the photographic material collected during my researches in Italy and in the USA with the historical and technical aspects of the visual dimension in anthropology, in order to build a didactic itinerary useful to both researchers and people operating in the social communication field.

Reflection and the practical use of this methodology during the lessons highlight the communicative and documentary potentialities of this shooting technique, which continues to represent a basic instrument for the participant observation which is typical of the human sciences.