‘Indications of India’:

Working with the Embodied Experience of Photography in Stella Snead’s Photographs, Photobooks, and Photo-Collages

Volume One of Two

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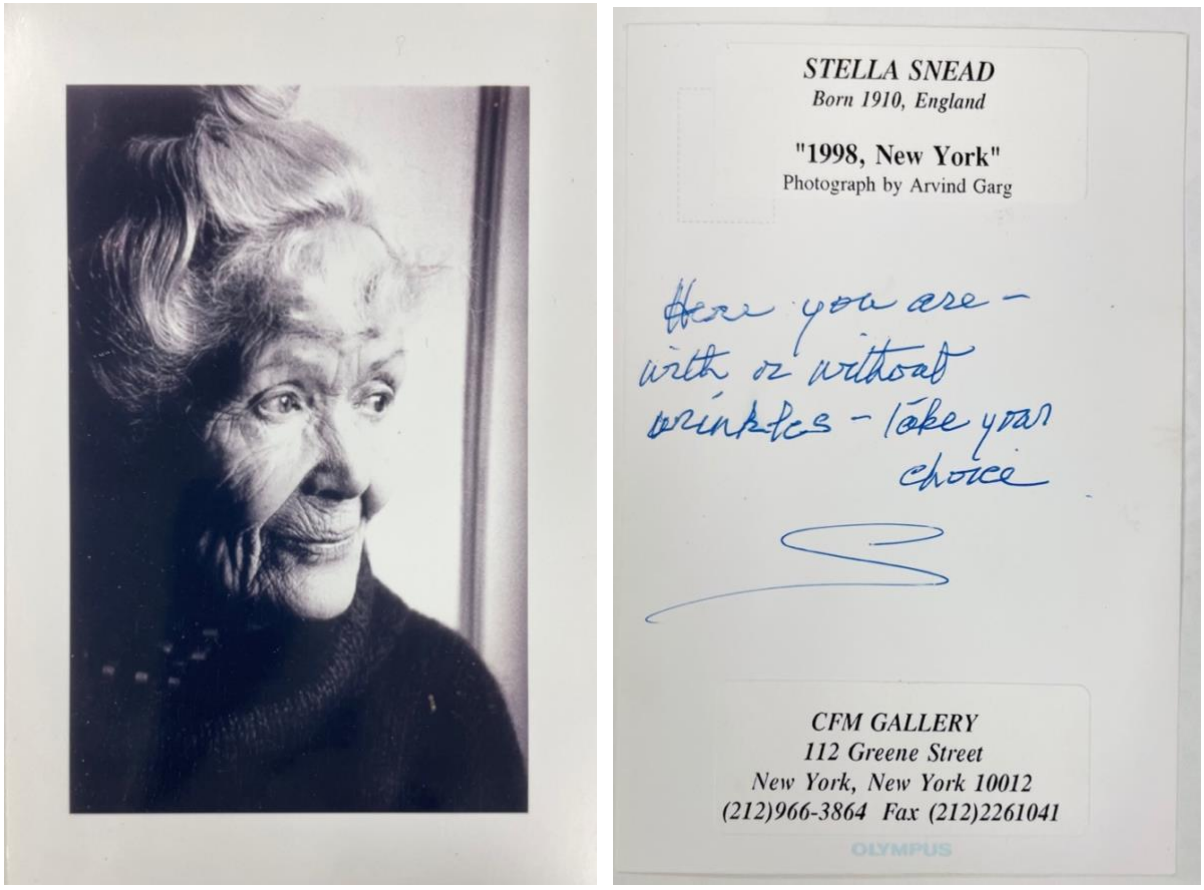
Abstract

This thesis examines the multifaceted artistic contributions of Stella Snead (1910–2006), a painter, photographer, collagist, and traveller, with surrealist inclinations. Employing a phenomenological approach to study the embodied experience of photography, it provides the first extensive investigation and theoretical evaluation of Snead's work and explores how her work intersects with the studies of women artists, photography, and surrealism.

Over the past thirty years, there has been a resurgence of interest in women artists associated with surrealism. While artists such as Leonora Carrington, Dorothea Tanning, Leonor Fini have become canonical women surrealists, Snead remains on the periphery and receives little academic attention. This thesis, however, does not aim to simply insert Snead into current historiographies. By examining her work through a phenomenological lens, it offers a crucial perspective for evaluating Snead's place in art history and reflecting on potential issues within the historiographies of surrealism and women surrealists.

The first chapter examines Snead's approach to travel and photography in India. The second chapter focuses on Snead's photobook *Shiva's Pigeons: An Experience of India* (1972) and her photographic exhibition *People Figures–India* (1982) as part of the Festival of India (1982) to evaluate how these works challenge conventional representations of India. The third chapter analayses Snead's method of reinventing her personal photographic archive to make photo-collages, aiming to understand the significance of manipulating embodied experience and rewriting memories.

This thesis enhances the understanding of women photographers/artists who worked on the margins of surrealism, contributing to the historiography of surrealism. Furthermore, it experiments with a new dimension in the phenomenological approach to the studies of photography and highlights the significance of examining archival materials, which significantly contributes to the understanding of the artist's working method and the interconnectedness of the mediums.



Stella Snead (1910-2006)

Table of Contents

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of my original work, and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references.

List of Illustrations

Introduction

Chapter One

Fig. 1.1 Unknown photographer, *Family Group*, c. 1950s, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.2 Unknown photographer, *Me, Ba and Maya*, c. 1950s, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.3 Unknown photographer, untitled, c. 1950s, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.4 Unknown photographer, untitled, c. 1950s, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.5 "Juhu houses, 1959. On the left is Nani's house, on the right, Stella's. Photograph by Stella Snead". Image from Kirin Narayan, *My Family and Other Saints*, 11.

Fig. 1.6 Stella Snead, *Dundeshwar II, Almora, Katarmal*, 1960, contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.7 Stella Snead, *Hampi*, 1960, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.8 Stella Snead, *Hampi II*, 1960, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.9 A spread from Stella Snead, Wendy Doniger, and George Michell, *Animals in Four Worlds: Sculptures from India*, 64–65.

Fig. 1.10 Stella Snead, *Pravina's Work Factory*, 1960, contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.11 Stella Snead, *Pravina's Work Factory*, 1960, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.12 Stella Snead, *Chandigarh*, 1961, contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.13 Stella Snead, untitled, 1961, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.14 Stella Snead, *Bedsa*, 1964, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.15 Stella Snead, *Rajasthan VIII*, 1962, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.16 Stella Snead, *P's F* (Pravina's Factory), 1965, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.17 Stella Snead, *Numala's*, 1965, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.18 A spread in Jon Godden, Rumer Godden, and Stella Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons: An Experience of India*, 123.

Fig. 1.19 Stella Snead, *Bangalore, Ooty II*, 1967, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.20 Stella Snead, *Bombay Bazaar IV*, 1968, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.21 Stella Snead, *B. B. People Figures*, 1968, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.22 Stella Snead, *Rajasthan VIII*, 1962, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 1.23 Stella Snead, *Rajasthan VIII*, 1962, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Chapter Two

Fig. 2.37 A spread in *Shiva's Pigeons*, 148-149.

Fig. 2.38 Judy Dater, *Joyce Goldstein in Her Kitchen*, 1969.

Fig. 2.39 Stella Snead, *People Figures–India*, 1982, exhibition view, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.40 Stella Snead, *People Figures–India*, 1982, front cover of the exhibition catalogue, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.41 Stella Snead, untitled, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.42 Stella Snead, untitled, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.43 Stella Snead, *People Figures–India*, 1982, exhibition view, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.44 Stella Snead, *People Figures–India*, 1982, exhibition view, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.45 *Lala Deen Dayal: The Eminent Indian Photographer 1855–1910*, June–July 1982, Swiss Cottage Library, London, front cover of the exhibition catalogue, the British Library.

Fig. 2.46 *Lala Deen Dayal: The Eminent Indian Photographer 1855–1910*, June–July, 1982, a page of the exhibition catalogue, the British Library.

Fig. 2.47 *Lala Deen Dayal: The Eminent Indian Photographer 1855–1910*, June–July, 1982, a page of the exhibition catalogue, the British Library.

Fig. 2.48 Stella Snead, *People Figures–India*, 1982, exhibition view, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.49 A page in the catalogue for the Festival of India: Doshi Saryu, *Pageant of Indian Art: Festival of India in Great Britain*, 125.

Fig. 2.50 Unknown photographer, *M. Palaniappan in Aditi: A Celebration of Life*, 1985, book cover of Rebecca M. Brown, *Displaying Time: The Many Temporalities of the Festival of India*.

Fig. 2.51 Stella Snead, "Large figures of a type found in fields or by the roadside to the south of Madras," no. 6 in Stella Snead's exhibition catalogue *People Figures–India*, 1982.

Fig. 2.52 Stella Snead, *People Figures–India*, 1982, exhibition view, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.53 A page from Stella Snead, *Can Drowning Be Fun? A Nonsense Book*.

Fig. 2.54 Stella Snead, untitled, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.55 Christian Haugen, *Elephanta Caves Trimurti*, 2009.

Fig. 2.56 Stella Snead, *Large and Curious Figures beside a Fairground, Rajasthan*, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.57 Stella Snead, *People Figures–India*, 1982, exhibition invitation card, front and back, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.58 James Thrall Soby, *Max Among Some of His Favorite Dolls*, 1942.

Fig. 2.59 James Thrall Soby, *Portrait of Max Ernst*, 1942.

Fig. 2.60 Stella Snead, *52nd Birthday Party, Kota Rajasthan, Circuit House Garden*, 1962, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.61 Stella Snead, *Lakshmi*, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.62 Illustration of the goddess Lakshmi.

Fig. 2.63 Stella Snead, *Assam II*, c. 1969, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.64 Stella Snead, *People Figures–India*, 1982, exhibition view, detail, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.65 Stella Snead, untitled, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.66 Stella Snead, *Wax Figure, Bandia*, undated, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.67 Stella Snead, untitled, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 2.68 Unknown photographer, *Visitors at the exhibition The Family of Man* (traveling exhibition), Jehangir Art Gallery, Bombay, India, 1956.

Fig. 2.69 A spread of the magazine *Marg*, December 1960: 'Birth' photographs taken by B. F. Ferreira, N. Ramakrishna, and Rabindu Sengupta.

Chapter Three

Fig. 3.25 Stella Snead, *Time Transfixed (apologies to Magritte)*, c. 1974, 16x20 in., photo-collage print, courtesy of Pavel Zoubok Fine Art.

Fig. 3.26 Rene Magritte, *La Duree poignardee (Time transfixed)*, 1938, 57½ × 38 3⁄16 in., oil on canvas.

Fig. 3.27 Stella Snead, *Goa*, 1965, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.28 Stella Snead, *Women Devotees Listening to the Guru at an Ashram at Beas, Panjab*, 1965, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.29 Stella Snead, *Juhu, Ladder*, 1967, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.30 Stella Snead, *Dec of N.Y. XI*, 1967, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.31 Stella Snead, *Trap to Capture the Marvellous*, c. 1972, 16x20 in., photo-collage, courtesy of Pavel Zoubok Fine Art.

Fig. 3.32 Conroy Maddox, *Theatre of Our Dreams*, 1972, oil on canvas.

Fig. 3.33 El Lissitzky, *Self-portrait: The Constructor*, 1924, gelatin silver print.

Fig. 3.34 Stella Snead, *Paisee House*, 1964, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.35 Stella Snead, *Snake Vista*, c. 1974, 8x10 in., photo-collage print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.36 "Hindon River Mills, Ghaziabad, India. 1969-73. Architect: Achyut Kanvinde (1916-2002). Engineer: Mahendra Raj (b. 1924). View of Suspension-arch Roof Structure, c. 1973. Photograph: Stella Snead. Mahendra Rai Archives." Image from *The Project of Independence, Architectures of Decolonization in South Asia, 1947–1985*, exhibition catalogue, 2022.

Fig. 3.37 Stella Snead, untitled, c. 1958-60, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.38 Stella Snead, photographic fragments from the folder 'collages to repair', courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.39 Stella Snead, *Pushka, Rajasthan I, Udaipur,* 1966, contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.40 Attributed to Jairam, *Maharana Jagat Singh II Bathing with His Nobles at Jagniwas*, c.1746-50, 46.9 X 81.3 cm, gouache on paper.

Fig. 3.41 Stella Snead, *Tibetan Monks*, 1961, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.42 Stella Snead, *Tibetan Monks on Pilgrimage at Bhaja Caves, Maharashtra*, 1961, photographic print, courtesy of Kenoyer and Narayan.

Fig. 3.43 Robert MacDougall, *Lake Palace (Jag Nivas)*, c. 1970s-80s.

Fig. 3.44 Stella Snead, *Pushka and Udaipur, Rajasthan I*, 1966, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.45 Stella Snead, *Inside Out*, c. 1967-1968, 17x24 in., photo-collage print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.46 Stella Snead, *Pushka, Rajasthan I, Udaipur,* 1966, contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.47 Stella Snead, *Pushkar Mela (Fair)*, 1966, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.48 Stella Snead, *Serengeti*, 1966, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.49 Stella Snead, *Pravina Mahla's Factory at Chinchwad (Near Poona)*, c. 1958-60, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.50 Conroy Maddox, The Departure, 1971, 50x60 in., oil on canvas.

Fig. 3.51 Stella Snead, *Rajasthan I*, negative strips, courtesy of Kenoyer and Narayan.

Fig. 3.52 Stella Snead, *Rajasthan I*, negative strips, courtesy of Kenoyer and Narayan.

Fig. 3.53 László Moholy-Nagy, *The Shooting Gallery*, 1925, gelatin silver print.

Fig. 3.54 Stella Snead, *Ceiling*, c. 1966-1968, 20x30 in., photo-collage print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.55 Stella Snead, *Model II*, 1967, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.56 Stella Snead, untitled, c. 1966, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.57 Unknown photographer, "This photograph displays the glass box building boom in midtown known as the International Style," c. 1972, postcard cover.

Fig. 3.58 Andy Blair, *Atmospheric, orange, smoggy winter sunset from the Empire State Building northeast to the PanAm and Chrysler buildings, Triboro Bridge and Hell Gate Bridge. New York,* 21 January 1973.

Fig. 3.59 Stella Snead, *Sheila Lalvani, Model I*, c.1967, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.60 Lewis Morley, *Christine Keeler*, 1963.

Fig. 3.61 Michael Ward, *Pauline Boty* (Boty is seen here with her painting Scandal '63), 1964.

Fig. 3.62 *Dear Christine*, installation view, Vane Contemporary Art, Gateshead, 2019, photo credit: Judith Fieldhouse.

Fig. 3.63 Dhiraj Chawda, *Sharmila Tagore*, printed in Filmfare magazine, Aug 19th, 1966.

Fig. 3.64 Unknown photographer, *Juhu, India*, c.1960s, photographic print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.65 Stella Snead, *Feather Center Beach*, c.1975-1976, 16x20 in., photo-collage print, courtesy of Pavel Zoubok Fine Art.

Fig. 3.66 Stella Snead, *Juhu*, c. 1967, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.67 Stella Snead, *Pat van Ingen and I Lunch in Nora Fisher's Garden, Sante Fe'*, 1979, photograph print and folder cover, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.68 Anita Steckel, *Giant Woman (Nostalgia)*, 1973, 37x49x1 in., photo collage and pencil on paper.

Fig. 3.69 Stella Snead, *Be Seated*, c. 1975-1976, 10x12 in., original photo-collage, courtesy of Pavel Zoubok Fine Art.

Fig. 3.70 Stella Snead, *Be Seated*, c. 1975-1976, 10x12 in., photo-collage print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.71 *Exhibition of Photo-collage by Stella Snead*, exhibition pamphlet, Gallery Chemould, Bombay, 1968, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.72 Stella Snead, *Iceberg Eaters*, c. 1967-1968, 12x15 in., photo-collage print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.73 Salvador Dalí, *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, 1937, 51.1x78.1 cm, oil on canvas.

Fig. 3.74 Penny Slinger, scrapbook of press reviews for *Young and Fantastic*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1969.

Fig. 3.75 Penny Slinger, scrapbook of press reviews for *Young and Fantastic*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1969.

Fig. 3.76 Yoko Ono's exhibition *Unfinished Paintings and Objects*, exhibition card, Indica Gallery, London, 1966.

Fig. 3.77 Stella Snead, *Collage Show /68,* 1968, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.78 Stella Snead, *Collage Show /68,* 1968, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.79 Stella Snead, *Collage Show /68,* 1968, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.80 Stella Snead, *Collage Show /68,* 1968, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.81 Yoko Ono, *Ceiling Painting,* 1966, installation view, *Unfinished Paintings and Objects*, Indica Gallery, London, 1996.

Fig. 3.82 Yoko Ono, *Ceiling Painting,* 1966, installation view, *Unfinished Paintings and Objects*, Indica Gallery, London, 1996.

Fig. 3.83 Stella Snead, *Ceiling*, c. 1967-1968, 20x30 in., photo-collage print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.84 Stella Snead, *Kashmir*, 1964, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.85 Stella Snead, *Mexico*, 1967, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.86 *Surrealism Unlimited 1968–1978*, exhibition catalogue, Camden Arts Centre, London, 1978.

Fig. 3.87 Stella Snead, *For Going Up*, c. 1974, photo-collage print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.88 Stella Snead, *Juhu, Ladder*, 1967, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.89 Grete Stern, *Perspectiva, Sueño (Dreams) no. 20,* 1949, silver gelatin print.

Fig. 3.90 Stella Snead, *Sheila Lalvani, Model I,* c.1967, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.91 Stella Snead, *Model II*, 1967, detail of contact sheet, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 3.92 *New Ground Group Exhibition*, front and back of the exhibition invitation card, Zelda Cheatle Gallery, London, 1991.

Fig. 3.93 *Surrealism Unlimited 1968-1978*, exhibition catalogue, Camden Arts Centre, London, 1978.

Fig. 3.94 Man Ray, *Woman with Long Hair*, 1929, gelatin silver print.

Conclusion

Fig. 4.1 Front and back cover of *A Second Talent: Painters and Sculptors Who Are Also Photographers*, exhibition catalogue, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Connecticut, 1985, National Art Library, V&A.

Fig. 4.2 A spread showing works by Stella Snead, *A Second Talent: Painters and Sculptors Who Are Also Photographers*, exhibition catalogue, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Connecticut, 1985, National Art Library, V&A.

Fig. 4.3 Newspaper clipping of Philip Eliasoph, 'Developing Film into Art in Aldrich Museum Show', *The Advocate*, October 4, 1985, National Art Library, V&A.

Fig. 4.4 A spread showing works by David Hockney, *A Second Talent: Painters and Sculptors Who Are Also Photographers*, exhibition catalogue, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Connecticut, 1985, National Art Library, V&A.

Fig. 4.5 *A Second Talent: Painters and Sculptors Who Are Also Photographers*, exhibition pamphlet, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, 1985, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 4.6 A page in *Shiva's Pigeons*, 23.

Fig. 4.7 Stella Snead, *With an Eye to Horizons*, 16x20 in., c. 1972, photo-collage print, courtesy of the Stella Snead Archive.

Fig. 4.8 Stella Snead, *With an Eye to Horizons*, 1987-93, 30x20 in., oil on canvas.

Fig. 4.9 Unknown photographer, *Penny, Max Ernst & Roland Penrose in Paris*, 1968.

Fig. 4.10 Unknown photographer, *Penny, Max Ernst & Roland Penrose in Paris*, 1968.

Introduction

Over the past three decades, there has been a notable surge in interest among academics, curators, and collectors in the work of artists such as Leonora Carrington, Dorothea Tanning, Leonor Fini, Frida Kahlo and others, signalling a renewed focus on women artists associated with surrealism. The proliferation of scholarship on this theme is a trend that shows little sign of abating.[1]

Unlike these well-known women artists, Stella Snead (1910–2006) remains less well-known and has received little academic attention. However, my research does not simply aim to insert Snead into current histories of women surrealists. Instead, it stems from a longstanding inquiry that has intrigued me, and which was sparked by Patricia Allmer's crucial question: why do some artists become canonical figures while others remain on the periphery?[2] Thus, amid the growing scholarly interest in the history of women artists associated with surrealism, why does Snead's contribution remain largely unacknowledged?

Snead was a painter, photographer, and collagist, with surrealist inclinations. She was also a world traveller, constantly on the move from the 1950s to the 1980s. In the late 1950s, she began photographing and developing black-and-white prints by herself, a practice she continued until the late 1980s. Travel and photography were significant aspects of her life and vital sources of inspiration for her artistic creations. From 1960 to 1971, she lived, extensively travelled and photographed in India. This period profoundly influenced her later artistic work. Throughout her career, she was active in various roles including painter, photographer, collagist, and book designer. She navigated diverse artistic hubs such as New York, Bombay, London, and Taos, maintaining an equally diverse artistic network. Writings and exhibitions on surrealism and women have primarily focused on her early surrealist-style paintings made in the 1940s. However, the works she produced afterwards, including photographs, photobooks, photo-collages, and later paintings, were far more extensive, and equally if not more complex, multi-layered, and sophisticated than her early paintings. Nevertheless, they received little scholarly attention. In particular, I believe that examining

[1] This includes, but is not limited to: Whitney Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (New York: Little, Brown, 1985); Mary Ann Caws, Rudolf Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg, eds., *Surrealism and Women* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993); Patricia Allmer, ed., *Intersections: Women Artists/Surrealism/Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016); Whitney Chadwick, *The Militant Muse: Love, War and the Women of Surrealism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2017); and Anna Watz, *Surrealist Women's Writing* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021).
[2] Patricia Allmer, "Introduction," in Allmer, ed., *Intersections*, 4.

her photography in India offers a crucial perspective for evaluating her creative practice as a whole and place in art history.

Specifically, this thesis examines Snead's practice of travel and photography during her time in India from a phenomenological perspective, focusing on her photographs, photobooks, and photo-collages. Through my analysis and discussion, it seeks to understand Snead's relationship with surrealism and to reflect on potential issues within the historiography of that movement. Before considering the rationale behind my investigation of Snead's work from this perspective, it will be beneficial to review Snead's biography and the existing literature about her life and work.[3]

[3] I am giving an outline of Snead's biography instead of a definitive one. This thesis does not intend to provide a full account of her life and work.

Section 0.1 Outline Biography

The information in this section is mainly derived from Snead's autobiographical writings published in the journal *archipelago*, including "Chronology of a Painter" (Spring 1999) and "Prelude to Photography and Then Some" (Winter 2000).[4] It is worth noting that she only began systematically organising her chronology and autobiographical writings in the late 1990s. Before this, the biographical information she provided to publishers and exhibition organisers was only a few sentences long. The absence of a detailed narrative about her life and work was potentially related to her long-term neglect.

Born in London in 1910, Snead's family background was marked by her mother's affluent upbringing and her father's struggles with mental illness. Due to her father's deteriorating psychological state, which posed a threat to her and her mother's safety, they fled from him in 1915. Snead spent her early years attending a girls' school in Leicester and later a church school in Letchworth. In 1936, she commenced her studies in painting and sculpture with Amédée Ozenfant and Henry Moore at the Ozenfant Academy of Fine Arts in London (Fig. 0.1). There she met her life-long friends Leonora Carrington and Sari Dienes.

In 1939, Snead fled from the war and migrated to the United States, where she continued her studies with Ozenfant until 1941. In that year, Snead and Carrington unexpectedly ran into each other in the New York subway, shortly after Carrington's escape from Spain and Portugal. It was through Carrington that Snead became acquainted with the surrealist circle. In the autumn of 1941, Snead held a solo exhibition of her paintings at Gallery 10 in New York, which was visited and praised by Max Ernst and Ozenfant.

During their brief time in New York, Snead and Carrington each produced related works. Fascinated with bicycles, Carrington very likely depicted Snead holding a bicycle in an unfinished painting, *Stella Snead and Her Cat* (1941) (Fig. 0.2). Snead's pose in this painting resembles the figure in a drawing by Carrington entitled *I am an Amateur of Velocipedes* (1941) (Fig. 0.3). The wheel between Snead's hands is identical to the wheels in Carrington's drawing *Vers l'inconnu (Toward the unknown)* in 1940, which was later published to illustrate Carrington's article in the fourth issue of *VVV* in February 1944 (Fig. 0.4). A drawing by Snead featuring a girl leading animals (Fig. 0.5) was also likely created during

[4] Stella Snead, "Chronology of a Painter," *archipelago* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1999), http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-1/chronology.htm; and Stella Snead, "Prelude to Photography and Then Some," *archipelago* 3, no. 4 (Winter 2000), accessed 11 March 2024, http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-4/snead.htm.

this period, in response to Carrington's *Vers l'inconnu*. The two artists' friendship and their shared yearning for mobility and freedom are evident in these works.

According to Pavel Zoubok, Snead's art dealer and close friend, while she did attend several surrealist gatherings in New York in 1941, she did not like the way they treated women as muses and chose to keep a distance from their activities.[5] In 1942, Snead concluded her studies with Ozenfant and became an independent artist.[6] Over the following years, she travelled back and forth between the east and west of the US, particularly exploring the country's southwestern landscapes by mail truck.

In 1943, Snead took a job as a waitress at a hotel atop Mount Wilson, California, home to one of the largest astronomical instruments in the world. Her interest in astronomy is evident in her paintings from this period, whose nocturnal scenes feature planets and views of outer space (Fig. 0.6 and Fig. 0.7).

After 1946, Snead made her home in Taos, New Mexico. The castellated buildings in her earlier paintings disappeared, replaced by creatures inspired by totem animals and adobe buildings (Fig. 0.8). Her affinity with native American culture and its rituals, as well as the adobe architecture, landscapes, and weather phenomena of this region all left their traces in her paintings.

Snead became part of the artists' community in Taos. Her paintings betray a fusion of influences from multiple styles, exhibiting a profound connection with the visionary landscapes and hybrid creatures found in the works of surrealists with whom she was acquainted, such as Leonora Carrington, Max Ernst, Kay Sage, and Yves Tanguy. Additionally, the crisp contours and geometrical forms of Snead's paintings in this period, such as *Deadlock* (1948) reflect the influence of Ozenfant, stemming from her artistic training (Fig. 0.9), while their interlocking translucent colours also reflect her contact with abstract artists in New Mexico.[7]

[5] Pavel Zoubok, in conversation with the author, March 2020. Zoubok served as Snead's art dealer from the 1990s until her death. Prior to Zoubok, she had never had an art dealer. The information Zoubok provided came from conversations with Snead, in which she recalled events from her past.
[6] Carrington also left New York for Mexico in 1942.
[7] From the 1930 to the 1950s, there were two main groups of abstract artists active in this region, namely the American Abstract Artists (AAA) and the Transcendental Painting Group (TPG). Charmion von Wiegand, who joined American Abstract Artists (AAA) in the 1940s and served as its president from 1951 to 1953, was a close friend of Snead. The energy, movement, and spiritual forces suggested in Snead's paintings serve as evidence of her experimentation with their styles.

Between 1941 and 1950, Snead held at least thirteen exhibitions in Taos, New York, and London. For example, in 1946, Paul Wengraf gave Snead her first solo exhibition in London, titled *Fantastic Paintings and Drawings by Stella Snead*. Held at the Arcade Gallery, the show featured forty-one paintings and drawings. In 1949, her painting *Advancing Monuments* (1946) was included in the Carnegie International Exhibition in Pittsburgh (Fig. 0.10), and in 1950, she was invited to show fourteen paintings at an exhibition curated by E. L. T. Mesens at the London Gallery.[8]

Despite Snead's burgeoning success, the onset of a severe depressive disorder halted her painting activities in 1950. Then, in 1952, she received an invitation from her friend Didi Kinzinger to visit India. This marked a turning point in her life and ignited her new passion for travel and photography. In 1960, Snead decided to live in India, occupying a house on Juhu Beach in Bombay. For eleven years, from 1960 to 1971, she travelled extensively across India, immersing herself in photography. During the latter half of the 1960s, she began to make photo-collages using her own photographs. She published eight photobooks in her lifetime.[9] Among them, she collaborated with writers Rumer Godden and Jon Godden on the creation of the photobook *Shiva's Pigeons: An Experience of India* (1972), which ultimately became the most renowned publication in her portfolio and will be analysed extensively in chapter two of this thesis.

Following her time in India, Snead relocated to New York in 1971, yet her global travels continued well into the late 1980s, encompassing many places in the Americas, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, she dedicated herself to exhibiting her photographs in the US and the UK, predominantly promoting her photographs of India.

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[8] The exhibition organised by E. L. T. Mesens at the London Gallery in 1950 included three rooms, respectively dedicated to Kurt Schwitters, Rolanda Polonsky, and Stella Snead. An exhibition pamphlet reveals the show's very long title: E. L. T. Mesens, "*E. L. T. Mesens presents an homage to Kurt Schwitters, and sculpture by Rolanda Polonsky, first exhibition in London, and recent works by the English painter Stella Snead, returned from Taos (New Mexico), from Wednesday 19th April to Saturday 13th May 1950*", exhibition pamphlet, National Art Library, V&A.

[9] Stella Snead, *Ruins in Jungles* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1962); Stella Snead and Daisy Aldan, *Seven Seven 7:7* (New York: Folder Editions, 1965); Stella Snead and Gwendolyn Reed, *The Talkative Beasts: Myths, Fables, and Poems of India* (New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shephard, 1969); Stella Snead and Sumana Chandavarkar, *Children of India* (New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shephard, 1971); Jon Godden, Rumer Godden, and Stella Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons: An Experience of India* (London: Chatto & Windus; New York: Knopf/The Viking Press, 1972); Stella Snead, *Beach Patterns: The World of Sea and Sand*, introduction by Gyorgy Kepes (Barre, MA: Barre Publishing; New York: Crown Publishers, 1975); Stella Snead, Wendy Doniger, and George Michell, *Animals in Four Worlds: Sculptures from India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); and Stella Snead, *Can Drowning Be Fun? A Nonsense Book* (New York: Pont la Vue Press, 1992).

After a prolonged hiatus, Snead rekindled her passion for painting in 1987, beginning to create variations of lost paintings from the 1940s.[10] She also produced new paintings based on the compositions of her photo-collages and some postcards she had collected. In 1999, she held a solo exhibition of twenty-eight paintings at CFM Gallery in New York, entitled '*Rediscovery': The Paintings of Stella Snead*. Investigating her career as a painter, this exhibition stands as the most extensive solo presentation of her paintings.

In 2006, Snead passed away dur to natural causes in New York at the age of ninety-six, leaving behind a rich legacy of artistic exploration that spanned paintings, photographs, photobooks, and photo-collages, and manifesting a profound connection with India.

[10] In the 1970s, Snead stored some of her paintings in a friend's garage in London. By the 1980s, she found at least a dozen paintings were missing from the friend's garage, although her friend insisted that Snead had already removed them. The whereabouts of these lost paintings remains unknown. Snead used black-and-white photographs of the missing works to recreate variations of them.

Section 0.2 Literature Review on Stella Snead

Snead's career can be divided into three primary phases: her painting practice of the 1940s, her photography from the 1950s to the 1980s (including making photo-collages in the 1960s and 1970s), and her return to painting from the late 1980s to the 1990s. Despite her prolific output spanning nearly six decades, with many exhibitions and the publication of photobooks in various locations, her work has elicited little academic attention.[11] References to her work primarily appear in exhibition catalogues and reviews.

During Snead's lifetime, the only time she became the focus of formal scholarly attention was on the occasion of her 1999 solo exhibition '*Rediscovery': The Paintings of Stella Snead*, at CFM Gallery.[12] This exhibition focused on the first and third phases of her career, presenting a chronological overview of her twenty-eight oil paintings.[13] The exhibition catalogue includes essays on Snead by Whitney Chadwick, Salomon Grimberg, Stephen Robeson-Miller, Pavel Zoubok, and Neil Zukerman.[14]

These authors affirm Snead's categorisation as a surrealist, on which basis she is thought to warrant 'rediscovery'. Zukerman, for instance, writes: 'Child-like and technically brilliant with a primal understanding of color, her work impresses and in the true spirit of surrealism expresses a universal dream of reality and sub-conscious desires and states of being.'[15] The descriptions of her paintings in the catalogue essays mainly converge on a simple employment of phrases conventionally used to describe surrealist works, highlighting her use of mysterious forms and magical creatures in dreamlike landscapes. However, this approach, based solely on the visual description of her works, offers only a superficial and incomplete understanding of her relationship with surrealism.

It is noteworthy that only Zoubok outlined differences between Snead and many other women surrealist artists of her time.[16] Zoubok observed that while Snead was deeply interested in some surrealist ideas and aesthetics, she chose to maintain a distance from their

[11] For a list of Snead's exhibitions of photographs and photo-collages, see appendix 1.
[12] This exhibition also toured to Galerie Minsky in Paris in 2000, arranged by Neil Zukerman.
[13] The twenty-eight oil paintings in this exhibition are the ones with traceable locations. Her lost paintings, along with many works sold in the 1940s, remain untraceable. Additionally, many of her drawings are not part of this exhibition.
[14] Whitney Chadwick et al., "*Rediscovery": The Paintings of Stella Snead* (New York: CFM Gallery, 1999).
[15] Neil Zukerman, "'Rediscovery': The Paintings of Stella Snead," in Chadwick et al., "*Rediscovery",* 7.
[16] Pavel Zoubok, "*For Going Up*: The Fantastic Journey of Stella Snead," in Chadwick et al., "*Rediscovery",* 15–16. This article can be found online: Pavel Zoubok, "*For Going Up*: The Fantastic Journey of Stella Snead," *archipelago* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1999), http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-1/zoubok.htm.

group activities.[17] Pursuing active participation in the surrealist group would have secured her reputation far more easily, but she was unwilling to give up her autonomy.[18] Zoubok's perspective on Snead's relatively independent status offers some insight but can only partially explain why she has been overlooked in the histories of surrealism. In the next section, I will revisit this issue and reflect on the limitations of the historiography of surrealism itself, rather than solely blaming the artist's lack of participation in collective activities.

Over the past two decades, as many women artists associated with surrealism have gained increasing prominence in academic research and exhibitions, Snead's works have been included in some related group exhibitions. For example, in 2005, her painting *Animal Totem* (1947) was included in *Surrealism USA* at the National Academy Museum in New York. This exhibition surveyed the activities of surrealists in the US up to 1950. However, Snead's name was entirely absent from the catalogue text, with only one illustration entry. Her painting was included among a selection of works reflecting the influence of the American West, yet her time in the US received little attention or investigation.

In 2007, Snead's painting *Ecstatic Cow* (1943) was featured in the exhibition *Picasso to Pop: Aspects of Modern Art* at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut. In a review for the *New York Times*, Benjamin Genocchio first evaluates the curation and installation of the exhibition, before specifically drawing the reader's attention to three women surrealist artists who appeared in the show, including Snead, Kay Sage, and Leonor Fini.[19] While describing Snead, Genocchio writes: 'Ms. Snead, a vegetarian, was fascinated by the Southwest, where she returned in the early 1940s and began to paint dreamy landscape scenes with animals. "Ecstatic Cow" (1943) depicts a happy cow in a farmyard scene.' In fact, Snead was not a vegetarian, and whether the painting depicts a farmyard scene is debatable. Nonetheless, this review reflects the typical attitude towards Snead in most of the group exhibitions she participated in, where a focus on her biography mainly revolves around personal anecdotes, and her artworks are described in a simplistic and potentially problematic manner.

Essentially, in the years leading up to and following Snead's passing, the inclusion of her paintings in a number of retrospective exhibitions of surrealism indicates an increasing

[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Benjamin Genocchio, "From the Atheneum's Basement, Bits of This and That," *New York Times*, 14 January 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/14/nyregion/nyregionspecial2/14ctarts.html.

awareness of her work among curators and scholars. However, her recognition during this period primarily stemmed from the surrealist elements and American landscapes in her paintings, situating her within existing narratives of surrealism in the US. A fuller investigation and interpretation of her work and its relationship to surrealism was still lacking.

Since the 2010s, Snead has been more frequently included in retrospective exhibitions of women artists associated with surrealism. For example, Snead's painting *Advancing Monuments* (1946) was included in the exhibition *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*, a collaborative exhibition spanning three locations: Los Angeles County Museum of Art (January–May 2012); Musée National des Beaux-Arts, Quebec (June–September 2012); and Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City (September–January 2013). This was a significant exhibition of women surrealist artists in the Americas, featuring forty-eight artists who lived and worked in Mexico and the US, including Frida Kahlo, Leonora Carrington, Louise Bourgeois, Jacqueline Lamba, Dorothea Tanning, and Remedios Varo, among others.[20] The exhibition sought to reaffirm that women artists were not merely muses and sexual symbols portrayed by male surrealists, but were actively engaged in exploring their own subconscious and dreams.[21] However, the catalogue text neither analysed Snead's relationship to surrealism nor sought to question the extent to which her work met this key criterion of exploring the subconscious. Mentioning only her biography, it failed to discuss Snead's contribution as a woman artist in the Americas.

In 2019, Snead's two works *Feet* (1938) and *Sulky Lion* (1943) were featured in the exhibition *The Female Gaze: Women Surrealists in the Americas and Europe* at Heather James Fine Art, New York. This exhibition underscored the significant contributions of women artists to surrealism, primarily by emphasising how they found their own gaze by breaking away from the dissection or mythologisation of the female body in many male surrealists' works.[22] The exhibition placed emphasis on alchemy, folklore, magic, mysticism, and hybrid creatures, showing how attention to these non-human subjects disrupted

[20] Ilene Susan Fort, Tere Arcq, and Terri Geis, eds., *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and Munich: Prestel, 2012).
[21] Susan L. Aberth, "In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States," *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 6, no.1 (2012), 91–94.
[22] Gloria Orenstein and Patryk Tomaszewski, *The Female Gaze: Women Surrealists in the Americas and Europe* (New York: Heather James Fine Art, 2019).

hierarchical systems, and how it echoes contemporary discussions of ecofeminism.[23] However, the catalogue neither featured Snead's biography nor assessed her practice and contribution to exploring the female gaze; her two works appeared in the illustrations only.

With respect to Snead's photography, there has been no academic research on this to date. Although she held numerous exhibitions of her photographs during her lifetime and published eight photobooks, reviews of these primarily relied on information provided by exhibition organisers and publishers in order to briefly describe the content of her works and to reiterate her biography.[24] Beyond this, there has been no scholarship on the relationship of her photographs, photobooks, or photo-collages to either the history of photography or the history of surrealism.

In summary, over the past two decades, though Snead has been increasingly recognised by curators of group exhibitions focused on surrealism and women surrealist artists, she has consistently been relegated to secondary and inconspicuous status within these contexts. The exhibition catalogues have typically offered only brief biographies, lacking any critical or scholarly discussion of her work.

This literature review suggests that Snead's peripheral status is twofold: she has been marginalised both within exhibitions of surrealism and exhibitions dedicated to women surrealist artists. In the majority of cases, her works have been prresented in such a way as to appear to conform to established surrealist typologies, with simplified and repetitive descriptions hastily assimilating her into conventional narratives of the movement. These exhibitions have failed to examine her works or elucidate her relationship with surrealism.

[23] Ibid., 16.
[24] Snead maintained a folder of media reviews on her work. Stella Snead, folder containing newspaper and magazine clippings, in the Stella Snead Archive kept by Kathy Fehl and Ian Teal, Weyauwega, Wisconsin.

Section 0.3 The Historiography of Women Surrealist Artists and Surrealism

My initial question into why Snead continues to occupy a marginal position while other women surrealists have become newly canonical figures prompts consideration of whether current written and exhibited histories of women surrealists risk canonisation.[25] Such accounts may tend to oversimplify and essentialise certain attributes that are considered required for women surrealists, potentially leading to the neglect of those who do not conform to these characteristics, styles, or themes.

The most common argument in such historiography is that, through various means, women have explored their own creativity in their work so as to resist being seen merely as muses, *femme-enfants*, or sources of inspiration for male surrealists.[26] The primary aim here is to place women artists on an equal footing with their male counterparts, while demonstrating their similar capacity to explore dreams and the subconscious, and their inheritance and development of classic surrealist themes such as the uncanny, biomorphism, mythology, alchemy, and the symbolic meanings of landscape.

However, this narrative of women artists remains wedded to a notion of male creative authority, and of the masculine discursive power of surrealism, within mainstream art-historical discourse, an approach widely employed in research, writing, and curating.[27] It implies adherence to the criteria established by the historical surrealist movement, thereby overlooking the fact that many artists, whether initially or later on, only partially adopted surrealist principles and pursued their surrealist practices in various ways.

Snead's artistic trajectory diverges from this typical narrative of the women surrealists. From the very beginning, she showed no interest in the collective ethos and psychoanalytical agenda of the first-generation surrealists. She was determined not to assimilate into such patriarchal groups and chose to work independently. Rather than delving into female imagery, fetishism, or sexual symbolism, she approached some surrealistic ideas in a non-sexual manner.

[25] Undoubtedly, the historiography of women surrealists resonates with feminist movements, amplifying the influence of these women artists as role models for younger generations.
[26] Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement*, 13. See also Gwen Raaberg, "The Problematics of Women and Surrealism," in *Surrealism and Women*, eds. Caws, Kuenzli, and Raaberg, 1–10.
[27] Allmer, "Introduction," in Allmer, ed., *Intersections*, 3.

Therefore, I contend that existing mainstream historiographies of surrealism and of women surrealists are not adequate approaches for understanding Snead's work; indeed, these mainstream historical narratives would only further marginalise her. Accordingly, this thesis seeks an alternative way to interpret her works and their significance.

Snead's extensive body of work in photography has been largely overlooked in critical discourse. I believe that her works should not be viewed in isolation, particularly by focusing solely on her paintings from the 1940s. Instead, it is imperative to recognise that photography and its related works such as her photobooks and photo-collages constituted the most enduring aspect of her career, significantly influencing and shaping her artistic trajectory. Zoubok suggested that Snead's surrealist sensibility was evident in her photography as she transitioned from painting in surrealist style.[28] I aim to explore in detail how she selectively embraced and explored specific surrealist ideas through photography and developed her unique set of working methods. Only by understanding these aspects can we fully grasp her relationship with surrealism.

Recent scholarship on surrealism has increasingly focused on examining center-periphery relations, reflecting contemporary concerns about center-periphery hierarchies. Examples include Michael Richardson's article '"Other" Surrealisms: Center and Periphery in International Perspective' (2016), the book *Surrealism in North Africa and Western Asia: Crossings and Encounters* (2021), the exhibition *Surrealism Beyond Borders* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Tate Modern (2022), and the 5th annual conference of the International Society for the Study of Surrealism (ISSS) in Houston (2023).[29]

Michael Richardson argues that surrealism's challenge to conventions formed the foundation of its ability to transcend geographical boundaries.[30] He emphasises that the relationship between the center and the periphery is not fixed but constantly evolving, using examples of surrealists active in regions outside of Paris, such as the UK and Belgium, to illustrate their loose connections with Paris.[31]

After Richardson, Monique Bellan and Julia Drost shift their focus from Western countries to non-Western countries and regions. They argue that surrealistic practices in areas

[28] Zoubok, "*For Going Up*."
[29] The 5th annual conference of the ISSS offered an extensive exploration of the practice and acceptance of surrealism by artists, writers, and intellectuals from many countries in North and South America.
[30] Michael Richardson, "'Other' Surrealisms: Center and Periphery in International Perspective," in *A Companion to Dada and Surrealism*, ed. David Hopkins (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2016), 132.
[31] Ibid., 131-143.

beyond Paris, London, and New York should not merely be seen as peripheral imitations of central surrealism but rather as significant experiments and developments.[32]

Bellan and Drost propose a clear distinction between the historical surrealist movement led by Breton and surrealism in a broader sense, with the latter understood as a way of thinking, a philosophy, and an attitude towards life.[33] This mode of thinking, lifestyle, and spirit of rebellion has been embraced and selectively employed by many artists, writers, and intellectuals working outside the artistic centres. Their practices of surrealism have diverged significantly from those of Breton's movement and adapted to various historical, political, cultural, and aesthetic contexts.

I contend that any approach to Snead's work needs to be anchored in this broader notion of surrealism, acknowledging that an artist's identity as a surrealist does not necessarily entail any desire to establish a collective or be part of an existing one.

My research thus aligns with the decentralised approaches to the study of surrealism and the recent scholarly trend towards focusing on its reception, adjustment, transformation, and integration within non-Western countries and regions. Moreover, I aim to adopt a more specific methodological approach to this tendency, avoiding any attempt to construct a universal history of surrealism's expansion into other countries. I advocate for valuing individual experiences, examining the encounters and perspectives of specific individuals within their cross-cultural and cross-geographical lives and practices. Ultimately, behind surrealism as an international phenomenon lies not a set of uniform doctrinal principles and disseminated ideologies, but rather the experiences of individuals traversing geographical and cultural boundaries.

In the meanwhile, I realise that research on surrealism is influenced and constrained by languages, research materials, and perspectives of researchers. This resonates with Michael Richardson's view that a comprehensive perspective on surrealism is impossible.[34] I do not aim to overturn the current historiography of surrealism. Rather, I am addressing the situation that current historical writing still largely fails to acknowledge artworks that do not fit into certain categories or mainstream narratives. I hope that my research may create a space for the interpretation and study of artists who continued to practice surrealist ideas, philosophies,

[32] Monique Bellan and Julia Drost, "Introduction," in *Surrealism in North Africa and Western Asia: Crossings and Encounters*, eds. Monique Bellan and Julia Drost (Beirut: Ergon Verlag in Kommission, 2021), 17.
[33] Ibid., 26.
[34] Richardson, '"Other" Surrealisms," 132.

and attitudes towards life on the margins, regardless of the temporal, geographical or conceptual boundaries of the historical movement itself.

Section 0.4 Research Questions

In a broad context, my research is located at the intersection of three scholarly domains: surrealism studies, photography studies, and the study of women artists. My approach seeks to understand how an artist, working beyond Western-centric and mainstream discursive frameworks in the latter half of the twentieth century, engaged in a sustained practice of experimentation inspired by surrealist ideas. Research to date has underestimated the significance of Snead's photography and has overlooked the relationship between her photographic works and surrealism. This paper provides the first extensive exploration and theoretical evaluation of her photographic works.

Specifically, the main question of my research concerns how photography mediates Snead's travel experience in India, with the primary objects of study being her photographs, photobooks, and photo-collages. This thematic choice aligns closely with the core of Snead's oeuvre, as most of her publicly exhibited works are intertwined with her extensive travel and photography in India. This inquiry encompasses a series of subordinate questions to address, including that of Snead's approach to photography, the relationship between her photography and travel, her establishment of connections with India through photography, her representation of India through photobooks and exhibitions, her methods of making her photo-collages, and the significance of her working methods.

Looking ahead to broader future research on Snead, this thesis will serve as a robust and solid foundation that will facilitate subsequent investigations into other phases of her work, including her paintings of the 1940s, her photography in other countries spanning from the 1950s to the 1980s, and her paintings after 1987. The exploration of these distinct phases of her career will be left for future scholarly pursuits.

Section 0.5 Methodologies

The Phenomenology of Photography

This thesis considers photography's role as a mediator of Snead's travel experience in India. To dissect and analyse the specific role of photography in mediating travel experience, the study employs a phenomenological approach. C. F. Graumann provides a concise overview of the history of phenomenology as a methodological approach in the humanities and points out that phenomenology itself does not constitute a unified science; rather, it comprises divergent and evolving schools of thought.[35] He also argues that the scope of phenomenology should not be restricted to methodology alone but can extend to a systematic examination of human consciousness and experience, encompassing a range of mental processes such as to 'perceiving, thinking, judging, remembering, feeling, desiring, willing'.[36] Consequently, my thesis employs phenomenological ideas on this foundation to elucidate the subject matter, rather than engaging in philosophical debates.

Photography, as an art form and a means of visual communication, has a unique and profound connection to phenomenology. As a philosophical approach that focuses on the study of human consciousness and the structures of experience, phenomenology enriches our understanding of how we perceive and interact with photographs. The phenomenology of photography delves into the intricate ways in which this medium constructs meaning and influences our perceptions, emotions, and memories.

The discourse surrounding photography is multifaceted, encompassing several major strands, with each offering a distinct perspective on the medium and its implications. Modernist, postmodern, and phenomenological approaches are prominent among these.[37]

The modernist discourse of photography emerged in the early twentieth century, emphasising objectivity, clarity, and the pursuit of truth. It often adheres to formal and compositional rules, with a focus on capturing the essential qualities of the subject. Practitioners of modernist photography subscribe to the belief in the intrinsic value of the

[35] C. F. Graumann, "Phenomenology in Human Science," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, eds. Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (Oxford: Pergamon, 2001), 11357–61, https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-08-043076-7/00695-1.
[36] Ibid., 11358
[37] William J. Nieberding, "Photography, Phenomenology and Sight: Toward an Understanding of Photography through the Discourse of Vision" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2011), 183.

photographic image as an objective portrayal of reality. Rooted in an Enlightenment model of truth, the discourse surrounding modernist photography encompasses terms such as 'Ocularcentrism, Cartesianism, Cartesian Perspectivalism, the camera-obscura model of thought, and Cartesian Visual Epistemology'.[38]

The postmodern vision of photography developed in the late twentieth century to challenge the assertion of objectivity and universality made by the modernist discourse of photography. It questions the notion of a singular, immutable reality and frequently employs methods such as collage, appropriation, and manipulation to interrogate the constructed nature of images. Postmodern photography is marked by a self-aware and critical approach, prompting viewers to question not only what they see but also how images are created and used to convey meaning. Concepts such as 'simulation' and 'simulacrum' in postmodern frameworks denote the undermining of fixed and secure meaning.[39]

Phenomenology stands apart from both modernist and postmodern discourse by focusing on the act of perception and the existential dimensions of photography. It highlights the complex interplay between intentionality, embodiment, temporality, and intersubjectivity, inviting us to contemplate the ways in which photography shapes our perceptions and emotions, and interpretations of our experiences.

As William J. Nieberding argues, each of these discourses offers a distinct perspective on the visual impact of photography. The three discourses are not in opposition; rather, they each focus on a specific form of understanding.[40] Therefore, when I refer to the concepts and theories of the phenomenology of photography as a methodological framework for this thesis, my intention is not to assert the superiority of phenomenology over either modernist or postmodernist discourses. Rather, I do so to draw attention to this relatively underexplored aspect of photographic analysis.

Regarding the studies of surrealist photography, debates concerning the role of photography in surrealism since the 1970s can be considered generally revolving around the modernist and postmodern discourses of photography. Rosalind Krauss's poststructuralist account, as articulated in her 1981 article and the influential 1985 exhibition *L'Amour Fou:*

[38] Ibid., 184.
[39] Ibid., 189.
[40] Ibid., 183.

Photography and Surrealism, highlights how surrealist photographers employed techniques such as framing, spacing, and doubling to transmute reality into representation and signs, aligning with the surrealist goal of revealing the marvelous in the ordinary.[41] Krauss's work significantly elevated the status of surrealist photography and positioned it as a central, rather than peripheral, component of the movement.

After Krauss, Ian Walker and David Bate re-examined the conceptual framework for understanding the surrealist uses of photography during the inter-war period and highlighted the importance of the connection between surrealist photography and reality. Walker's book examines how surrealists used the tactics of documentary photography and challenges the prior emphasis on surrealist manipulation of indexicality celebrated in Krauss's work.[42] He argues for the significant role of direct photography, showing how it simultaneously exploited and subverted its principles.[43]

Bate criticises the poststructuralist approach to surrealist photography, pointing that it fails to account for the diverse social types and the cultural and psychological meanings embedded in the surrealist images, thus leading to a 'crisis of the sign'.[44] He emphasises that surrealists used pre-existing ideological and mimetic language functions across various forms of representation to underscore the inherent instability and cultural variability of symbols, thereby creating disjunctions and hesitation for their audience.[45]

Currently, there are very few studies on surrealist photography that use a phenomenological approach.[46] Unlike the two aforementioned approaches to studying surrealist photography, my focus on phenomenological experience in photography suggests a model of meaning rooted not in the content or semiotics of photography but in the embodied experience guided by its visual and material elements. Through an examination of Snead's

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[41] Rosalind Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," *October* 19 (1981): 3–34, https://doi.org/10.2307/778652; and Rosalind Krauss, Jane Livingston, and Dawn Ades, eds., *L'Amour Fou: Photography and Surrealism* (Washington, DC: Corcoran Gallery of Art; New York: Abbeville Press, 1985).
[42] Ian Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams: Surrealism and Documentary Photography in Interwar Paris* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).
[43] Ibid., 5.
[44] David Bate, *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent* (London: IB Tauris, 2003), 10.
[45] Ibid., 25.
[46] I have found only one master's thesis that uses phenomenology as a methodology to study surrealism. Anna Gorham, "The Surrealist Glance: A Phenomenological Analysis of Surrealism," (Master's thesis, Concordia University, 2021).

specific methods as a case study, my aim is to offer fresh insights into the study of surrealist photography through a phenomenological lens.

Grasping the idea of a phenomenological experience of photography serves as only a starting point. My aspiration is to acknowledge that the mediation of experiences by photography is an ongoing, evolving process that unfolds over time, rather than being a momentary occurrence at the instant of capturing or encountering an image. This dimension is often overlooked due to the prevailing view of the photographic image or print as the final product, as opposed to a notion of photography as a multifaceted and dynamic process. The dynamic nature of this process can be effectively substantiated and elucidated through an examination of Stella Snead's archive.

Photography Mediates Travel Experience

When discussing photography's role in mediating travel experience, we often refer to its capacity to document the information about tourist destinations and the details of our journeys. Across various societal institutions, a considerable portion of human knowledge is generated and disseminated through this medium. Whether in public or private contexts, on individual or collective levels, in processes of production or consumption, photography has become one of the primary filters between the world and us.

Scholars examining the relationship between photography and travel/tourism have placed significant emphasis on photography as a form of representation. Many researchers in the field of tourism studies have devoted substantial efforts to the analysis of cultural constructions within the tourism industry. Dean MacCannell asserts that the tourist embodies a post-industrial individual who engages in an organised and inauthentic mode of experience, alongside a ritualistic dedication to a complex and experientially fragmenting division of labour.[47] Donald Horne contents that 'the camera and tourism are two distinctly modern means of defining reality.'[48] John Urry has made significant contributions to our understanding of the relationship between photography and global mobility. He emphasises the role of photography in the commodification and commercialisation of tourist destinations, wherein the act of taking photos becomes a form of ownership and a mechanism for creating memories.[49] Essentially, Urry's viewpoint underscores the power dynamics inherent in photographic behaviour within a tourism context, inviting us to critically examine the impact of photography on the tourism industry as well as the broader cultural and social implications of this visual practice.

Academic interest in travel writing and travel photography has flourished across many branches of the humanities and social sciences, with a notable emphasis in postcolonial studies. In examining 'tourism imaginaries'—the notions and expectations tourists hold regarding their destinations—Noel Salazar and Nelson Graburn argue that these 'imagnaries' persist and circulate in various institutions and across multiple platforms, including the media, cultural productions, historical sites, museums, and more.[50] Many tourism studies

[47] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 4, 11–13.
[48] Donald Horne, *The Great Museum: The Representation of History* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 121.
[49] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage, 2002), 130.
[50] Noel B. Salazar and Nelson H. H. Graburn, "Introduction: Toward an Anthropology of Tourism Imaginaries," in Noel B. Salazar and Nelson H. H. Graburn, eds., *Tourism Imaginaries: Anthropological Approaches* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 2.

have undertaken critical examinations of the construction of power, hierarchy, and hegemony through the institutionalisation and distribution of tourism imageries in cultural products.

Given the extensive literature in this domain, my research will not delve into debates surrounding the authenticity of travel photography, nor will it offer further critique of the commodification of travel and tourist photography through the lens of consumerism and ideology. Instead, this thesis endeavours to illuminate on the phenomenological dimensions of travel experience as mediated through photography, an aspect relatively underrepresented in scholarly discourse.

What role does photography play in the relationship between travellers and the world? The medium of photography inherently mediates the body and its surroundings. It is intrinsically connected to the reception of varied sensory stimuli through the movement and positioning of the body, particularly evident in photographs taken while on the move.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty offered a departure from a Cartesian perspective on perception and proposed that our engagement with the world should be understood as one of 'synergy'.[51] This synergy constitutes a collaborative process involving the body, external objects, other individuals, and the world, resulting in an interactive domain that arises at the intersection of these elements, which Merleau-Ponty defines as 'experience'.[52] According to Peter-Paul Verbeek, the concept of mediation implies a process of transformation and exchange: when something is conveyed, something else changes.[53]

The phenomenological experience of photography within a travel situation entails a distinct embodied and situated relationship of the individual with the world. This experience may be described as 'a lived process, an unfurling of perspectives and meanings'.[54] Jeffrey Kottler and Garth Lean both contend that physical travel possesses the capacity to immerse travellers in alternate realities, offering them opportunities and stimuli for reassess their existing beliefs and behaviors.[55] The experience of venturing into unfamiliar culture can be surprising, disorienting, discomforting, and incongruent, providing individuals with an

[51] Lawrence Hass, *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 36.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Peter-Paul Verbeek, *What Things Do: Philosophical Reflections on Technology, Agency and Design* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 195.
[54] Jonathan A. Smith, Paul Flowers, and Michael Larkin, *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research* (London: Sage, 2009), 21.
[55] Jeffrey A. Kottler, *Travel That Can Change Your Life: How to Create a Transformative Experience* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997); Garth L. Lean, "Transformative Travel: A Mobilities Perspective," *Tourist Studies* 12, no. 2 (July 2012): 160, http://doi.org/10.1177/1468797612454624.

opportunity to become aware of and reflect on the explicit societal cultural constructs and norms, languages, roles, relationships, and expectations. This stands in contrast to an understanding of travel/tourist experience as entertainment or curiosity satisfaction.

In this thesis, I aim to explore the power of photography beyond the discourse of authenticity and documentation, to examine the interaction between the individual and the world within the realm of embodied experience. The experiences of travel are closely intertwined with Snead's entire photographic career. I will posit that the value of Snead's photography lies not only in its representation of places but also in its ability to encapsulate and generate experiences. The interactive nature of photography is enhanced rather than diminished by distance and the passage of time.

The Context of India

It is imperative to underscore that Snead's experiences in India served as the principal wellspring for her extensive photographic archive and provided the enduring source of inspiration for her artistic trajectory throughout her career.

Snead's photography was profoundly influenced by her experiences of India in the 1960s, which was marked by diverse encounters and the specific conditions of the time. The primary aim of my research is not to verify the authenticity of specific historical and societal conditions as depicted in her work. Instead, I intend to highlight that embodied experience mediated by photography is subject to change according to one's living environment and the impact of unfamiliar cultures, and thus continually adapts to one's mode of existence.

Driven by advancements in transportation and infrastructure, the global tourism industry began to take shape in the mid-twentieth century. Cameras became more affordable, and film processing facilities became increasingly convenient. Consequently, many photographers and tourists found increased opportunities and motivation to visit and photograph culturally unfamiliar destinations.

The rise in international travel at this time raises several questions: Did it lead to an increase in cross-cultural understanding or global issues? Were hegemonic and colonial relations perpetuated as more people began to travel from developed to less-developed countries and regions?[56] These questions are not easy to answer. Meanwhile, it is important to realise that condensing cross-cultural encounters into simplisitc relationships of domination and subordination is unhelpful and does not reflect the postwar global landscape, characterised by heightened global and regional mobility, cooperation, competition, and conflict.

India has been substantially influenced by the West in various domains, such as politics, economics, language, culture, and lifestyle. Simultaneously, it has maintained its distinctiveness in areas marked by contradiction, and in its own cultural and religious diversity. Sanja Bahun-Radunovic and Marinos Pourgouris contend that it is essential to

[56] For a further discussion, see E. M. Bruner, "Transformation of Self in Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 18, no. 2 (1991): 238–50, https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(91)90007-X; and E. M. Bruner, *Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

avoid the traditional pitfalls of world diffusionism and Eurocentrism, as well as the excessive relativism between marginal and central positions.[57]

Drawing inspiration from these authors, this research seeks to avoid oversimplifying the relationship between economically and culturally dominant nations, on the one hand, and their former colonies and other developing countries, on the other. It seeks to shed light on the complexity of their dynamic relationship, as reflected in the individual's practice of travel and photography. By investigating the experiences of an dividual engaged in cross-cultural practices, this study explores how Snead navigated between central and peripheral positions while pursuing her passions, identities, and aspirations.

The phenomenological notion of intersubjectivity underscores how our experiences are influenced by our interactions with others, including human and non-human subjects.[58] I am intrigued by the way in which Snead's working method acknowledges and embraces the influence of India upon her, conveying a sense of intersubjectivity and interconnectedness. This explains why the title of this thesis incorporates the phrase 'Indications of India'. This phrase is derived from the title of Snead's draft album, for which she selected and compiled seventy photographs from the huge number of images that she took in India during the 1960s.[59] This draft album betrays an ethos of receptivity towards the manifold influences and inspirations that she drew from India, rather than standing as any kind of unilateral attempt to define the country's essence. This phrase most aptly encapsulates Snead's contemplations of travel and photography in her work.

[57] Sanja Bahun-Radunovic and Marinos Pourgouris, *The Avant-Garde and the Margin: New Territories of Modernism* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).
[58] Karl Löwith, a student of Heidegger, proposes three forms of interaction: with others, with non-human objects, and with oneself. See Graumann,"Phenomenology in Human Science," 11359.
[59] This draft album, *Indications of India: 70 Photographs by Stella Snead*, is examined in the second chapter. Stella Snead, *Indications of India: 70 Photographs by Stella Snead*, draft album, the Stella Snead Archive.

Section 0.6 Archival Sources

Before Snead passed away, she donated some of her works to the following institutions for their collections: The Harvard University Archives (400 photographs and slides), the International Center of Photography (four photographs), the New-York Historical Society (133 photographs), Pavel Zoubok Fine Art (twenty original photo-collages, fourteen photo-collage prints, and several oil painting and drawings), the Victoria & Albert Museum (two photographs and two photo-collages), and Weinstein Gallery (three paintings).

Besides portions gifted to the aforementioned institutions, the remaining materials from Snead's estate, archived by the artist herself, are primarily stored in two private locations: the Stella Snead Archive maintained by Kathy Fehl and Ian Teal in Weyauwega, Wisconsin, and six boxes kept by Jonathan Mark Kenoyer and Kirin Narayan at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The former contains approximately twenty drawings and paintings, 10,000 photographic prints, 20,000 negatives, 500 contact sheets, 3,000 slides, five original collages, fifty photo-collage prints (excluding duplicates), five book drafts, some exhibition pamphlets and invitation cards, folders of newspaper and magazine clippings, and several travelogues and essays. The latter collection's six boxes comprise around 2,000 photographic prints, 16,000 negatives, and 2,600 slides.

Considering the fact that Snead's lost paintings cannot be traced, the archival sources related to her photography are far more abundant and solid than the sources for her painting. Therefore, it is rational for this thesis to focus on examining and analysing the archival sources related to her photography. This thesis primarily relies on the archival materials in the two private locations, because they not only preserve photographs but also include photo-collage prints, book drafts, and materials related to her exhibitions.

The materials at the two private locations have not been sorted since Snead's passing. My research trips marked the first extensive examination of these materials. In essence, the subject of my investigation is a personal archive created by Snead herself. This is pivotal to my research and will be further discussed in the main body of this thesis. These archival materials provide comprehensive evidence for an in-depth analysis of her photographic method, with a particular view to understanding how she printed, archived, edited, and reused her photographs.

In this thesis, I will extensively use contact sheets, photographic prints, photo-collage prints, book drafts, and exhibition-related materials sourced from the archives, with a lesser

reliance on her negatives and slides. These materials collectively provide visual evidence to support my investigation on the theme of mediating travel experience through photography. They also facilitate understanding of the interconnections between Snead's works in different media, as well as shed light on her collaborative endeavours and networks.

Additionally, it is worth noting that while the archives contain a wealth of visual materials, written materials by Snead are scarce. They consist only of a few travelogues and essays on her ideas about travel and photography; the letters and postcards she received have not been preserved.[60] The scarcity of written materials by Snead has allowed me to steer clear of relying too heavily on her writings and the details of her life, and thus has helped to shape the direction my research, preventing the thesis from lapsing into mere biography. These written materials will be used to support my arguments at appropriate junctures in the thesis.

[60] It is currently unknown why the letters and postcards received by Snead were not preserved. The Sari Dienes Foundation and the Lenore G. Tawney Foundation have each kept about twenty postcards that Snead wrote to these two artists respectively.

Section 0.7 Structure

While considering how to structure this thesis to address the research question, I referred to literature on women photographers. Over the past thirty years, many scholars have aimed to restore the historical position of women as photographers and elucidate their contributions. For example, Naomi Rosenblum's book *A History of Women Photographers* (1994) provided a comprehensive survey of over 200 women photographers in their diverse practices since 1839 and Melissa McEuen's book *Seeing America: Women Photographers Between the Wars* (2000) explored the works and motivations of five female documentary photographers from the 1920s and 1930s.[61]

At the specific intersection of women, photography, and surrealism studies, Claude Cahun and Lee Miller are the two most frequently discussed women photographers. Claire Raymond reminds us that Cahun started receiving significant attention from feminist scholars in the 1990s, followed by the 'rediscovery' of Miller in the first decade of the 21st century.[62] Art history has positioned Cahun and Miller as central figures in understanding women photographers and surrealism, by extensively describing their biographies and how they used the liberating spirits of surrealism to develop their photographic practices.

For instance, attention on Cahun focuses on her self-portraits, which highlight her challenge to heteronormativity through disguise, androgynous staging, distortion, and double exposure.[63] She is considered to be a pioneer for contemporary artists such as Cindy Sherman and Gillian Wearing, given that Cahun's work questions the construction of gaze in photography and denies a stable concept of the self.[64]

However, other scholars caution against overemphasising Cahun's lesbian identity and viewing her as a proto-feminist. Astrid Peterle affirms that contemporary terms such as

[61] Naomi Rosenblum, *A History of Women Photographers* (Paris: Abbeville Press, 1994) and Melissa A. McEuen, *Seeing America: Women Photographers between the Wars* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000).
[62] Claire Raymond, *Women Photographers and Feminist Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2017), 42.
[63] Tirza True Latimer, *Women Together/Women Apart: Portraits of Lesbian Paris* (New Brunswick, New Jersey; London: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 92 and Jennifer Josten, "Reconsidering Self-Portraits by Women Surrealists: A Case Study of Claude Cahun and Frida Kahlo", in *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 30, no. 2 (2007): 22-35, https://atlantisjournal.ca/index.php/atlantis/article/view/777.
[64] Raymond, *Women Photographers*, 43-44. Also see Sarah Howgate, *Gillian Wearing and Claude Cahun* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2017).

'subversion' should be used cautiously when applied to historical context, as Cahun's understanding of homosexuality and gender discourses was likely limited to her time.[65]

The narrative around Lee Miller often focuses on her biography, her roles as a fashion model, war photographer, and muse to male surrealists, with a tendency to attribute her photographic work to her psychological biography.[66] For instance, Lynn Hilditch's book *Lee Miller, Photography, Surrealism and the Second World War* (2017) continues to emphasise her wartime photography so as to solidify her status as a female war photographer and ensure the alignment of her work with surrealist aesthetics and principles.[67]

Patricia Allmer, however, contents that studies on Miller should not rely on psychological biography to interpret her photographic work. In Allmer's 2013 article, she interprets Miller's work through the symbolic aspects of desert landscapes, mobility, and territory, viewing her identity and spatial strategy as nomadic.[68] In Allmer's 2016 book, she further developed the application of the concept of deterritorialisation to Miller's works, emphasising their deconstruction of patriarchal and colonial ideologies.[69] Allmer also began to examine Miller's work, roles, and creativity in her post-war life.[70] This approach challenges the fixed identity often ascribed to women photographers.

Echoing the latest approaches in the studies of Cahun and Miller, my research aims to avoid defining Snead's roles and identities solely through her life stories and her relationships with historical surrealists. Instead, I advocate for viewing her photography as an ongoing, growing process that involves activities such as printing, reviewing, editing, and recycling images in her personal photographic archive. The extensive materials in Snead's archives offer new possibilities for studying a photographer's working methods. The embodied experience evoked by different mediums such as photographs, photobooks, and photo-

[65] Astrid Peterle, "'Visible-Invisible-Hypervisible': Sketching the Reception of Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore", in *Indecent Exposures,* ed. Vern Walker (Vienna: IWM Junior Visiting Fellows' Conferences, vol. 22, 2007), 6, https://files.iwm.at/jvfc/22_5_Peterle.pdf.
[66] Patricia Allmer, *Lee Miller: Photography, Surrealism, and Beyond* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 18.
[67] Lynn Hilditch, *Lee Miller, Photography, Surrealism and the Second World War: From Vogue to Dachau* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 1-4.
[68] Patricia Allmer, "Apertures onto Egypt: Lee Miller's Nomadic Surrealism," *Dada/Surrealism* 19, no. 1 (2013):1-17, https://doi.org/10.17077/0084-9537.1271.
[69] Allmer, *Lee Miller*.
[70] Ibid.

collages are interconnected and interact with each other, and should not be interpreted as isolated or static objects.

Therefore, to address the overarching research question—how photography mediates Snead's travel experiences in India—the main body of the dissertation will be divided into three chapters: 'Making Images', 'Compiling Images', and 'Recycling Images'. The naming of these three chapters aims to reflect their interconnectedness, suggesting the continuity of Snead's working process and the connections between the mediums with which she worked: photographs, photobooks, and photo-collages. It is crucial to recognise that the series of operations associated with photography constitute a dynamic process that opens up ever greater possibilities for embodied experience to grow and change.

The first chapter primarily examines Snead's approach to travel and photography in India, encompassing her means of travel, her photographic methods, how photography mediates her embodied experiences of travelling, and how photography expresses Snead's connection to India. At appropriate junctures, I will also compare Snead's appreciation of her encounters and her attitudes towards different modes of travel with those of the first-generation surrealists, highlighting both similarities and differences. This chapter will serve as the foundation upon which the subsequent chapters of the thesis will be built.

The second chapter examines Snead's photobook *Shiva's Pigeons: An Experience of India* (1972) and her exhibition *People Figures–India* (1982) in order to consider how the evocation of embodied experiences in her work challenges the conventions and official ideologies that govern the representation of India in photographic history. I will also draw comparisons between Snead's use of non-Western objects and that of the first-generation surrealists, further elucidating both similarities and differences. The chapter attends to the cultural, touristic, and political contexts of India that Snead encountered in the mid-twentieth century, beyond the context of the historical surrealist movement.

The third chapter examines multiple perceptions evoked by Snead's photo-collages, conducting an analysis of select works to summarise her approach to their production. Through a comparative analysis of her surrealist imagery construction vis-à-vis that of other surrealists, this chapter aims to understand how she experiments with surrealism in her own way, thus facilitating her exploration of empowerment and transformation. Additionally, by exploring the exhibition history of her work, this chapter leads to further discussion on why

the prevailing histories of surrealism and of women surrealists may fall short in adequately interpreting the significance of both Snead's work and her working methods.

Chapter One Making Images: Stella Snead's Travel and Photography in India

Introduction

This chapter seeks to explore the multifaceted relationship between Snead's approaches to travel and photography in India in the 1950s and 1960s. Specifically, it aims to address three overarching questions: first, how travel and photography complemented each other to shape her distinctive working method; second, how photography mediated her travel experiences; and third, how her life in India influenced her approaches to travel and photography.

In the first section, I aim to understand Snead's practice of travel and photography in India, including her arrival in India, modes of travel, the commencement of her photography, her photographic subject matter and her photographic interests. Exploring these aspects prompts further discussion on her approach to photography and the symbiotic relationship between her travel and photography.

The second, third, and fourth sections will focus respectively on the three main themes of her photography: beach patterns, architectural patterns, and street patterns. These sections will examine what she inherited from the legacy of Western modernist photography, as well as her individual photographic interests and the methods that she cultivated. Snead employed the three concepts of 'revelation', 'pattern', and 'vision' in her writings about her photography. I am interested in examining how these three concepts relate to the role of photography in mediating her travel experience in India.

Collectively, these discussions lead to a conclusion about the multifaceted relationship between Snead's approaches to travel and photography in India. This includes the considerations of her identity as a lifestyle traveller, the significance of her approach to photography as a process, and the role of photography in expressing her connection with India.

I draw on Snead's archive materials to support my arguments in this chapter, including her contact sheets, photographic prints, exhibition catalogues, and her travel-related writings. Comparison between her contact sheets and her prints allows for an understanding of her methods of image capture, processing, and selection. I believe that contact sheets played a pivotal role in her working methods, forming the basis for her activities of reviewing,

juxtaposing, compiling, and recycling her images, which recurred frequently throughout her life.

Photographic prints have traditionally been and remain widely esteemed as the foremost and most significant final product and artistic expression in photography. They often serve as the tangible form through which a photograph is exhibited, shared, and appreciated. They represent the culmination of the photographic process and occupy a central position in the realm of photography. Nonetheless, the publication of the book *Magnum Contact Sheets* has stripped away the perceived mystique surrounding photography by providing a rare behind-the-scenes look at the photographic process as it once used to be prior to digital photography.[71] This book, featuring the contact sheets of renowned photographers from the Magnum agency, unveils the intricate and deliberate decision-making involved in selecting photographs. It illustrates that a single iconic photograph is often the result of a sequence of shots and assessments. In essence, the idea of the 'decisive moment' is considered a myth, as it often takes a photographer multiple attempts to capture a scene that yields a memorable shot.

Kristen Lubben explains that 'the contact sheet … is the photographer's first look at what he or she captured on film, and provides a uniquely intimate glimpse into their working process.'[72] Contact sheets tell a much larger story about the photographic process and experience than the final prints. The concept of 'photographic experience' that I employ here goes beyond the experience of taking pictures at a specific moment during a specific journey. It encompasses, most importantly, the photographer's experience in printing, viewing, and selecting contact sheets. In other words, it is the embodied experience of the photographer's physical interaction with the materiality of contact sheets.

Snead did not often document her travels in written form, apart from a detailed travelogue of her bus trip from Istanbul to India in 1956 and a handful of short essays about several places she visited in India. Consequently, her contact sheets can be considered as her visual diaries and constitute the most significant source for understanding her travel and photographic practice. In this chapter, my exploration of her working methods will rely on my inspection and analysis of her contact sheets, supplemented by the textual materials she kept in her archive.

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[71] Kristen Lubben, "Introduction," in *Magnum Contact Sheets*, Kristen Lubben ed. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011), 9.
[72] Ibid.

Section 1.1 Snead's Approaches to Travel and Photography in India

Unbounded Trips and Taking Up Photography

In 1950, Snead suffered from a severe bout of depression, leading to her gradual cessation of painting. She writes: 'I felt less than half a person; how and when would this vacuum be filled?'[73] The 'vacuum' not only manifested on a psychological level but also impacted her artistic output, largely impeding her capacity to work, with only sporadic works being produced. She did not give up travelling during this challenging period of her life, and visited destinations in England, the American West, and Mexico. She also underwent psychotherapy with a Dutch Jungian psychologist for nearly a year. However, these efforts only provided slight relief from her depression. In early 1952, she ceased her psychiatry sessions, opting not to confront her depression head-on but instead to seek alternative ways to fill what she referred to as the 'vacuum'.

In 1952, Snead received an invitation to visit India from her American friend Didi Kinzinger (hereafter referred to as Didi), who had married an Indian man, Ramji Narayan (hereafter referred to as Ramji).[74] Snead stayed with a joint family consisting of Didi, Ramji, and their children, as well as Ramji's parents and other relatives and servants, who lived together in a two-storey bungalow in Nasik, a small town 115 miles northeast of Bombay.[75]

In her autobiographical account of this period, Snead writes:

> For two weeks I hardly slept, just kept on saying to myself, with amazement, 'I'm in India!' I was not even thinking of my vacuum, that space left by not being a painter. It was some weeks before I realized it was being filled by India itself, its sights, its people, its ways of being, its un-selfconscious beauty, even its ugliness.[76]

Snead provides a highly condensed account of her life in India during the 1950s, attributing the filling of her inner emptiness to her experiences there. However, I am curious about the specific experience of her initial two years in India that allowed her to become acquainted

[73] Snead, "Chronology of a Painter." Details of Snead's biography in this section are taken from this source, unless otherwise stated.
[74] Didi Kinzinger (known as Didi Contractor) was an American artist and builder. She married Ramji Narayan ((known as Narayan Contractor) in the 1950s and spent the rest of her life in India. In 2019, she was rewarded the Nari Shakti Puraskar, India's highest civilian award for the achievements and contributions of women. She was celebrated for delving into India's vernacular architectural traditions, incorporating locally sourced materials like adobe, bamboo, and stone into her buildings, integrating them into the landscape.
[75] Snead, "Chronology of a Painter."
[76] Ibid.

with the country, as her stay with this joint family was the starting point of her connection with and travels within India.

In the early 1950s, Snead had not yet commenced her photographic practice. Notable records of this period in her archive include a memoir essay written by herself, and several family portraits.[77] Additionally, Kirin Narayan, Snead's goddaughter, provides insights into the family events of this period in her memoir *My Family and Other Saints*.

In the memoir essay 'Ramji Mistri Bungalow', Snead writes about how she was welcomed upon returning to the joint family after long journeys in India:

> At whatever time you arrive at the Bungalow it is the same. The tonga will jingle up the driveway and come to a standstill at the front door which is always open, there will be a rush of dogs and the brrrr of feet running quickly downstairs, quiet greetings and smiles, then an excited child's voice and finally an American voice, Hi! Hugs and handshakes. After a small haggle the tonga driver is paid, and there is the jingle of bells again as the horse trots away. Servants are carrying in my belongings, the Indian family retires upstairs, and I go with Didi into her part of the house. We are bursting with too many things to say and to show, Maya, her daughter aged three watches me solemnly, and asks what I have brought her. This is how it always was, my homecomings to Nasik after a long trip to another part of India.[78]

In this memoir, Snead's text emphasises a phenomenological account of her experience. The repeated rituals, from the jingling tonga arriving at the open front door to the lively and hurried footsteps of family members and the excited children's voices, trigger a range of multisensory experiences. The 'rush of dogs' and the 'brrrr of feet' resonate with a sense of movement, vitality, and anticipation. The 'quiet greetings and smiles' suggest a shared joy, where her arrival is met with a subtle yet profound acknowledgment in the Indian manner. The 'Hi!' and ensuing 'hugs and handshakes' reflect the exuberance of reconnecting with loved ones, a physical affirmation of emotional ties, as per the American way of Didi. The moment that Snead describes also carries with it a sense of homecoming and continuity. The horse-drawn tonga departing after a 'small haggle' signifies the completion of the arrival process, further emphasising the rhythmic nature of this experience.

Snead's memoir sifts her memories through the lens of embodied experience, yet it neglects to address the cultural and power conflicts within this joint family. The family

[77] Snead did not give an account of where she travelled in India between 1952 and 1954. Since she had not yet initiated her photographic practice, there are no visual records in the archive depicting the details of her travels during this period.
[78] Stella Snead, "Ramji Mistri Bungalow," undated, unpublished essay, the Stella Snead Archive.

portraits kept in Snead's archive offer a glimpse of the efforts made by both Snead and Didi to learn and adapt to the customs of this Indian household.

In two family portraits, the figures are dressed the same and stand in front of a house, highly likely to be the joint family's bungalow, indicating that they were taken on the same day (Fig. 1.1 and Fig. 1.2). Snead's trip to visit Didi was accompanied by Didi's mother, Alice Fish Kinzinger (hereafter referred to as Alice), and another friend of Alice's.[79] Therefore, in the first picture, from left to right, the figures are Alice's friend, Snead, Didi's daughter Maya, and Didi's mother-in-law, Ba (Fig. 1.1).[80] It is probable that these two portraits were taken shortly after Snead, Alice and Alice's friend arrived at this bungalow in 1952. They were likely taken by Didi herself, given her absence from both pictures.

Kirin Narayan (hereafter referred to as Kirin), Didi's youngest daughter, provides additional insights into the family dynamics during this period in her memoir.[81] It reveals that despite Didi marrying Ramji Narayan in the USA and bringing their daughter Maya back to India, Ramji's parents remained reluctant to acknowledge Didi as their daughter-in-law. Ramji's parents had arranged his engagement to a distant relative before his departure for the USA in 1947 to study engineering. Despite Ramji's explicit desire to terminate the engagement before marrying Didi, his parents still hoped for him to proceed with the arranged marriage and to wed a suitable Indian girl. Alice came to India not only to visit Didi and Maya but also to persuade Didi to return to the USA. Therefore, the atmosphere upon their arrival in 1952 was undoubtedly tense. The portraits taken in front of the bungalow appear to show a group of Western women amusing themselves in front of the house, with Ba's polite participation as the hostess. Snead titled the first portrait 'family group', indicating that, when reviewing this photograph, she perceived it as symbolising the composition of a family consisting of women from different races and cultures, including herself as a member of the family. The absence of Didi and her husband in what was supposed to be a family group portrait suggests the lack of recognition of their marital status within the Indian family.

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[79] Didi's mother Alice Fish Kinzinger and her father Edmund Daniel Kinzinger were both painters and art educators.

[80] In the writings of Snead and Kirin Narayan, Didi's mother-in-law is commonly referred to as 'Ba'. Therefore, this chapter follows their convention. This lady's full name is Kamlabai Ramji, as documented in Kirin Narayan's book: Kirin Narayan, *Alive in the Writing: Crafting Ethnography in the Company of Chekhov* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

[81] Kirin Narayan, *My Family and Other Saints* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 55–56. The family stories in this and the following paragraph come from this memoir. Some of the stories Kirin narrates, especially those from before her birth, were based on accounts told to her by other family members.

In 1953, Didi gave birth to a son, Rahoul Narayan (hereafter referred to as Rahoul), which dramatically changed her status in the family. Snead became Rahoul's godmother. The engagement between Ramji and his distant relative was immediately dissolved, and Didi received a silk sari and gold jewellery in acknowledgment of her status as daughter-in-law. In two subsequent family portraits, Didi occupies the central position, holding Rahoul (Fig. 1.3 and Fig. 1.4). In one of these two portraits, everyone is dressed formally, likely for the child's full moon celebration (Fig. 1.3). Not only Didi but also Snead, Alice's friend, and Maya wear saris, indicating their integration into Indian tradition. The women are all looking at Rahoul, implying the significance of the birth of the son. There is no information about the identity of the man standing at the back of the group and wearing a Western suit; he is possibly a male companion invited by Alice's friend to attend the celebration. He is the only one looking directly at the camera. The contrast in attire and direction of gaze between the women and the man implies their differing degrees of proximity to Indian life. In the other portrait, Didi and Ramji each hold one child (Fig. 1.4). The standard posture of nuclear family represented in this picture solidifies their relationships and the recognition of their marriage by the joint family.

These family portraits serve as reminders of Snead's experience in her initial days in India and shed light on her level of acceptance and integration within the family, revealed through choices of attire and interactions with women in the household. Considering both Snead's memoir essay and the family portraits she preserved, it is clear that her time in India broadened her concept of home. She found that the joint family served as her departure and return point, emphasising that familial connections extend beyond blood ties.

Snead continued to write about her life in India: 'I decided I couldn't leave.… From time to time I came back for rest and the feeling of belonging to the most-hospitable Nasik family.… I was learning the ropes of India. And I was very, very happy.'[82] This sense of belonging illustrates her growing attachment to this joint family. Learning India's 'ropes' was not merely an intellectual endeavour but a lived experience that allowed her to become a part of the culture rather than remaining an outsider or foreigner who simply observed from a distance. It enabled Snead to navigate India with a deeper level of comprehension, preventing her from appearing too ignorant or surprised by cultural differences.

[82] Snead, "Chronology of a Painter."

Snead dedicates a significant portion of her memoir essay to her memory of Ba, Didi's mother-in-law. She writes:

> Ba most loves a trip: going laden with presents to visit relatives in Kathiawar, to Bombay with Seth, to the nearby village of Trimbuk which is especially holy, or to see some astrologer or guru or friend. The men of the household consider most of these trips irresponsible, and so the two cars are left with a minimum of gasoline and the drivers have their orders. But Ba is clever and resourceful, and she often outwits everybody; a car and driver are missing and she has gone. Shanti, the second son, had wanted it to go to play cricket, Didi had meant to go to the bazaar, or perhaps several of us had thought of a picnic. We all stay at home and wonder where Ba has gone this time. When she returns there may be some frowns but her descriptions of her adventures will be so entertaining, her gestures so violent and expressive that everyone will laugh.[83]

Snead's account illustrates Ba's spirited and resourceful nature and tendency to embark upon trips by herself, challenging the stereotype of Indian women as confined to domestic roles. Snead captures the energy and enthusiasm that would pervade the household upon Ba's return from her escapades. Rather than being a passive observer, Snead found herself deeply influenced by Ba's infectious spirit. This dynamic ambiance transcended individual actions, fostering a collective experience within the family.

Snead's perspective on Ba goes beyond the traditional portrayal of an Indian mother-in-law, as depicted in Kirin's memoir. Snead's exposure to the diversity of experiences within this Indian household influenced her perceptions of Indian family life, steering her away from simplistic stereotypes. Her account underscores the coexistence of tradition and openness within the same family unit.

In 1954, Snead left India to stay temporarily in New York. However, she had already initiated plans for another return to India. She writes:

> In February, I returned via England to the States. Lived in sublets in New York, slowly planning a return to India, this time overland, on the surmise that if there were roads there must, or at least might be, busses. It seemed to me a most intriguing project. It was important not to hurry, to move unpredictably, certainly in a leisurely fashion, making detours; no deadlines. I've always liked the idea of travelling without reservations. No companion was found who had this amount of time—say, three or four months—and, furthermore, I felt quite capable of doing it alone. I hardly spoke of it to my mother, at first, but got down to reading books by earlier travellers to the Middle East, Persia, Afghanistan.[84]

[83] Snead, "Ramji Mistri Bungalow,"
[84] Snead, "Chronology of a Painter."

She recounts her perspectives on travel and home, and uses the verb 'return' twice in this passage, referring to her journeys to the United States and to India. If home is the place one returns to, there was more than one home for her. Or rather, she enjoyed a nomadic life, and was not obsessed with rooting herself in a particular place and its culture. As she states: 'I became a nomad wandering the world, writing a little and looking a lot.'[85] Home, for her, was not confined to a single place; instead, she found a sense of belonging in her nomadic existence.

Between 1954 and 1956, Snead spent two years preparing for her overland trip by bus, poring over books in the British Library written by previous travellers, going through the visa process for several countries, and consulting travel advice from friends. In 1956, she undertook a four-month overland journey from Istanbul to India, via Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. In her writings about travel, she emphasised that this trip predated the establishment of the hippie trail, and she was not influenced by the hippie movement of the 1960s and 1970s.[86] Her decision was driven by the accounts of earlier travellers, her fascination with bus trips, and her longing to return to India.[87]

In the mid-1960s, Snead wrote a travelogue, *From Istanbul to India*, mainly to reflect upon her experiences during this bus trip in 1956.[88] Notably, she did not write the travelogue immediately after the trip but instead waited until a decade had passed. In the travelogue, she acknowledges that her descriptions are essentially recollections filtered through processed memories.[89] These recollections were likely enriched by her evolving perceptions and perspectives accumulated over the course of a decade, during which she travelled extensively, particularly in India. I therefore believe that, even though this travelogue does not concentrate

[85] Stella Snead, "Me as a Photographer," 1966, unpublished essay, the Stella Snead Archive.
[86] In Snead's essay, she observed the hippies as an emerging phenomenon of mobility, noting that the routes they travelled were reminiscent of her own bus trip years earlier. However, Snead distinguished her identity as a traveller from that of the hippies; they relied more on drugs and spiritual fulfillment, often burdening host families and local residents on their journeys. Stella Snead, "The Traveller," undated, unpublished essay, the Stella Snead Archive.
The mention on her trip occurring during the 'pre-hippie time' is also present in Snead, "Prelude to Photography and Then Some."
[87] Ibid. In this essay, Snead mentions that most of the earlier travellers she admired were women, including Lady Hester Stanhope, Gertrude Bell, Rosita Forbes, Freya Stark, Alexandra David-Néel, Ella Maillart, Barbara Toy, and Dervla Murphy.
[88] Stella Snead, *From Istanbul to India*, c. 1965, unpublished travelogue, the Stella Snead Archive, Weyauwega, Wisconsin.
[89] Edward Bruner argues that stories do not merely replay events but rather 'embellish, privatize and transform the master narrative'. Bruner, *Culture on Tour*, 24.

on her travels within India, it encapsulates her thoughts about travel in India and remains profoundly pertinent to this research.

In this travelogue, Snead articulates her concept of travel: unbounded by any strict plan or deadline, she sought to embrace discomfort, uncertainty, unpredictability, challenges, detours, and surprises.[90] She believed that travelling by bus offered a superior way to immerse oneself in a country compared to train travel. Limited ventilation, coupled with the sweltering heat, as well as the mingling with local residents that are inherent to bus travel, contributed to her ability to perceive and engage with the journey on a profound level. She often found herself the only white woman among her fellow passengers. Buses would occasionally break down in the wilderness in the middle of the night. She would get lost due to language barriers and struggle to find suitable transportation. Nights were sometimes spent in the station waiting rooms, hotel offices, courtyards, and once in a roughcast cottage, occasionally encountering incidents of theft. Despite these challenges, her adventurous spirit remained undeterred. This travelogue illustrates her approach of hitting the road with an open mindset, allowing experiences and time to mould her perspectives. This outlook stands in contrast to approaching travel with rigid, preconceived attitudes or predetermined objectives.

The origin of Snead's photography came with this overland trip in 1956.[91] She carried a camera with her during this journey and began to take photographs. Though she thought most of the photos taken on this trip were of 'indifferent' quality, the camera played multiple roles during the journey.[92] Firstly, it helped to keep track of the places she encountered, as many of these were spontaneously visited and not planned in advance. Secondly, it helped her to interact with the locals, many of whom asked her to send photos back to them. Thirdly, it helped justify her identity. When she was sleeping in a hotel in Syria, she was visited by a policeman, because her passport stated her occupation as 'artist'. In Syria, in those days, there was no conception of 'artists' in the Western sense, and the English word 'artist' was used to describe nightclub entertainers. Snead went to the British Consul immediately and had her occupation changed to 'photographer' to avoid any further confusion. Lastly, being busy with photography allowed her to find relief from the pressure of being unable to paint.

Later in 1956, Snead visited several countries in Southeast Asia, before taking a ship from Japan to San Francisco and then a bus to Taos, New Mexico. In Taos, she saw how a

[90] The content of this paragraph is derived from Snead's travelogue: Snead, *From Istanbul to India*.
[91] For Snead's travel records between 1956 and 1988, see appendix 2.
[92] Snead, "Me as a Photographer."

darkroom worked for the first time, when her friend, the photographer Mildred Tolbert, helped to process some of her negatives.[93] Deciding to become a photographer and to do her own printing, she then rushed to England where she asked the well-known photographer Harry Miller to teach her how to print in the darkroom.

Snead's own words best express her sense of processing prints as a 'magic ritual':

> I watched in the dark with only a dim safelight as a sheet of photographic paper was slipped into the first tray of liquid. What a way for anything to reveal itself, with such a deliberate yet haunting slowness. I was hooked from that moment.…When a revelation comes, no matter how late, it's best it be total, not come by halves or dribbles. It took me longer to become aware that one of the great things about photography is that it goes well with travel. They are buddies, one might say. It took me longer still to understand how and why all this came about.… During that whole winter I repeated the magic rituals almost daily—often while singing for joy. [94]

Snead's experience of the darkroom and her perception of the photographic printing process as a 'magic ritual' are profoundly rooted in the phenomenology of watching and waiting as the photographic paper is submerged into the developing liquid. As such, her first encounter with the darkroom was more than just a technical introduction.

She conveys a profound experience of the 'haunting slowness'. This slowness and the anticipation are key aspects of her relationship with the photographic process. The gap between capturing an image during travel and processing it at a later point enables this unique perspective, creating a temporal disjunction where perceptions and memories can be refreshed.

I think her use of the term 'revelation' has two layers of meaning. Firstly, inspired by her experience of the printing process, Snead began to realise that the embodied experience of photography, which blends chance and unpredictability, is what she finds most captivating about photography. Secondly, she recognised the symbiotic and inseparable relationship between photography and travel, with each enhancing the other. This interconnection of travel and photography signifies a profound personal and artistic revelation for her.

During the period from 1957 to 1960, aside from her sojourns between the United States and the United Kingdom, Snead embarked on journeys to various South Asian and Southeast Asian countries to capture images of ruins.[95] During 1958–59, she visited India for the third

[93] Ibid.
[94] Snead, "Prelude to Photography and Then Some."
[95] The biographical details in this paragraph are from Snead, "Prelude to Photography and Then Some."

time, via Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. She primarily relied on the darkroom facilities of her friends to develop her negatives; however, only a few photographic prints and contact sheets from this period are preserved in the archives. This may be explained by two primary factors. Firstly, her nomadic lifestyle, devoid of a permanent abode, made it inconvenient to carry large volumes of developed photographs. Secondly, it is possible that her overall satisfaction with her photographs during this period was less than optimal, leading to a limited use of external photographic printing services.

Exploring the Indian Subcontinent

In 1960, Snead made the decision to live in India. Didi designed three houses on Juhu Beach, situated in a suburb of Bombay. One was occupied by Didi, her husband, and their children, while Didi's mother, Alice, lived in another. Snead resided in the third house (Fig. 1.5). Didi also helped set up a fully equipped darkroom in Snead's house, complete with air conditioning. Snead then set on a decidedly new course as a photographer and began to travel and photograph extensively throughout India.[96] She usually took breaks to rest and engage in the photographic printing process within her darkroom between these prolonged journeys.

Snead's goddaughter Kirin Narayan offers a glimpse of Snead's daily life in Bombay during this period:

> While everyone else seemed to have family trailing in every direction, Stella was her own person with no relatives at all. She had short curly white hair, wore slacks, drove her own white Ambassador car, and locked herself away in the darkroom for hours. Music drifting from her house might be anything from the hoarse voices of women singing Flamenco, to energetic baroque trumpets, to the thrilling new Beatles…[97]

Through continuous travelling and photographing, Snead found that her photography was beginning to improve. She usually carried two cameras, one for black and white and one with colour reversal films. She would usually process the black-and-white negatives herself, while the Kodachrome films were sent to shops to be made into slides.

Her contact sheets provide us with valuable insights into her unconventional travel patterns. They not only reveal her physical movements but also serve as a visual diary of her evolving perception of and connection to the places she visited.

The contact sheets for the year 1960 reveal that Snead immediately began to travel to many states of India after settling in Bombay. For example, in that year alone, she journeyed to places as diverse as Hampi in the central state of Karnataka, Dhauli in the eastern state of Odisha, Madras and Tanjore in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, Ellora in the western state of Maharashtra, Almora in the northern state of Uttarakhand, and the Elephanta caves near Bombay. Her travel routes followed an unconventional pattern, involving irregular and unplanned trips to different locations in different states. She did not explore all the

[96] In addition to her extensive travels in India during the 1960s, Snead also made multiple visits to countries such as Pakistan and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Therefore, I refer them as the Indian subcontinent in the title of this section. Since her travels were focused on India, my research primarily delves into her experience in India.
[97] Kirin Narayan, "Stella in Bombay," *archipelago* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1999), http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-1/narayan.htm.

noteworthy destinations within a particular state in one continuous journey, but rather spread these visits across different years.

Snead's contact sheets also reveal how her process of finding and developing the subject matter of her photography gradually became influenced by her experiences of travel in India. In 1960, Snead visited Almora in the northern state of Uttarakhand. In this period, she photographed ancient Indian buildings in a relatively conventional manner, primarily choosing frontal views of the entire structure (Fig. 1.6). In 1961, she visited Hampi, renowned for its significance for monkey worship in India. The contact sheets here show us that she was interested in photographing the ways in which the monkeys occupied the temples and asked for food from visitors (Fig. 1.7). Snead also found many ancient sculptures of monkeys and various animals adorning the exteriors of temples in Hampi, that she captured in her photographs (Fig. 1.8). This initiated a sensory bond for her between ancient sculptures and living animals coexisting in the same environment, sparking her subsequent emphasis on sculptural depictions of animals in her photography, particularly those from ancient Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain temples in India. This photographic interest culminated in the publication of her photobook *Animals in Four Worlds: Sculptures from India* (1989), solidifying her enduring fascination with sculptures on ancient architectural structures as well as her collaboration with Indologists Wendy Doniger and George Michell (Fig. 1.9).[98]

In 1960, Snead became acquainted with some modern Indian architects. Their influence sparked her interest in modern architecture in India, prompting her to visit construction sites and capture photographs. For example, she visited and took photographs of a recently constructed modern factory in 1960, designed by her friend Pravina Mehta, a leading female Indian architect and political activist (Fig. 1.10).[99] Snead captured a series of photographs featuring Mehta engaged in discussions with her engineers/contractors (Fig. 1.11). Mehta, dressed in a sari with her hair neatly secured in a bun, appears to be gesturing with an open hand, suggesting that she is giving instructions to the three men that surround her. In this series of photographs featuring Mehta, the three men in white attire are clustered together, whereas Mehta stands alone. Snead's photographs keenly capture Mehta at work: she is focused, tough, and assertive.

[98] Snead, Doniger, and Michell, *Animals in Four Worlds*.
[99] In the past decade, several historically neglected female Indian architects, including Pravina Mehta, have begun to be widely discussed. See Mary N. Woods, *Women Architects in India: Histories of Practice in Mumbai and Delhi* (London: Routledge, 2016); Madhavi Desai, *Women Architects and Modernism in India: Narratives and Contemporary Practices* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2019).

Snead and Mehta's friendship was fuelled by their many shared experiences. Their educational backgrounds were each related to modernist aesthetics and multicultural living experiences. Mehta studied at the Illinois Institute of Design (founded as the New Bauhaus) in the 1940s and returned to India in 1956 to pursue her professional career in architecture. When Mehta returned to India, the buildings of Chandigarh were under construction. Many of the buildings that she designed in the 1960s, such as the Patel House and the Advani Oerlikon Electrodes Factory, show the influence of Le Corbusier on her work.

This visit was pivotal in consolidating Snead's passion for photographing architectural space in India. Snead's photographs of several of Mehta's buildings in the 1960s have been preserved by Mehta's firm to serve as visual evidence of her historical projects.[100] In 1961, Snead also visited Le Corbusier's Capitol Complex in Chandigarh, where she took a series of photographs (Fig. 1.12).

Around 1961, Snead began her exploration of beach patterns, sparked by her observation of the traces left behind by small crabs on Juhu Beach (Fig. 1.13). Subsequently, she embarked on a journey down the west coast of India, beginning in Bombay, in pursuit of additional beach patterns. These fascinating beach photographs are evident on contact sheets spanning the entire decade of the 1960s, where the patterns exhibit an increasing diversity and complexity (Fig. 1.14).

In 1962, Snead embarked on her journey to Rajasthan, a region that she would later revisit numerous times throughout her life.[101] Rajasthan's complex history and rich folk culture prompted her to photograph here extensively, capturing such details as its wedding attire, handcrafted items, elephant drawings, and puppet performances (Fig. 1.15). During this phase, she began to explore how to capture detailed patterns of folk objects from a personal perspective, trying to avoid tourist-oriented frontal shots and grand scenes.

By 1965, Snead had established close friendships and deep connections with many Bombay locals, as revealed in her contact sheets. One of these shows her visit to Mehta's

[100] It is worth noting that recent books featuring illustrations of Mehta's buildings have primarily used Snead's photographs. However, these have often neglected to properly credit Snead, attributing them to Mehta's collaborators, or to 'the archive of the Associated Architects' (Mehta's firm in Mumbai). For example, in the book *Women Architects in India* by Mary N. Woods, an image on page fifty-three, captioned as 'Carved Wooden Doors Opening onto Courtyard, Patel House. Source: Malvika Chari', was actually photographed by Snead. All of the images used in the book to illustrate the Advani Oerlikon factory are captioned as 'Source: Malvika Chari' or 'Source: Shirish Patel', but were all taken by Snead. In any case, this at least suggests that Snead's photography has been recognised as a commendable representation of Mehta's work, albeit without due credit.

[101] According to an incomplete count, Snead revisited Rajasthan in 1964, 1976, 1979, and 1983.

factory and Mehta's reciprocal visit to Snead's home on Juhu Beach (Fig. 1.16). Snead took several photographs of Mehta standing before Snead's photograph of beach pattern hanging on the wall. Starting from this period, Snead often invited friends to pose in front of her photographs hanging in various locations around her home. Her home became a venue for presenting her work, with friends becoming collaborators in her re-creative activities.

On another occasion, Snead visited her friend Numala's home (Fig. 1.17). Snead's camera lens is zoomed in, closely focusing on subtle details such as eyes, parts of faces, and the contours of a young boy's belly, evoking a deep sense of intimacy. Photography became more than a mere method of recording visits for Snead; it became a collaborative venture in the exploration of photographic expression. The picture of Numala in the lower right corner of the contact sheet was later selected in Snead's photobook *Shiva's Pigeons: An Experience of India* (Fig. 1.18).[102] These photographs stand as a testament to the profound moments of intimacy and experiential expression that Snead shared with her friends in India.

In 1967, Snead went to Bangalore (today known as Bengaluru) in the central state of Karnataka, and Ooty in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. As the contact sheets reveal, her exploration of the southern landscapes inspired a shift in her focus towards capturing the details of villagers' daily lives, from the goods displayed at small roadside stalls to the figures adorning local homes and the colourful Bollywood film advertisements at village gates (Fig. 1.19). In contrast to her earlier photographs in Rajasthan, where she delved into the region's folk art, her photographic exploration of South India shifts from the photographic representation of the regional or national culture in a general sense.

Upon her return to Bombay, Snead's fascination with the seemingly trivial objects she encountered in South India found further expression in the bustling streets of Bombay between 1968 and 1970. She photographed shopkeepers' stalls, signs, posters, crafted figures on street corners, and the performances of street artists (Fig. 1.20 and Fig. 1.21). Snead devoted substantial time to photographing these seemingly trivial and overlooked patterns. These subjects may have appeared mundane on the surface, but they provided a captivating glimpse into the contemporary lives of ordinary Indians.

[102] Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons*, 123.

Snead's Approach to Photography

The preceding analysis of Snead's contact sheets of the 1960s has illuminated the features of her approach to travel and photography. As observed from the contact sheets, Snead's practice of photography and travel in India traversed a multitude of subjects. Her photographic interests evolved from capturing ancient ruins and temples in a broad sense to specifically focusing on animal sculptures. Similarly, her photographs transitioned from capturing representative examples of folk art and crafts to the trivial and ordinary objects of contemporary Indian life. Her travels were marked by uncertainty and spontaneity, providing a continuous stream of sources for photography. Photography also adapted to her mode of travel, favouring lightweight equipment to support the pace of her journeys. Her photographic interests, subjects, perspectives, and routines evolved as she immersed herself in the Indian environment. Three aspects merit further discussion: the notion of slowness, the role of contact sheets, and the emphasis on photography as a process in her photographic method.

Firstly, the notion of slowness was intrinsic to her approach, as her photography was intricately woven with her constant travelling. The examination of her contact sheets reveals a recurring pattern whereby one roll of film would often encompass various geographical locations, sometimes spanning several months. She did not rush into processing the rolls of film but allowed the process to synchronise with the cadences of her journeys and life, optimising the potential of each film roll.

As a result, when Snead returned to her home in Bombay and decided to process her film rolls, the contact sheet, besides fulfilling its primary function of aiding her memory of her journeys, frequently brought her delightful surprises. For example, in a contact sheet of her travels in Rajasthan, the last image of one strip shows that Snead took a picture of a man in Bikaner (a town between Jaisalmer and Pushka) before visiting Pushka, and that, after a few other shots, she also photographed a boy attending the Holi festival (Fig. 1.22).[103] Upon printing the entire roll of film as a contact sheet, a remarkable coincidence came to light. The images of the man and the boy appeared adjacent to each other in the frame, with the man wearing a substantial, natural moustache and the boy wearing a painted moustache (Fig.

[103] This photograph of the boy at Holi festival is included in Snead's photobook *Shiva's Pigeons*. Snead writes in the caption for this image: 'His clothes are bespattered with coloured water and red powder; he himself very likely added the moustache. At Puskha, near Ajmer, Rajasthan.' Holi is the festival of colours in India. Snead's black-and-white photograph allows the audience to focus on the boy's bright eyes, the sign of Vishnu on his forehead, and the painted moustache. Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons*, 310, 366.

1.23). This coincidence, derived from the 'darkroom magic' of printing, was a great pleasure for Snead, and among the revelations of which she spoke.[104]

This revelation is not preconceived, nor is it something noticed during her travels. It demonstrates a phenomenological experience of the photographic process. This means that, in addition to being a tool for recording, indexing, and editing, the contact sheet is a source of inspiration in itself, and the relationships between the images on the contact sheet are not isolated or competitive. The encounter between one image and another illustrates how perspectives change towards the invisible realms of perceptual experience. Importantly, these relationships are not preconceived during the act of capture or anticipated during Snead's travels. They are discovered upon reviewing the contact sheets. This is why Snead finds the work in the darkroom more exhilarating than the moments at which she captures her photographs. Her practice not only highlights the temporal gap inherent in analogue photography but also her deliberate extension of this gap, allowing the developing process to assume a more creative and substantial role.

Secondly, when considering the role and importance of contact sheets in Snead's work, it is crucial to note that she had a distinctive approach towards their handling, which set her apart from many of her peers. Henri Cartier-Bresson's influential concept of the 'decisive moment' has left an indelible mark on the history of photography. However, the influence of this concept goes beyond technical aspects and has permeated the popular understanding of photography, often reducing the art form to a focus on singular, isolated moments. This focus on the instantaneous has led to a perception that the final, chosen photograph is the only significant result, overshadowing the process leading to it. For instance, Cartier-Bresson cut up his negatives in 1939, keeping the individual shots he considered successful or valuable, and discarding the rest.[105] Bevan Davies has also expressed that he does not like to look at his contact sheets.[106] For these photographers, the primary role of contact sheets is to identify the most exceptional image from a series of shots. Once this is selected, the remaining unselected negatives and contact sheets will have fulfilled their purpose and can serve no further utility for the photographer.

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[104] The juxtaposition of these two images on the contact sheet could also coincidentally resemble a portrait of Salvador Dalí and Georges Mathieu, which Snead might have seen before, with the former sporting a slender, upturned moustache, and the latter having a thicker, drooping moustache.
[105] Eric Kim, "Book Review: Magnum Contact Sheets," Eric Kim Photography (website), accessed 5 April 2024, https://erickimphotography.com/blog/2012/10/03/10-things-street-photographers-can-learn-from-magnum-contact-sheets/.
[106] Ibid.

Photography is more intricate than the capturing of a singular instant, despite the popular notion of the 'decisive moment'. Eve Forres contends that images are the culmination of a multitude of 'experiences, routines, environments, and movements', all interwoven as crucial components within the complex layers of photographic practice.[107] Snead's approach to handling contact sheets enhances their practical applications and significance. While many other photographers might wish to destroy or hide contact sheets as evidence of what they have done wrong, the images on Snead's contact sheets are considered valuable sources to evoke new embodied experience after travel instead of mistakes or missteps. Her frequent use of these contact sheets is evident from their worn condition and storage method. They are kept in paper boxes with lids that enable convenient access whenever needed. (Fig. 1.24).[108]

Finally, her working methods epitomise the idea of photography as an ongoing process. They illustrate that photographic prints are not isolated end products but are integral parts of a dynamic, evolving journey. Her approach to photography was far from static; it constituted a living archive in constant development, and a view of photography as an ever-growing process. Travel photographs are typically perceived as factual records of specific times, places, events, and landscapes, combined with personal emotional responses, but these narratives tend to overlook the phenomenological experiences that the practice of travel and photography carry with them. These experiential aspects are not fixed and can change as photographs are placed in various ways, viewed repeatedly, and shared in different contexts.

Dawn M. Phillips emphasises the importance of understanding the photographic process, highlighting that the act of taking pictures alone does not yield an immediate photograph.[109] The recorded light image requires additional steps for its visual realisation, even though modern cameras often automate these processes.[110] Snead's approach to photography further reveals that the photographic process extends beyond the time gap between the event of the photographic shot and the final print. It encompasses ongoing and potentially unending stages, where each interaction with photographic materials and every encounter between images contributes to the expansion of meaning, upon the foundation of phenomenological experience. Prematurely fixating on the end result overlooks the richness of this ongoing

[107] Eve Forrest, "On Photography and Movement: Bodies, Habits and Worlds in Everyday Photographic Practice" (PhD diss., University of Sunderland, 2012), 5.
[108] All of the contact sheets and most of the photographic prints were processed in the darkroom in black and white by Snead herself. Prints for exhibitions and book drafts were printed externally when required.
[109] Dawn M. Phillips, "Photography and Causation: Responding to Scruton's Scepticism," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 49, no. 4 (2009): 337–38, https://doi.org/10.1093/aesthj/ayp036.
[110] Ibid.

process and the possibilities it embodies. Snead's approach to photography and travel yielded fresh perspectives, constituting a pivotal facet of her phenomenological engagement with photography.

This dynamic approach allowed Snead to gradually develop her photographic preference regarding subject matter, as she states that 'my subject matter was almost everything, but was tending more and more towards details and patterns.'[111] Her photographs tend to share a common thread that she encapsulated in the word 'patterns'. She continues:

> I was also beginning to look more closely and eagerly at the small, still things: the bark of trees, the patterns made by algae on stagnant water, the flowers shopkeepers wove together to decorate women's hair. There was so much that was new and strange and fascinating to look at in the details of India.[112]

The term 'pattern' here extends beyond mere abstract repetition or a behavioural pattern. In the following three sections, I will delve further into the concept of 'patterns' in Snead's photography, examining it through the three primary types of patterns: beach, architecture, and street patterns. I will also explore how photography mediates her embodied experience of travelling in India, forging a profound connection between herself and the country.

[111] Snead, "Prelude to Photography and Then Some."
[112] Ibid.

Section 1.2 Beach Patterns

Beach Patterns

In the first section of this chapter, we learnt that Snead began to take photographs of beach patterns in 1961. Soon after this, she embarked upon trips down the west coast of India, starting from Bombay, to search for more complex beach patterns (Fig. 1.25). Her criteria for choosing a beach were: that it must be wide enough to observe the intersection of land and sea; that it preferably be in the tropics, because of the diversity of species as well as the high level of activity; that the time of observation must be when the tide is low; and that it is preferable for the beach not to be crowded, in order to allow for some time alone.[113] All of these criteria serve her desire to find, observe, and photograph the ever-changing patterns at the junction of sea and land.

Snead usually carried a light meter and two cameras, one to shoot black and white and one to shoot colour. She had a Micro-Nikkor 55mm f/3.5 manual-focus lens to use with the cameras, allowing for a precise focus, especially on close-ups.[114] She would send the colour films to professional studios for processing, while she processed most of her black-and-white negatives by herself. She was fascinated to see how the 'magic ritual' of printing disclosed the grainy texture that 'accentuates the sandiness'.[115]

'Vision' is a term that Snead often emphasised when communicating her thoughts about photography. In her magazine article "Plages Indiennes (*Indian Beaches*)," published in *Camera* in 1967 (Fig. 1.26 and Fig. 1.27), she gave an account of her thoughts about the relationship between beach photographs and vision:

> I soon realised that the beach I lived on was much more than a narrow strip of sand dotted with palm trees. Each tide changed the details to such an extent that I began to point my camera directly at what lay at my feet.… By capturing these small, seemingly insignificant things and enlarging them,… it is possible to unfold the vision of others as well as your own. One of the greatest satisfactions I experienced at the first exhibition of my Indian beaches at the Gallery Chemould in Bombay in 1966 was the pleasure that many visitors expressed at seeing something 'new'; some were even tempted to run to the beach to see it all with their own eyes. At a subsequent exhibition in New York, I

[113] Snead, *Beach Patterns*. This photobook is unpaginated.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

> received similar reactions. So I had succeeded, at least to a small extent, in broadening the vision of a few people…[116]

This passage has three key points. First, Snead here describes how she was influenced and inspired by her embodied experience of Indian beaches to start taking photographs of their patterns. Second, she delves into her fascination with the printing process and its ability to enlarge small details, promoting a fresh exploration of the realm of vision. This is closely linked to the themes of slowness and revelation discussed in the preceding section, where I examined her methods of photography and travel. Third, she reflects on the sense of satisfaction and accomplishment that arises when she finds her photographs have the potential to expand the vision and perception of her audience, inspiring them to embark on their own beach explorations and experiences.

In 1975, Snead compiled her beach photographs to publish a photobook, *Beach Patterns: The World of Sea and Sand*, with an introduction written by György Kepes. While this book was published in 1975, it is based on the content of her 1967 article in *Camera*, suggesting that Snead had already developed a detailed account of her photographs of beach patterns by that earlier date. The text of the 1975 photobook is an expansion of her 1967 article. Thus, even though the photobook was published eight years later, it is useful to assist our understanding of her photographs of beach patterns taken in the 1960s.

[116] Stella Snead, "Plages Indiennes (*Indian Beaches*)," *Camera*, no. 6 (June 1967), 16–21, the Stella Snead Archive.

Imaginative Seeing and Expanded Vision

In the previous section, I emphasised that the most prominent feature of Snead's treatment of photographs is her anticipation of the 'revelation' elicited by the printing process. This revelation and the experience it encapsulates are elucidated in her photographs of beach patterns. Regarding a photograph of small balls created by sand bubbler crabs (later titled 'Collective Invention'), creatures inhabiting sandy beaches in the tropical Indo-Pacific who feed by filtering sand through their mouthparts (Fig. 1.28), she writes:

> When I enlarged the photograph to 20" x 24", I saw something else, something that might have been seen from the air: a herd of animals gathering round a waterhole, an oasis of trees, a crowd of people under white umbrellas. One does not often think in these terms while on the beach; it is upon examining the enlarged photographs later that these fancies suggest themselves. Then there are the seemingly cooperative efforts of a number of crabs.[117]

Snead celebrates how the patterns formed by the co-operation of several small crabs can stimulate the imagination and lead to many associations. She is fascinated by the transformative potential of photographic printing, which can enlarge a photograph to the extent that it imaginatively elevates the viewer into the air and alters one's perceptions. She describes it as akin to 'looking down on villages with tree-bordered highways running between them'.[118] The parallels between these minute patterns and the enormous landscapes observed from the air are brought together in our mind. In this context, Snead underscores the misalignment between the moment of capturing a photograph and the imaginative associations it can prompt after processing.

In 1965, after she had accumulated enough beach photographs, Snead had an exhibition at Gallery Chemould in Bombay (Fig. 1.29). In 1966, she also got a chance to exhibit her beach photographs at Panoras Gallery in New York (Fig. 1.30). In her exhibition of beach photographs in 1965, she assigned each of the thirty-eight exhibited works a caption with a poetic association, such as '3. Communication Gap', '15. Collective Invention', '17. How Low the Moon', and '27. The Crab's Butterfly' (Fig. 1.31).

In many photobooks featuring natural abstract photographs, details about the actual objects or their locations are often provided in captions, either beneath the images or in the illustration list. For example, in Arvid Gutschow's *See Sand Sonne*, the caption for figure

[117] Snead, *Beach Patterns*.
[118] Ibid.

thirty-six reads ‘Äderung eines versickerten Rinnsals’ (‘Branches of a Dried-Up Rivulet’) (Fig. 1.32).[119] Snead also took a photograph of a sand rivulet (Fig. 1.33), including this in her 1975 photobook *Beach Patterns*, where she writes:

> In between the rocks and around their bases, the water swirls, leaving as it ebbs patches of sand, now smooth, now rippled.… They are free flowing, for what makes them is a flow, a trickle, a creeping of water draining from the sand. Around the base of a rock there is a pool and into it the trickles wander, slightly indenting the sand, making runnels that branch from and into one another just as great deltas do as they approach the sea.[120]

Here Snead describes how enlarged and printed images of the gentle flow of trickling sand elicit for her a vision of expansive deltas. This photograph featured in her 1965 exhibition of beach photographs, the catalogue for which reveals Snead’s title for this work to be *Hair of Venus*.[121] Diverging from the usual practice of providing neutral or simply ‘untitled’ captions for abstract photography, Snead purposefully provides hints to stimulate the reader’s imaginative associations.

In the same year, Snead printed *Hair of Venus* and hung it on the wall of her house on Juhu Beach. She invited female friends to stand in front of this work so as to take portraits of them. For example, Snead took several photographs of Pravina Mehta standing in front of *Hair of Venus* (Fig. 1.34 and Fig. 1.35). In addition, Snead specially cut out the section with Mehta’s eyes looking to the right (Fig. 1.36). The process of viewing this photograph is an interaction of embodied experiences triggered by three elements: the photograph of beach patterns, Mehta’s eyes, and the icon of the hair of Venus. This photographic section represents a sincere connection between two independent women in their pursuit of art and architecture in India, a connection that goes beyond the fetish of Venus’s hair as a symbol of femininity, as reproduced by the canon of art history. Snead offers a physical experience of interacting with the photographs, an interaction that places particular emphasis on vision, the body, and dynamic and perceptual experiences.

What Snead advocates through her exhibitions and photobook is an associative or imaginative seeing, wherein the viewing process is prompted by the uncertainty of

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[119] Arvid Gutschow, *See Sand Sonne; 75 Photographische Aufnahmen Von Meer Watt Strand Dünen Und Küstenpflanzen* (Hamburg: Gebrüder Enoch, 1930), viii.
[120] Snead, *Beach Patterns*.
[121] Stella Snead, *Beach Abstracts*, exhibition catalogue (Bombay: Gallery Chemould, 1965), the Stella Snead Archive.

photography in terms of abstraction, perspective, and proportion.[122] This echoes Gestalt psychology and the duck-rabbit illusion made famous by Ludwig Wittgenstein.

As far back as 1928, Walter Benjamin demonstrated a profound recognition of photography's connection to the unconscious mind in his review "News about Flowers," about Karl Blossfeldt's photobook *Originary Forms of Art*.[123] Benjamin marvelled at photography's ability to magnify minuscule plant details, allowing him to discern unconscious resemblances in botanical photographs, such as ancient Greek columns in the enlarged image of a horsetail, cathedral windows from an enlarged image of saxifrage, and totem poles from an enlarged image of maple shoots.[124] Later, in his "Little History of Photography," he boldly states that photography engages with 'another nature' beyond human consciousness, tapping into the realm of the unconscious.[125] Despite photography's human origins, Benjamin believed that it could expose the limits of human intentionality, serving as a means to explore the optical unconscious—much as psychoanalysis delves into the instinctual unconscious.

In a political twist, Benjamin's contemplations shift the locus of photography's potential from its presumed indexical relationship with reality to its close association with the concealed structures of the human psyche. He identifies the political potential of photography as its ability to grant human vision access to realms that it cannot perceive on its own. This new mode of forensic vision introduces an uncanny and enchanted dreamlike world, which brings forth a sense of distance, alienation, and abstraction.

Snead's approach to naming her works also reflects many surrealists' quests for poetic and absurd titles. For instance, she titled her photograph depicting patterns left by small crabs as 'Collective Invention,' referencing Rene Magritte's painting *The Collective Invention* (1934) (Fig. 1.37 and Fig. 1.38). In Magritte's work, the fish head and human legs reverse the traditional depiction of a mermaid. Similarly, in Snead's photograph, the pattern represents

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[122] The term 'imaginative seeing' is from Kendall L. Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).
[123] Walter Benjamin, "News about Flowers" (1928), in *Selected Writings*, vol. 2, part 1, 1927–1930, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al., eds. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 156. See also Shawn M. Smith and Sharon Sliwinski, *Photography and the Optical Unconscious* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 4–5.
[124] Benjamin, "News about Flowers".
[125] Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography" (1931), in *Selected Writings*, vol. 2, part 2, 1931–1934, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al., eds. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999), 507–30, 510.

five mermaids joined head-to-tail, each coincidentally resembling the reversed imagery of the mermaid depicted in Magritte's painting.

The emphasis on the accidental and unpredictable experience evoked by reviewing images inherits Benjamin's observations and refers to Magritte's poetic nomenclature and classic imagery. The head-to-tail reversed mermaid depicted in René Magritte's painting highlights the figure's exposed legs and potential genitals, suggesting a collective imagination of sexual deviation shared by many surrealists derived from the abnormal body structure.[126] However, the pattern in Snead's photograph diverges from the Freudian theories favoured by surrealism regarding the subconscious, sexual impulses, and fears of castration. Ironically, the pattern in her photograph was not created by humans but was the result of several small crabs' collaboration.

Snead's photographs of beach patterns evoke not merely a similarity to previous motifs or forms, but rather the embodied experience of associations and imaginations. This resonates with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's emphasis that even when we envision a bird's-eye perspective, this invariably engages the body and is mediated through bodily experiences, since all perspectives fundamentally trace back to, and originate from, our personal embodied encounters.[127]

Snead's emphasis on the imaginative seeing in her photographs of beach patterns exposes the constant oscillation of our sensory experiences, spanning the micro and macro. To put it differently, once one recognises the potential for associative imagination, reverting to a solitary image is no longer a viable option.

[126] Przemysław Strożek, "Death of a Mermaid: A study on René Magritte's L'Invention Collective (Collective Invention)," in *Fishing with John*, ed. Honza Zamojski (Rome: Nero, 2013), 131-143.
[127] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (London: Routledge, 2012), 234-35.

Vision and Abstract Nature Photography

Abstract nature photography is one of the most important categories of modernist photography in the twentieth century. Photographing the ephemerality of nature is always associated with photography's ability to expand human vision. The camera's capacity to reveal things not easily available to the eyes has been celebrated by different generations of photographers, with diverse aspirations, since the invention of photography. Snead's photographic interest in patterns of nature can be traced back to the photographic language of German and American modernist photography. Albert Renger-Patzsch, Arvid Gutschow, and Alfred Ehrhardt, as representatives of the New Objectivity movement, considered nature and the machine to function in similar ways, and believed in the ability of photography to represent the texture and essence of an object.[128] Paul Strand and Edward Weston also based their photographic language on the formal qualities of nature and man-made objects.

László Moholy-Nagy was one of the earliest theorists to discuss the concept of 'new vision' in photography. He asserted that the modern lenses of camera has introduced remarkable opportunities of expanding the visual image beyond the confines of our eyes.[129] The construction of vision in terms of a language had also appeared in the writing of Amédée Ozenfant and Le Corbusier, who likened the 'modern optic' to a new 'plastic language'.[130]

In 1944, György Kepes published his book *Language of Vision: Painting, Photography, Advertising-Design*.[131] During the 1950s and 1960s, he edited a set of anthologies, each of which contains essays and images from scientists, artists, architects, and designers concerning the relationship between vision, nature, art, and science.[132] Kepes's books became a staple of art education in American schools and studios in the mid-twentieth century.[133] Leigh Anne Roach argues that Kepes synthesised the various threads of investigation and experimentation

[128] Gutschow, *See Sand Sonne*. See also Maria Morris Hambourg, Philippe Apraxine, Malcolm Daniel, Jeff L. Rosenheim, and Virginia Heckert, *The Waking Dream: Photography's First Century. Selections from the Gilman Paper Company Collection* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993).
[129] László Moholy-Nagy, *Painting, Photography, Film*, trans. Janet Seligman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967), 7.
[130] Amédée Ozenfant and Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, "Purism," in *Modern Artists on Art: Ten Unabridged Essays*, ed. Robert L. Herbert (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1964), 58–73.
[131] Gyorgy Kepes, *Language of Vision: Painting, Photography, Advertising-Design* (Chicago: P. Theobald, 1944).
[132] Such as Gyorgy Kepes, *The New Landscape in Art and Science* (Chicago: P. Theobald, 1956); Gyorgy Kepes, *Education of Vision* (London: Studio Vista, 1965); Gyorgy Kepes, *The Nature and Art of Motion* (London: Studio Vista, 1965); Gyorgy Kepes, *Module, Proportion, Symmetry, Rhythm* (New York: G. Braziller, 1966).
[133] Frederick Logan, *Growth of Art in American Schools* (New York: Harper and Row, 1955), 255–57.

of twentieth-century visual theories, rather than introducing a new form of representation.[134] Many of Kepes's notions and concerns about vision and photography presented in his books are rooted in the Bauhaus and were organised to proclaim his utopian hopes for art's effect on education and humanity's future.

On account of their shared interest in photography and vision, Snead invited Kepes to write an introduction to her photobook *Beach Patterns: The World of Sea and Sand*, in 1975.[135] In Kepes's introduction, he reiterates his views on how science, technology, mobility, and equipment influence the human senses and alter human vision. This perspective not only enables practical insights into the forms and principles of nature but also reveals its patterns. However, Kepes refrains from specifying what kind of patterns Snead's photographs reveal, instead placing her work within the general context of Eastern philosophy and the concept of the 'pure rhythm of undisturbed nature'. Thus, I will here further compare Snead's photobook with those of select modernist photographers in order to shed light on the significance of Snead's beach patterns and their impact on the viewer.

Many modernist photographers took extensive series of photographs of abstract patterns of architecture, machinery, plants, deserts, ripples, and so forth. Besides its use for capturing and recording fleeting patterns, the reproducibility and ease of manipulation and dissemination of photography, as a modernist medium, has helped to bring about the coordination and integration of nature and industry.[136]

This search for structural laws is oriented to a utopian belief in human progress.[137] Michael Golec argues that Kepes takes an intellectual approach rather than a sensory one, emphasising 'the fundamentally synthetic (and philosophically idealist) nature of Kepes's notion of coming into wholeness—or integration'.[138] It means that Kepes proposed a refining vision for the paradigm of human advancement by overlooking the corporeal and material aspects.

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[134] Leigh Anne Roach, "A Positive, Popular Art: Sources, Structure, and Impact of Gyorgy Kepes's Language of Vision" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2010), 2.
[135] There is no record as to how Snead got in touch with Kepes. It is possible that she came to know him through her artist friends in the US. It is also possible that Pravina Mehta might have known Kepes during her studies at the Illinois Institute of Design in the 1940s, and that she introduced Snead and Kepes to each other.
[136] Jessica Lauren Schouela, "Truth in Soft-Focus: Photography and Abstraction in Dialogue 1914–1930" (PhD diss., University of York, 2019), 193.
[137] Roach, "A Positive, Popular Art," 25.
[138] Michael Golec, "A Natural History of a Disembodied Eye: The Structure of Gyorgy Kepes's *Language of Vision*," *Design Issues* 18, no. 2 (2002): 6, https://doi.org/10.1162/074793602317355747.

I would like to argue that, unlike these modernist photographers and theorists, Snead is not obsessed with shaping a greater order so as to direct human progress, but rather focuses on the relationship between embodied experience and the materiality of photography. Her habit of searching for beach patterns did not come to her as soon as she arrived in India, but coalesced after her move to Juhu Beach, where her senses were fully stimulated by her embodied experience of living on the tropical beach.

Brett Weston published his photobook *Voyage of the Eye* in 1975, the same year that Snead published *Beach Patterns: The World of Sea and Sand* (Fig. 1.39 and Fig. 1.40).[139] Weston inherited his father Edward Weston's attention to high contrasts, dark backgrounds, and the formal structures of objects, and his photobook consists of photographs of diverse objects and landscapes, including a number of abstract images of sand dunes and tide pools (Fig. 1.41). According to Edward Weston, 'the camera should be used for a recording of life, for rendering the very substance and quintessence of the thing itself, whether it be polished steel or palpitating flesh.'[140] Many of Edward Weston photographs of still life are purged of their spatiotemporal context.[141] They are accentuated and intensified so as to transcend the objects themselves, in order to focus purely on their aesthetic attributes.

Differing from the formal, abstract emphasis on dramatic high contrasts and the sharp intersection of planes in Brett Weston's work, the power of Snead's photographs comes from the dynamic entanglement generated by the interaction of layers of materials. For instance, in the image inside the front cover of Snead's *Beach Patterns*, the colour and texture of the sand varies as it moves from dark to light, reflecting the shifting elements of the surroundings (Fig. 1.40). The runnels of water that carry the receding tides here appear as carved veins in the sand and uncover the black sand just below the surface, adding a sense of organic movement. Shells and pebbles are dotted with white reflections in this photograph, breaking up the darker tones of the beach. The surrounding sand is not entirely flat; it bears faint traces of water ripples, further emphasising a sense of ongoing movement and transformation. As a pattern formed by the intricate dance of nature's energies, Snead's photograph emphasises the dynamic interaction of the elements of wind, water, sand, and stone. By avoiding the heavy contrast that is typical of the styles of many nature photographers, Snead's work is able

[139] Brett Weston, *Voyage of the Eye* (New York: Aperture, 1975).
[140] Lisa Hostetler, "Group f/64," Metropolitan Museum of Art (website), accessed 5 April 2024, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/f64/hd_f64.htm.
[141] Shelley Rice, "*The Daybooks* of Edward Weston: Art, Experience, and Photographic Vision," *Art Journal* 36, no. 2 (1976): 127, https://doi.org/10.2307/776160.

to focus more on texture and the rhythms of kinetic effects, suggesting the energy and life present in the seemingly simple yet intricate interactions of these natural elements.

The layout of Snead's photobook deserves special consideration. The practice of framing images with white borders is a convention adopted in many photographers' photobooks, as in Brett Weston's work (Fig. 1.41). This practice sustains a self-reflective quality to the work, constantly reminding the reader that they are looking at a book or work of art. In contrast, Snead's photobook boldly discards this conventional framing. Throughout the entire book, not a single image is enclosed within a full frame. Instead, each image extends to at least one edge of the page, often extending to three and sometimes to all four edges (Fig. 1.42). There are also images that occupy the full spread without leaving any empty space (Fig. 1.43). Notably, the layout undergoes variations from one spread to another within the photobook. In this way, the design expands readers' spatial perception and transcends the confines of the single page by conveying a sense of openness and endlessness of the beach patterns.

In the photobook, Snead also incorporates several quotations from Rachel Carson, the renowned American marine biologist who is celebrated for her seminal work *Silent Spring*, of 1962, which significantly contributed to the global environmental movement. Snead is particularly drawn to Carson's appreciation of the tide line, that juncture where sand meets water, symbolising a realm of perpetual dynamism and change. Carson's pioneering work *The Edge of the Sea* revolves around her development of an environmental ethics that takes non-human life into account.[142]

In accordance with Carson's call for greater recognition of non-human interests, Snead's photobook stands as a visual testament to the vibrant life of the intertidal zone, reinforcing the anti-anthropocentric idea that the non-human world merits not only our attention and respect but also influences our perceptions and embodied experiences. The understanding of mutual influence and symbiosis is not theoretical or conceptual, but rather emanates from personal sensory experiences and imaginative connections with nature.

Serving as the first interior image of the book, Snead's photograph astutely magnifies the beach pattern so that it resembles a branchlike form, akin to the fingers of a hand, that extends across an entire page (Fig. 1.40). What is noteworthy is that this enlargement is not

[142] Philip Cafaro, "Rachel Carson's Environmental Ethics," *World Views: Environment, Culture, Religion* 6, no. 1 (2002): 58–80, https://doi.org/10.1163/156853502760184595.

just for the eyes; it is an invitation for the viewer's hands to embark on a tactile journey as they leaf through the book. This unique approach not only encourages visual exploration of the beach patterns but, more significantly, prompts a direct physical connection with them, overcoming the traditional limits of photography's merely visual mode of engagement.

When looking at printed photographs, one may realise that images assume unique spatial identities and dimensions. Photographs are usually considered two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional geographical space. However, this condition should be understood as flexible, since spatial dimensions engage in a constant dialogue, flowing in and out of each other's realms. That is to say, the space within a printed photograph is far from flat, for a photograph is not just a depiction of real-world objects but is a tangible entity in itself. The interaction goes both ways: how we perceive spaces in the tangible world may, and perhaps should, be shaped by the photographs we encounter. While photographs traditionally depict spatial locations, through their printing and arranging they metamorphose into three-dimensional spaces in the physical world, becoming more than visual representations.

In essence, Snead's beach photographs, as with this inviting branch of a tree, transcend the typical two-dimensional confines of a photograph and urge viewers to engage with their images not only with their eyes but also through direct tactile interaction. The space within the printed photograph is anything but flat; it accumulates value, becoming an entity with depth and texture. Patterns of nature are not confined to the square borders given to them by human beings; their extension and growth is beyond human control. The grain of the patterns follows the edge of the book and extends into the distance, directing the reader's perception beyond the pictorial space. This transition from image to living space redefines the viewer's interaction with the photograph. This shift in the phenomenological experience of photography marks Snead's departure from the conventions of her modernist predecessors and opens new dimensions in the interaction between viewers and photographs. By touching, leafing through, and looking back and forth, Snead experiments with the layout of her photobook, helping readers to extend the boundaries of their own perception and cognition.

Embodied Experience

In 1965, Snead had the idea to exhibit her beach photographs and reached out to Gallery Chemould in Bombay. Kekoo Gandhy and his wife, Khorshed Gandhy, established Gallery Chemould in 1963, on the first floor of Jehangir Art Gallery. Chemould was renowned for being the first modern and contemporary gallery in Bombay. Art educator Mahendra Damle provides insights into Bombay's art scene during the mid-twentieth century:

> There were not many avenues to present art, there were few buyers and modern art was not understood by many. Even artists who rebelled against art school education and were encouraged and mentored by Walter Langhammer, the Austrian artist who had fled to India following the National Socialist annexation of Austria, all needed a space where they could showcase their works.[143]

In this time of great need, Gallery Chemould played a key role in Bombay's cultural milieu, emerging as a vibrant centre for artists, writers, poets, and activists.[144] According to Jerry Pinto, an old friend of the Gandhys and author of the book *Citizen Gallery: The Gandhys of Chemould and the Birth of Modern Art in Bombay*, Khorshed and Kekoo's opinions diverged with regard to Snead's proposal to exhibit her beach photographs. Khorshed expressed scepticism about the market for beach photographs, while Kekoo affirmed that even if nobody would buy, they will have them shown anyway. This anecdote has been widely circulated within oral histories of Gallery Chemould. The deliberations of Khorshed and Kekoo concerning the feasibility of Snead's exhibition are also documented in family letters preserved by the couple's daughters in the gallery's archive.[145]

This anecdote in part reflects the conditions of the art market in Bombay in the 1960s. Indian modern art at that time was dominated by Indian modernist paintings that were formally influenced by Western modern art and thematically rooted in Indian culture and life. Discussion of photography in India mainly concerned the iconic images of the country's colonial history and the photographic exploration of questions of autonomy and self-

[143] Mahendra Damle, "'Citizen Gallery' by Jerry Pinto: How an Art Gallery Shaped India's Modern Art Scene," *Tribune*, 27 November 2022, https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/reviews/story/citizen-gallery-by-jerry-pinto-how-an-art-gallery-shaped-indias-modern-art-scene-455204.
[144] Gallery Chemould attracted many famous modern and contemporary Indian artists, such as S. H. Raza, Shankar Palshikar, H. A. Gade, Sadanand Bakre, V. S. Gaitonde, M. F. Husain, K. K. Hebbar, and Akbar Padamsee. For more details, see Jerry Pinto, *Citizen Gallery: The Gandhys of Chemould and the Birth of Modern Art in Bombay* (New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Books, 2022).
[145] Pinto, "What the Letters Reveal," in *Citizen Gallery*.

definition in relation to nationalism and photojournalism.[146] As an art form, photography had not yet attained the same status as painting in Indian museums.

In addition, the anecdote suggests Snead's connection to the local art community. Gallery Chemould, which promoted Indian modern and contemporary artists, accommodated Snead's works even though she was not an Indian. A group portrait (Fig. 1.44) taken at the wedding reception of Rashna Gandhy (Khorshed and Kekoo's daughter) and Bernard Imhasly (Swiss) in 1968 shows that Snead was invited to sit among people who were all connected to the Bombay art circle, including Shirin Sabavala (1924–2017, art patron and wife of Jehangir Sabavala), Khorshed Gandhy, Jehangir Sabavala (1922–2011, Indian painter), Homi Patel (1928–2004, Indian painter), and Satish Panchal (born 1935, Indian painter).[147] In the 1960s, the art scene in Bombay was by no means insular; it thrived on international exchanges and a constant influx of diverse individuals. Snead was very much a part of this artistic milieu.

Lastly, I believe that the concerns of the Gandhys with regard to the exhibition of Snead's beach photographs were not to do with whether Snead, as a Western artist, was able to be shown in an Indian art gallery. Rather, their concerns mirrored the challenges and struggles of Indian photography to find its photographic language and style during the first two decades following India's independence.[148] During this period, there was a prevalent apprehension that Indian photography might be perceived as merely derivative of Western modernist photography, potentially at the cost of its regional specificity.[149] This prompted questions about the positioning of Snead's works within this milieu, in the gallerists' interactions with both Western and Indian art scenes. The gallery owners did not leave explicit answers to these questions in the exhibition records, and it is my hope that my analysis can shed light on these matters.

With the Gandhys' support, Snead's exhibition was held successfully in 1965 (Fig. 1.45). The exhibition was titled *Beach Abstracts*, most likely to recall the nomenclature of recent abstract photography exhibitions in the United States. For instance, the Museum of Modern Art in New York held an exhibition entitled *Abstraction in Photography* in 1951, which demonstrated its ambition to define modernist photography (Fig. 1.46). The use of the

[146] Diva Gujral and Nathaniel Gaskell, *Photography in India: A Visual History from the 1850s to the Present* (Munich: Prestel, 2018), 13–15.
[147] Pinto, "Three Keys to Khorshed and Kekoo Gandhy," in *Citizen Gallery*.
[148] Gujral and Gaskell, *Photography in India*, 13–15.
[149] Ibid.

term ‘abstract’ might also have been an attempt to align with the prevailing popularity of Indian modern painting in Bombay at that time. From approximately 1970 onwards, Snead adopted the term ‘beach patterns’ to describe her beach photographs. In its differentiation from abstract photography, this shift suggests her growing confidence in her distinct direction and aspiration for her work.

Snead intentionally incorporates her experiences of life on Indian beaches into the design of her exhibitions and books because she believes that the entire experience can influence the audience. She encourages viewers to look downward rather than horizontally towards the sea. This requires them to stoop, carefully scan the ground, and consider how their bodily posture, viewing perspective, and pace influence their connection with the natural world. Snead photographed the installation of her 1965 exhibition at Gallery Chemould. Her contact sheet shows that some exhibits were placed against the lower section of the wall (Fig. 1.47). This design was even more pronounced in her photographic exhibition of natural patterns in 1974, once again at Gallery Chemould, where two works were deliberately laid directly on the floor, facing upwards (Fig. 1.48).[150]

Snead received enthusiastic responses from her audience, who expressed their desire o rush off to a beach to experience it for themselves.[151] She intentionally incorporated these experiences of living and exploring the beaches of India into the design of her exhibitions and photobook. Merleau-Ponty highlights that our lived body forms the basis for our existence in the world, enabling us to observe and engage with our surroundings, and that this ‘embodiment’ is the foundation for all experiences.[152] This means that the role of photographic mediation in Snead’s work lies in its making viewers aware of the presence and significance of embodiment itself. This encourages them to independently seek individual experiences related to embodiment, resulting in a notable impact on their physical reactions and behavioural impulses.

Snead’s design of the 1965 exhibition catalogue is notably distinctive. The numbering and captions in the catalogue use a variety of fonts and a non-linear arrangement, echoing her advocacy of ‘imaginative seeing’ (Fig. 1.31).[153] Although the numbering appears to be in disarray, following the sequence of numbers leads the reader’s gaze and head to slightly sway

[150] This was Snead’s second photography exhibition at Gallery Chemould, showcasing not only beach patterns captured in India during the 1960s but also some natural patterns photographed in other countries.
[151] Snead, “Plages Indiennes (Indian Beaches).”
[152] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 81.
[153] Snead, *Beach Abstracts*.

from side to side, mirroring the dynamics of the ocean waves, and echoing the ebb and flow of the waves implied by the dotted lines on the left. The design integrates two-dimensional symbols and forms, three-dimensional spatial imagery, and the physical movements of the body, amplified by the fact that visitors to Snead's show were physically surrounded by large blow-ups of beach photographs in the exhibition space.

In the introduction to *Beach Patterns*, György Kepes attributes the features of Snead's photographs to the ideas of 'Far Eastern philosophy': 'what Chinese call "rhythmical vitality" or the "essence of things".'[154] Indeed, Indian culture has a rich history of philosophical and spiritual traditions that have contemplated the nature of consciousness, the self, and the boundaries of human existence. Indian philosophical traditions have often used nature as a metaphor and a source of wisdom. For instance, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna teaches profound spiritual lessons by drawing analogies from the natural world, such as the impermanence of physical forms.[155]

However, I do not consider it necessary to categorise Snead's beach pattern photographs by their adherence to Western, Indian, or Chinese philosophy. Inevitably, Snead encountered diverse cultural and religious contexts in her practice of travel and photography. More significantly, I believe that the influence of both Western and Eastern philosophies on her was not primarily theoretical or intellectual but, rather, that it was rooted in her travel and lived experiences.

There is a noteworthy beach photograph in which Snead captured a scene of two ascetics (sadhu) sitting on Juhu Beach early one morning (Fig. 1.49). Ascetics are individuals who have renounced all earthly possessions and chosen to dedicate their lives to the pursuit of spiritual liberation. As a part of their daily routine, ascetics often bathe in cold water before sunrise. Ascetics are often seen holding a human skull as a reminder of the impermanence of life. Since the subjects of Snead's photograph do not have one, they have instead drawn skulls and crossbones in the sand. In Snead's image, the drawing of a massive elongated skull directs the viewer's eye beyond the edge of the frame, while a smaller skull beneath the larger one leads the eye down to a human head exposed above the sand. This third ascetic is almost completely buried in the sand, with only his head exposed and covered with a white

[154] György Kepes, "Introduction," in Snead, *Beach Patterns*.
[155] Nanditha Krishna, *Hinduism and Nature* (Gurgaon, India: Penguin, 2017); Justus Onyebuchi Okafor and Osim Stella, "Hinduism and Ecology: Its Relevance and Importance," *Fahsanu Journal* 1, no. 1 (September 2018): 1-11.

towel. As the tide is approaching, the sandy area in which they are situated already has seawater pouring in. One can almost feel the damp sand that clings to the body and the salty water pouring into the mouth. Snead's photograph represents a sacred ritual of self-realisation in the low tide, which is a zone between death and life. The picture encourages the viewer to imagine all the perceptions that these monks are experiencing as part of their ascetic practice, which is dedicated to achieving 'moksha'—release from the cycle of death and rebirth.

Modernist theorists believed that viewers, after visual training, could become creators of meaning, shaping the meaning of nature; however, Snead's *Beach Patterns* photobook offers an alternative perspective on the relation between nature and humanity. One photograph shows the way in which shells attach themselves to the rubber sole of a discarded sandal, completely transforming the presence of this rubber product, and standing as a testament to the transformative power of nature (Fig. 1.50). On the next page, one photograph shows footprints that have begun to spread with the shifting of the sand, to become vague holes; the photograph below shows the dribbles of toe prints that appear like branches (Fig. 1.51). These photographs remind us of the traces that humans leave in nature and of human boundaries that are constantly in the process of being eroded and dissolved. By acknowledging the embodied influence of the Indian beaches on her perceptions and experiences, and the role of photography in expanding vision, Snead positions herself less as creator than as both viewer and photographer being inquisitive and becoming inspired.

In the mid-twentieth century, art and design practices in India each required new mental and cultural maps. At that moment of transformation, initial appeals to modernism contained both contradictions and interpretive challenges. The persistent dichotomy between humanity and nature began to be questioned. Nature was often thought of as a staunch antagonist, either to be feared or conquered. However, Snead's photography asks us to embrace it. She demonstrates how the processes of travelling and photographing help break down the boundaries of both vision and the body, based on an acceptance of encounter, chance, contingency, and a dialogue of dynamic interactions that are constantly taking place. Snead's work reveals to us that pattern is not simply a new perspective, but rather a perception of processual relationships that guides our physical movement beyond their isolated units.

Section 1.3 Architecture Patterns

Chandigarh

In 1961, Snead visited Capitol Complex in Chandigarh and took photographs of the newly constructed architecture designed by Le Corbusier. The Capitol Complex of buildings in Chandigarh propelled India to the forefront of the global architectural scene, becoming a site of pilgrimage for many architects and photographers from India and abroad, Snead among them.[156]

Snead's photographs reflect her interest in abstract forms in architecture. For example, her photograph of the university administrative building in Chandigarh not only presents the repeated pattern of its grid façade, but also shows how the supporting column and the edge of the brick wall together form a dividing line, splitting the upper and lower levels of the space into light and dark zones (Fig. 1.52).

Snead's interest in the formal elements of Le Corbusier's buildings was likely to have been influenced by her educational background. She studied painting with Amédée Ozenfant from 1936 to 1941 in London and later in New York. Ozenfant and Le Corbusier formulated their theory of Purism in 1918; their works drew on the construction models of modern industry and placed an emphasis on simplicity of form and colour.[157] Françoise Ducros explains that Ozenfant's paintings reduce the bulk and density of depicted objects in favour of contour and transparency.[158] The objects in Ozenfant's works are linked by shared contours, a visual feature that reflects his interests in Gestalt theory and topology.[159] If we compare Ozenfant's painting *Verrerie* with two of Snead's paintings (one from the 1930s and the other from 1946), it becomes clear that the crisp contours and emphases on geometry and transparency in Ozenfant's painting found a way into her works (Fig. 1.53, Fig. 1.54 and Fig. 1.55).[160] Though she includes organic forms and depth of field, Snead's objects are depicted in geometric shapes with crisp contours, and translucent colours are interlocked to suggest

[156] Charles Correa, "Chandigarh: The View from Benares," in *Le Corbusier* ed H. Allen Brooks (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 197.
[157] Amédée Ozenfant, *Foundations of Modern Art* (New York: Dover Publications, 1928). For further discussion of Ozenfant's "Flatness and Depth," see Schouela, "Truth in Soft-Focus," 131–43.
[158] Françoise Ducros, "Amédée Ozenfant, 'Purist Brother': An Essay on His Contribution," in *L'Esprit Nouveau: Purism in Paris, 1918–1925*, written by Carol S. Eliel, et al. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 89.
[159] Ibid. See also Jamie Morra, "Purism and the Object-type: Tradition and Modernity, Art and Society," (Master's thesis, City University of New York, 2017), 31, https://academicworks.cuny.edu/hc_sas_etds/259.
[160] The painting made in the 1930s was created after Snead's trip to Italy, during the time of her studies with Ozenfant, and the painting of 1946 was made when Snead was living in Taos.

light and sand. This aesthetic interest in abstract forms also finds its way into Snead's photography.

In *Foundations of Modern Art*, Ozenfant emphasises the power of 'geometrisation' in industrial activities and the 'geometrisation of the spirit'.[161] As Stanislaus von Moos summarises, 'for Ozenfant and Jeanneret, these *objets types* symbolize the virtues of the new industrial world: its order, its anonymity, and its purity—in short, its "purism".'[162] They formulated a rationalist worldview wherein nature and machine operate symbiotically, following physical laws.

The application to India of this modernist legacy of aesthetic virtues and the universal laws of nature and machine was not straightforward, yet post-independence India did witness a modernist flourishing of both architecture and photography in the 1950s and 1960s, resonating with Nehru's progressive attitude to art and modernisation.[163] It witnessed a 'feverish movement of artists, architects and photographers in and out of the country's borders', including Le Corbusier, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Lucien Hervé, and many Indian artists and intellectuals who went abroad in search of new languages through which to interpret India.[164]

Hervé's photographs of Le Corbusier's Capitol Complex have become icons of the visual language of Chandigarh. For example, his image of the High Court of Chandigarh contrasts the building's dark shadows with the white lines of the massive concrete structure that stretch to the sky (Fig. 1.56). On the right, there is a solitary tree on a small hill. While the building's edge appears to divide the pictorial space, the natural scene is not portrayed as an adversary to modern architecture; rather, it is disciplined to serve the holistic aesthetics of photographing modern architecture.

The modernist photographs of Chandigarh display this great leap forward in the modernisation of India and render the city a symbol of progress. They leverage the assumption of truth inherent in architectural photography, implying a direct equivalence between image and building.[165] This modernist aesthetic strategy made Hervé and Le

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[161] Ozenfant, *Foundations of Modern Art*, 117–20.
[162] Stanislaus von Moos, *Le Corbusier: Elements of a Synthesis* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1979), 48–51.
[163] Gujral and Gaskell, *Photography in India*, 15.
[164] Ibid., 156. See also Cervin Robinson, "Part II: 1880 to 1930," in *Architecture Transformed: A History of the Photography of Buildings from 1839 to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987).
[165] Andrew Higgott and Timothy Wray, "Introduction: Architectural and Photographic Constructs," in *Camera Constructs: Photography, Architecture and the Modern City*, eds. Andrew Higgott and Timothy Wray (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 3.

Corbusier archetypes of the collaboration between photographer and architect. Photography is here considered capable of constructing a new world, driven by the utopian aspirations of architects and photographers.[166] Many later photographers would adopt a similar aesthetic when photographing Chandigarh.

On the other hand, there was and still remains an anxiety concerning the loss of India's regional specificity amid this wave of modernisation and internationalism. 'Chandigarh style' became the model for architecture and urbanisation in India in the 1950s and 1960s, typified by exposed concrete and iconic abstract forms. However, Indian engineers and construction teams needed to work under difficult conditions, contending with labour-intensive and low-cost methods, restrictions on imported building materials, and a low energy supply.[167] The execution of Indian modernism thus emphasised handicraft, with fabricators seeking to find their own positions in the building process and in the definition of the modern construction of India.

Rather than indulging in the aesthetic laws of modern architecture, Snead's photographs reflect this observation. In one of her photographs of the Assembly Building of Chandigarh, she captures the concrete texture of the building from a close vantage point (Fig. 1.57). The grey tones of the concrete are mottled with pouring marks, which are evidence of the involvement of local workers in the on-site construction. A deep cut on the left rests awkwardly in the middle. Through the rounded square doorway, our vision descends through multiple layers of mottled concrete floors, yet the complete structural configuration remains elusive.

In another photograph featuring the Assembly Building, Snead captures a scene with two local workers standing next to a sand-sifting sieve (Fig. 1.58). It is interesting to compare Snead's photograph with another image of the same building provided by the Foundation of Le Corbusier (hereafter referred to as 'the Foundation') (Fig. 1.59). The Foundation image prioritises the architectural structure, relegating the human figure to near invisibility. This is done to align the photograph more closely with established modernist visual aesthetics, ensuring its harmony with the spatial language of modern architecture. This harmony is achieved through the interplay of light and shadow on the concrete structures, as well as the geometric shapes, the symmetry of the reflection, and the rhythm and intricate details of Le

[166] Ibid., 6.
[167] Ramachandra Guha, *India after Gandhi* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 210–18.

Corbusier's design. The presence of the person in the corridor merely serves as an embellishment, further emphasising the rhythm and scale of the building.

Andrzej Piotrowski argues that Le Corbusier precisely utilised the synergy of commercial and conceptual modes of thinking to project his widely accepted frameworks and to become a leader of modern architecture.[168] However, the representational mode of modernist discourse, determined by 'masterful visions', is concealed.[169] Photography is not only seen as a record of architectural works, but also as a tool for conceptualising, measuring, and planning urban development, as well as for propaganda, advertising, and education.[170] The modernist photographic language separates the object from its surrounding environment, to visually assert its certainty and dominance.

In Snead's photograph, the foreground emphasises a palpable sense of the sand and stones' texture, and the uneven, gritty surface of the ground as it contrasts with the smooth concrete façades of the building. It captures the two individuals at such an angle that they appear to be standing in front of two of the building's walls, while the concrete slab of the ground seems to neatly separate their heads from their bodies. They appear to have paused their labour and are gazing into the distance, yet their bodies remain frozen in the posture of handling their tools. The figure on the left, clad in a rolled-up white kurta (a long, loose shirt), echoes the illuminated window frame on the wall behind him. Meanwhile, the figure on the right stands shirtless, echoing the dark window frame on the wall before which he stands. Regardless of whether this composition was captured consciously by Snead on site, or whether this coincidence was discovered during the printing process, Snead's work circumvents the direct reproduction of the Western modernist photographic language. I would not wish to claim that she abandons or challenges modernist photography here. Lines, shapes, light, and composition still constitute her visual vocabulary—as discussed earlier, these elements are rooted in her background as a modern painter. Rather, she attempts a blended approach that incorporates an awareness of experience. This approach suggests a mutual resonance between individuals and their built environment, offering a nuanced perspective on the intersection of human experience and architectural space.

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[168] Andrzej Piotrowski, "Le Corbusier and the Representational Function of Photography," in *Camera Constructs*, eds. Higgott and Wray, 35–46.
[169] David M. Kleinberg-Levin, *Sites of Vision: The Discursive Construction of Sight in the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 403.
[170] Higgott and Wray, "Introduction," 2–3.

Jantar Mantar

Snead was not only attracted by Le Corbusier's architecture in Chandigarh but also by Jaipur's Jantar Mantar, the largest assembly of astronomical instruments in India, built as means to predict time and the movement of the planets. Jantar Mantar had already been photographed by many photographers, including Cartier-Bresson, Lucien Hervé, Andreas Volwahsen, and others (Fig. 1.60, Fig. 1.61 and Fig. 1.62).[171]

Hervé's diagonal composition, Cartier-Bresson's abstract curves, and Volwahsen's symmetry all indicate a fundamental link between the visual evidence of abstraction and ancient architecture in India. This is because the aesthetic laws of abstract architectural photography correspond to the function and precision of the astronomical instruments themselves. They find a universal dimension in the language of ancient and contemporary buildings.

However, it does not seem to be important to Snead that her own photographs should demonstrate the geometric forms and symmetry of Jantar Mantar. Snead's photograph of the Vrihat Samrat Yantra (the world's largest sundial) emphasises its steep slope (Fig. 1.63), the structure's diagonal line ascending abruptly before being cut off at the pavilion. The image positions the audience at the base of the sundial, gazing upwards toward the sky, in a departure from the more common approach of many photographers, who captured the sundial from a distance and from the side.

In another of Snead's images of Vrihat Samrat Yantra, the viewer is not offered clear information about the specific standing point (Fig. 1.64), but it appears to have been taken while Snead was ascending one of the instrument's staircases. Multiple curves traverse the entire image. While there is a staircase in the composition, it vanishes into darkness and obscurity, guiding the viewer towards uncharted territories. This composition conveys a dynamic, multi-directional expansion rather than a static geometric representation.

Our perception of space and time in photographs of buildings affects how we understand fundamental architectural features. Composition, cropping, and contrast between light and dark are all key factors to express the visual quality of architecture and can provide buildings with a distinct character. This raises a question about the nature of the photographic

[171] Gujral and Gaskell, *Photography in India*, 156–57.

experience of architecture: when we look at an architectural photograph, what else can we experience besides the formal elements of the building?

Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of phenomenological perception has influenced current thinking around architectural experience. According to Merleau-Ponty, our perception is a process of 'integration' rather than mere visualisation, in which our subjective perception is made up of intricate bodily faculties resonating with the outside world.[172] Scholars have begun to emphasise the ontological presence and phenomenological perception of architecture.[173] Juhani Pallasmaa reminds us that buildings become isolated in the cold and distant domain of vision if they lose their connection with the language and wisdom of the body.[174] Our experience of a building is derived from visual perceptions as well as the mediation driven by multisensory and bodily engagement.

Looking at a photograph of a building has obvious limitations for the experience of architecture compared to actually walking through a building. In addition to viewing, a site visit will include the experience of multiple senses, such as sound, smell, and texture, provided by the interaction between bodily movement and the environment, as detailed in Richard Hill's discussion of architectural experience.[175] What is important is how architectural photography evokes the viewer's memory of architectural experience as well as how architectural photography acts as a mediator to encourage the viewer to imagine the intensity of the experience.

This need for the intensity of experience that architectural photography can evoke is not the same thing as the appearance and structure of buildings that architectural photography can reproduce. Photographic technology has increased the accuracy and subtlety of photography as document. Many photographers have committed themselves to portraying buildings with a pinpoint focus, clear outline, and fine tones.

For Snead, the significance of architectural photography does not lie in its instrumentality but in its quality of mediation. In her photographs of Jantar Mantar, the metaphor of the staircase is very important. Her photographs of staircases symbolise

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[172] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 10–11.
[173] See Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa, and Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture* (San Francisco: William Stout, 2006); and Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (London: Academy Editions, 1996).
[174] Juhani Pallasmaa, "An Architecture of the Seven Senses," in Holl, Pallasmaa, and Pérez-Gómez, *Questions of Perception*, 29.
[175] Richard Hill, "Encounters with Buildings," in *Designs and Their Consequences: Architecture and Aesthetics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

movement and the ever-changing position of experience, in which our vision is expanded along with our feelings, perception, and cognition. She tries to restore the movement of the encounter with the building and to guide the viewer's physical perception in her photographs. The oblique angles and confusing compositions of her works disorientate the viewer. If our experience of looking at the photographs is very different from our physical experience of encountering the building itself, then Snead attempts to bring the two together.

A further question then needs to be asked: how can seeing an architectural photograph offer a mediated experience of physical encounter with a building? In fact, Snead often uses non-architectural elements or overlooked architectural elements to suggest motion and temporal duration in her architectural photographs. For example, in Snead's photograph of the Vrihat Samrat Yantra (Fig. 1.63), there are three pigeons standing in a line on the left wall of the sundial, stretching from nearest to farthest. They not only serve as indicators of linear perspective but also subtly suggest that we follow the rhythm set by the pigeons as we ascend towards the observatory pavilion. In the lower left corner of the image, we catch a glimpse of the building and the distant mountains. The incorporation of these contextual elements not only conveys the towering height of the Vrihat Samrat Yantra but also suggests that the process of ascending involves a shift in perspective regarding the landscape at ground level. It is a reminder that as humans move, the visual information we receive changes, and, consequently, so does our perception.

In the other photograph, Snead invites the viewer to follow the light source and move between shadow and brightness (Fig. 1.64). In architectural photographs, the position of shadows on buildings suggests the sun in motion. Here, it also corroborates the experience of these Indian astronomical instruments in use. One can walk on the outer walls and calculate the time by observing the shadows cast by the sun on the wings. Unlike many architectural photographers who tend to use a strong contrast of black and white to emphasise the abstract and geometric form of Jantar Mantar, Snead's photograph uses subtle grey tones to bring out the richness of detail in its marble veins. Each piece of marble has different veins, testifying to the temporal and geological diversity of its natural formation. The differing directions of the curves, pulling to the right, and the marble slabs, stretching to the left, create a visual tension. Human movement and the movement of time are intertwined in this experience, the shadow in motion symbolising time's gradual pace.

Historically, only the emperor and his celestial officials could access these instruments for observation. However, Snead's approach encourages everyone to engage with them. Her

work invites people to generate their own experiences, fostering connections between individuals, the structural space, the environment, the sky, and most importantly the changing perspective, as well as the associative imagination evoked by embodied experiences. Snead's work goes beyond mere documentation; it mediates the joy and curiosity these astronomical instruments can evoke in those who interact with them.

The observatory implies the measurement of time governed by the regular motion of the sun, casting shadows that signify time as they unfold on the architecture. However, Snead's approach to photography does not conform to this natural and mechanical uniformity. She refrains from emphasising abstract photographic order, in the manner of abstract masters, to represent the unified order of nature. Her approach does not adhere to the typical perception of mechanical and uniform temporal movement. Instead, she endeavours to present the unscientific and non-standard experiences that this seemingly scientific apparatus can offer us.

This experience diverges from the Western lens of progress, rejecting the legitimised tendency to systematise a more universal perspective. It amalgamates human sensory experiences, spatial mobility, and architectural perception, allowing people to genuinely connect with the architecture in an embodied manner. Western paradigms often hinge on categorising the world into progressive 'Western' cultures and backward 'non-Western' cultures. This implicit division legitimises processes such as colonisation and globalisation, which endeavour to transform the 'backward' into the 'progressive', processes that photography has both consciously and unconsciously illustrated. By contrast, Snead's works do not seek to accentuate the disparities between Indian culture and the West, between the ancient and the modern; rather, they adopt an alternative approach in order to enhance the individual's connection to and interaction with the built environment, enriching the layers of experiential existence. Their essence lies in their ability to communicate the intricate experiences that individuals have with buildings and how these encounters shape their feelings, perceptions, actions, and imaginations.

Section 1.4 Street Patterns

Street Patterns

Besides beach and architectural patterns, Snead also enjoyed photographing the patterns that she encountered while walking the streets of Indian cities.[176] She was fascinated by the patterns of goods on shopkeepers' stalls, as well as billboards, signs, posters, sculptures and crafted figures, and more (Fig. 65, Fig. 66, Fig. 1.20, and Fig. 1.21).[177]

Many modernist photographers have taken photographs of outdoor still lifes. I would like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that while the abstract patterns of modernist photographs often isolate images from their context in time and space, Snead's still life photographs always include environmental information. For example, in Snead's *Onion,* the composition explicitly includes the texture of the plinth supporting the titular vegetable, whereas Edward Weston excludes all background from his image of the same object (Fig. 1.67 and Fig. 1.68). A comparison of Snead's and Albert Renger-Patzsch's photographs of tubes reveals that, whereas the tubes' overlapping circles in Snead's work resemble pairs of eyes leading us into their visual depths, the dense and impenetrable appearance of Renger-Patzsch's tubes creates a wall preventing the viewer's gaze from delving beyond the image's abstract surface (Fig. 1.69 and Fig. 1.70).

In his text 'Aims', Renger-Patzsch writes that 'the secret of a good photograph' is to be found in its 'realism'.[178] In his analysis of Renger-Patzsch's photography, in particular his 1928 book *Die Welt ist schön*, Matthew Simms argues that the central theme of Renger-Patzsch's work is its insistence on the medium's truthfulness and ability to reveal the essence of the object world, free from artistic influences.[179] Simms reminds us that the primary photographic strategy of Renger-Patzsch involves the selection and isolation of objects that

[176] Snead, "Prelude to Photography and Then Some."
[177] Snead grouped her prints of street patterns in folders under titles 'Quantity' and 'Oddities'.
Stella Snead, folder titled 'Quantity', in the boxe 4/6 of Stella Snead's photographs, kept by Jonathan Mark Kenoyer and Kirin Narayan, the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
Stella Snead, folder titled 'Oddities', in the box 4/6 of Stella Snead's photographs, kept by Jonathan Mark Kenoyer and Kirin Narayan, the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
[178] Albert Renger-Patzsch, "Aims" (1927), in *Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913–1940,* ed. Christopher Phillips, trans. Joel Agee (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Aperture, 1989), 105.
[179] Matthew Simms, "Just Photography: Albert Renger-Patzsch's *Die Welt ist schön*," *History of Photography* 21, no. 3 (1997): 197–204, https://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.1997.10443829.

showcase rational organisational principles, such as 'regular, radial projections, or endless series of standardized modules'.[180]

I do not wish to neglect Snead's interest in the formal elements of the visual languages of the modernist masters, though I believe her approach differs from that of Renger-Patzsch. While Renger-Patzsch typically crops out elements that do not conform to his emphasise on the universality of things through abstraction, Snead highlights how patterns interact with localities. As we have seen, the contact sheet *Op-Pop II* highlights her encounter with Op Art (Optical Art) patterns in Bombay bazaars (Fig. 1.71). For instance, she captured a woman in her Op Art-patterned clothes. It emphasises how the pattern interacts with the body in a three-dimensional way, as well as how this pattern interacts with other geometrical forms found in the living environment such as the rectangular shapes suggested by door panels and stone steps.

Snead's focus lies in the interaction of patterns with other elements in the environment, as well as the experiences of individuals as they move through these environments. Furthermore, unlike Renger-Patzsch, who emphasised the consistency between series in nature and the seriality of mass-produced commodities, Snead's photography actually exposes the mismatch between what we understand as the standardised modules of manufactured objects and the non-standardised reality of life. This is why Snead aptly named her folder 'oddities', signifying her observations and perceptions of this mismatch.

During her travels, Snead observed the influence of modernisation in India and its consumption cycles at the local level. My intention here is not to oversimplify the scene as one of a binary opposition or contradiction between some form of modernity, on the one hand, and primitiveness, on the other. Rather, I aim to underscore that Snead's photography reveals a greater complexity of street patterns in India, one that arises from the sensory stimulation and phenomenological experiences provoked by these mismatches. This complexity goes beyond reducing photography to a singular medium that merely reflects a truth about the objective world, or that reproduces conceptual dualities such as East and West or modernity and primitiveness.

Renger-Patzsch linked the essence of a good photograph to realism. This ontological view of photography underscored the urgency of photography's identity and political mission in the Weimar context. Instead, Snead's work explores a more personal encounter with the

[180] Ibid., 199.

phenomenological experience of post-independence India. This experience encompasses not only the visual aspect but also the tactile sensations and material encounters of the environment, from the sounds of construction sites to the hustle and bustle of markets. She achieves this by integrating the surrounding environment into her photographs, placing the viewer in a position to recognise that sensory experience is a central theme in photography. Therefore, the term ‘pattern’ is more fitting than ‘abstract’ for Snead’s photographs.

The following part of this section will focus on Snead’s photograph *Discarded British Statues, Bombay* (1969) as a case study in order to understand the experience that it provokes in the viewer, the photographic language employed, and how the sensitivity of the cultural and political landscape of post-independence India in the 1960s is conveyed through her work. My aim is to explore how Snead’s approach to her photographs of street patterns reflects bodily perceptions and cultural awareness.

Photographing the Discarded British Statues

In the photograph *Discarded British Statues*, Snead frames together three British statues and the lower body of a local man lying on a marble platform (Fig. 1.72). The photograph captures the three sculptures from behind and highlights their decreasing height from right to left. The composition of Snead's photograph draws the viewer's attention to geometrical patterns: the three sculptures form a larger triangle, while the legs of the man form a smaller triangle. Two of the three statues are headless, while the individual's upper body has also been cut off by the picture frame.

These three statues once played important civic roles and were located in prominent positions in public space in Bombay. From left to right in Snead's photograph, the statues depict Lord Marquis of Wellesley, the fifth Governor-General of India (1798–1805); Lord Marquis of Cornwallis, a British Army General and the third Governor-General of India (1786–1793); and Lord Sandhurst, Governor of Bombay (1895–1900). During the 1950s and 1960s, the international political landscape changed hugely, with many former colonies demanding decolonisation and independence, including India. These statues, together with one of Queen Victoria, were defaced on the night of 10 August 1965 (Fig. 1.73).[181] In order to avoid further damage, they were removed from their original locations by the municipal authorities and bundled off to 'Rani Bagh' (also known as the Victoria Gardens).

Statues are commissioned and erected to commemorate the great figures that they depict. The statues of Lord Wellesley and Lord Cornwallis in Snead's photograph (the far left and middle figures) were the two 'most costly monuments in Bombay' in the early nineteenth century.[182] Though I have been unable to locate any photographs of Lord Wellesley's statue (the left one of the three statues in Snead's photograph) in Bombay prior to its defacement, an illustration in William Simpson's 1867 book shows us how this statue would have appeared in the nineteenth century (Fig. 1.74).[183] In Simpson's illustration, Lord Wellesley's statue is

[181] Vaishnavi Chandrashekhar, "How Colonial Statues Vanished from India's Cities," *Times of India*, 15 July 2020, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/how-colonial-statues-vanished-from-indias-cities/articleshow/76703063.cms.
[182] James Douglas, *Glimpses of Old Bombay and Western India, with Other Papers* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1900), 4.
[183] William Simpson, *Lord Wellesley's Monument at Bombay* (1867), Chromolithograph, plate forty-eight in the book *India: Ancient and Modern* (London: Day and Son, 1867), Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections of the British Library, accessed 27 March, 2021, https://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/other/019xzz000000108u00048000.html. Until now (April 30, 2024), the website of British Library remains inaccessible due to a cyber-attack.

erected on a high pedestal. By depicting it from the front and from a slightly low angle, the drawing enhances the statue's sense of authority and nobility.

In contrast, Snead's shot is taken at a level angle and from behind (Fig. 1.72). The black-and-white photograph adds to the shabby appearance of the statues, revealing the stained drapery and cracked stone plinths. The angle of Snead's photograph positions the headless sculpture directly in front of a palm tree. This creates an intriguing visual fusion whereby the fan-shaped leaves appear to sprout from the sculpture's hollowed-out neck. This not only emphasises the headless statue's loss of identifying features, but also highlights its dissolution due to the erosive effects of the natural environment.

Furthermore, Simpson's illustration depicts the landscape from a distance, while Snead shoots at medium range.[184] Simpson's illustration acquaints the audience with an overall appearance of the scene, including its people, activities, objects, and buildings. This kind of long shot is also considered a record of the scene from the 'objective angle', as the observer is not present in the picture and the Indians in the picture appear to be unaware of any observer.[185] However, a power relationship of viewing and being viewed nevertheless exists in this seemingly 'objective' long shot. In the foreground, the daily activities of local Indians occur at the foot of Lord Wellesley's statue, under its authority and surveillance. These Indians are of different ages, genders, and occupations, and wear different costumes in order to satisfy the Western viewer's appetite for exoticism. The image's two groups of Indians are not only trapped in the process of being scrutinised but also function as two perspective lines leading towards the top of the statue. The viewer's eyes are led upwards, guided by the two figures on either side of the pedestal, to finally focus on Lord Wellesley. In this manner, the illustration exemplifies how colonial images construct visual, ethnic, and political hierarchies and successfully involve the viewer in this process.

By using a 'medium shot', Snead chooses to show only a portion of the scene to the audience.[186] A medium shot often allows the camera to be close enough to record a figure's appearance, facial expressions, and gestures. If a figure in a scene looks directly into the camera lens, a 'performer-viewer eye-to-eye relationship' may be established.[187] In Snead's

[184] Joseph V. Mascelli, *The Five C's of Cinematography: Motion Picture Filming Techniques Simplified* (Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 1998), 25–27. Though this book mainly discusses filming techniques for motion pictures, I find these terms and their explanations suitable for the analysis of Snead's photographs.
[185] Ibid., 13–14.
[186] Ibid., 27. A medium shot, positioned between a long shot and a close-up, can also be referred to as an intermediate shot.
[187] Ibid., 19.

photograph, however, the upper body of the person lying down is cut off by the picture frame. With the face of the figure left out, the audience does not learn who they are seeing and what they are supposed to see. Furthermore, the power of seeing is weakened when the audience's attention is disrupted. Instead of paying attention to the specific identity of the person, the audience's eyes are guided to focus on the individual's bare feet, since they are at the top of the triangular shape formed by the legs. The feet seem to be kicking away the statues, and this kicking motion, together with the fact that an Indian body occupies the plinth, suggests an ironic reversal of the hierarchy, asking who has the right to be situated on a marble pedestal. Snead's photograph suggests a disruption of the of conventional visual and spatial relationships, thereby undermining the fundamental basis of the hierarchical colonial conditions.

The statue of Lord Cornwallis (the middle one of the three statues in Snead's photograph) was completed in 1812 by the British sculptor John Bacon Junior.[188] Though no image of this statue prior to its defacement is available, another statue of Lord Cornwallis in Calcutta (completed in 1805), made by the same sculptor with his father John Bacon Senior, suggests how the defaced Lord Cornwallis statue in Bombay could look like (Fig. 1.75).[189] Both the one in Calcutta and the one in Bombay present Lord Cornwallis in similar classic counterpose with one foot stepping forward and the other bearing the body's weight (Fig. 1.75 and Fig. 1.76). In contrast, Snead's photograph captures the statue of Lord Cornwallis in profile suggests an animated sense of walking away, rather than the stable counterpose of the front view (Fig. 1.72). In this manner, Snead's photograph disrupts the immobility and stability of the statue, which seems to be trying to escape from the person's kicking feet.

The composition in Snead's work resembles the two-shot technique in filmmaking, which aims to evoke tension between characters. A typical two-shot depicts the profiles of two people whose conversation or activity attracts the audience's attention (Fig. 1.77 and Fig. 1.78).[190] In Snead's photograph, the statue of Lord Cornwallis, in the middle, and the person to the right can also be considered a two-shot: one stands while the other is lying down; the stretched leg of Lord Cornwallis and the upturned legs of the person occupy the centre of the

[188] 'Monument of the late Marquis of Cornwallis, Governor General of India, Bombay', Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections of the British Library, accessed 27 March, 2021, http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/m/019pho000000140u00003000.html. Until now (April 30, 2024), the website of British Library remains inaccessible due to a cyber-attack.
[189] Sarah Burnage, "Commemorating Cornwallis: Sculpture in India 1792–1813," *Visual Culture in Britain* 11, no. 2 (2010): 175, https://doi.org/10.1080/14714781003784249.
[190] Mascelli, *The Five C's of Cinematography*, 30.

picture in opposite directions. In contrast with the face-to-face two-shot, the two figures are turning away from each other in Snead's composition.

In the two-shot, according to Mascelli, the use of position and lighting tells the audience which figure is more favoured by the camera, as in the case of the female figure on the right in the sample illustration (Fig. 1.78).[191] In Snead's photograph, the person on the right dominates the scene because he is positioned closer to the camera, thus appearing larger, and is shown in 'three-quarter angling', and with finer modelling by light and shade (Fig. 1.72).[192] Statues are erected to be iconic markers of public spaces. In Snead's photograph, however, the space in which the statues are standing has been occupied by the person and transformed into his immersive and personal space instead. By underlining the discarded and unattended condition of these statues in a corner of the Victoria Gardens, this work suggests that the monumental significance of statues does not last. Additionally, through the manipulation of spatial and viewing experience, the conventional viewing politics associated with these apparently harmless statues can be questioned.

[191] Ibid.
[192] For further explanations of the two-shot, see ibid., 31.

Cultural Sensibility

Snead's photograph of discarded statues found on the streets resonates with many surrealists' fascination with the displacement of famous monuments and statues during the interwar period. For instance, the no. 6 issue of 'Le surrealisme au service de la revolution' in 1933 documented surrealists' experimental inquiries into the 'irrational embellishment of a city', particularly regarding the iconic monuments and statues in Paris.[193] Max Ernst also frequently employed images of classic statues to make collages, striping the statues of their symbolic and mythological meanings, thereby subverting classicism.[194] Elza Adamowicz argues that that surrealists' engagement with the body of statues in the exquisite corpse involves 'citational strategies' which retains the familiar meanings associated with the statues in order to archive the displacement from their usual context and the semantic values.[195]

In contrast, Snead's approach to photography diverges from historical surrealists' appropriation of iconic images of monuments and statues and their semantic meanings. Instead, her approach is more closely aligned with the embodied experience in her practice of travel and photography. Her focus on the embodied experience reflects not only the fundamental perception of the spatial and power relations between the local person and discarded statues, but also the viewing politics between the viewers and the viewed.

This approach reflects Snead's sensitivity to the cultural politics and power dynamics between colonial statues and contemporary Indians. In a wave of patriotic fervour in mid-twentieth century India, hatred of the colonial past was extended to the colonial statues that still occupied major public spaces. Demand for the removal of colonial statues occurred not only in Bombay but in many cities across India. In Lucknow, dozens of statues were removed between 1958 and 1959, triggered by the centenary of the 1857 mutiny.[196] In Calcutta, colonial statues were removed in the 1960s and early 1970s, owing to the rising Naxal movement.[197]

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[193] Raymond Spiteri, "Surrealism and the Irrational Embellishment of Paris," in *Surrealism and Architecture*, ed. Thomas Mical (London, New York: Routledge, 2005), 191-192.
[194] Elza Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text & Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse* (Cambridge; New York; Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 169, 172.
[195] Ibid., 164
[196] Chandrashekhar, "How Colonial Statues Vanished."
[197] Tapati Guha-Thakurta, "Why Statues Matter: The Changing Landscape of Calcutta's Colonial and Postcolonial Statuary," YouTube video, 2019, presentation, part 2, Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOYpmCRM8ys.

Nowadays, Victoria Gardens has been renamed Veermata Jijabai Bhonsale Udyan and Zoo (also known as the Byculla Zoo), and these statues have been re-displayed on a footpath outside the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum (Fig. 1.79). The Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum, originally known as the Victoria and Albert Museum, Bombay, was built in 1872 as the first museum in the city.[198] The history and stories recounted on the museum's official website celebrate the contributions to the institution's establishment of 'public spirited citizens' and local Indians such as Dr. Bhau Daji Lad and Jugonnath Sunkarsett.[199] Simultaneously, by only briefly mentioning the names and positions of British officials who participated in the establishment of the museum and its collections, the museum today attempts to diminish its history as an institution established under British colonial rule and in line with Western aesthetics.

The acceptance of the relocation and re-display of these defaced colonial statues on the footpath outside the museum indicates a conciliation of the decolonisation movement following the turbulent 1950s and 1960s in India. They are now displayed on marble bases with labels recording the figures' names (Fig. 1.80). The images provided by the museum underscore how these statues have seamlessly integrated into the picturesque garden environment, where they are now admired as decorative pieces of marble artistry, functioning more like specimens rather than civic monuments.

Within this context, Snead's 1969 photograph indeed records an intermediate period following the mutilation of these colonial statues in 1965 but before the government had decided what to do with them. It indicates her cultural sensitivity towards that period in India, complicating the power relationship between colonial statues and contemporary local Indians.

She shifts the focus to the individuals occupying the space, those who turn the city streets into their personal and immersive world, and she deconstructs the established politics of viewing.[200] In this way, Snead presents a sensitive and amusing way for her audience to explore the trivial and neglected objects of the city, reflecting on the contemporaneous life of ordinary Indians. I believe that Snead's sensitivity to the cultural politics of India in her photographs of street patterns is the result of a combination of her own Western cultural

[198] 'Museum Story', Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum (website), accessed 5 April 2024, https://www.bdlmuseum.org/about/museum-story.php.
[199] Ibid.
[200] For a further discussion of travel photography and the tourist gaze, see Jonas Larsen, "Geographies of Tourism Photography: Choreographies and Performances," in *Geographies of Communication: The Spatial Turn in Media Studies*, eds. J. Falkheimer and A. Jansson (Gothenburg: Nordicom, 2006), 243–61.

background and her inclusive approach to travelling in India. It was her manner of exploring India that provided her with the opportunities to experience these moments among the local communities that she encountered. Snead's photographic work elicits a phenomenological experience by challenging traditional perspectives and offering a nuanced look at the intersection of culture, politics, and everyday life in India.

Conclusion

This chapter has closely examined Snead approach to travel and photography in India and three main themes of her photographs: beach patterns, architectural patterns, and street patterns. It has shed light on how her photography serves as a mediation of embodied experience, which sets her apart from many Western modernist photographers. I would like to provide a summary of the relationship between travel and photography for Snead, as well as how her travel and photographic practice helped her establish connections with India.

Lifestyle Traveller

In the context of the development of mass transportation and the proliferation of tourist destinations after the mid-twentieth century, tourism became common and shared activities.[201] Previously, I framed Snead's identities as a flâneuse and a nomad.[202] However, I now find that neither of these identities adequately describes her approach to travel. Perhaps 'lifestyle traveller' is more fitting. This term, coined by Scott Cohen, describes individuals who choose to sustain long-term physical mobility rather than just briefly vacation before returning to their everyday modes of being.[203] Lifestyle travellers discard any fixed conception of home and adapt to new identities in the places they visit. This mobility gives rise to new relationships with the places they encounter, contributing to the transformation of their view of the world.

It is interesting to further consider the difference between Snead's lifestyle travel and many surrealists' armchair travels. Roger Cardinal argues that André Breton's 'journeys might indeed be said to reflect a typically French (if not downright bourgeois) resistance to venturing across the national frontier.'[204] Though Breton took several major trips to places such as Mexico, Haiti, the US, Canada, and elsewhere, he did better at armchair travel, since 'Breton's true vocation was to be the great explorer of the imaginary, a virtuoso of *l'aventure*

[201] For discussions of transportation and tourism development in the second half of the twentieth century, see Jonas Larsen, "Ordinary Tourism and Extraordinary Everyday Life: Re-thinking Tourism and Cities," in *Tourism and Everyday Life in the Contemporary City*, eds. Thomas Frisch et al. (London: Routledge, 2019), 24-41; Erkan Sezgin and Medet Yolal, "Golden Age of Mass Tourism: Its History and Development," in *Visions for Global Tourism Industry: Creating and Sustaining Competitive Strategies*, ed. Murat Kasimoglu (Rijeka: IntechOpen, 2012), 73-90.
[202] Wen Yao, "A Global Flâneuse: Interpreting Six Photo-Collages of Stella Snead in Pavel Zoubok's Collection" (Master's thesis, University of York, 2019).
[203] Scott Cohen, "Lifestyle Travellers: Backpacking as a Way of Life," *Annals of Tourism Research* 38, no. 4 (2011): 1535–55, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.02.002.
[204] Roger Cardinal, "Breton's Travels," in *Surrealism: Crossing/Frontiers*, ed. Elza Adamowicz (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006), 25.

mentale, a man who used the contents of his crowded apartment as stimuli for reverie.'[205] Adamowicz concludes that most of the surrealists' activities were conducted within the Paris area, with 'psychogeographical crossings between a real and an imaginary Paris' during the 1920s and 1930s.[206] Breton participated in an experimental walking trip in 1924 with three other colleagues, departing from Blois in the Loire valley, which was 'chosen arbitrarily on the map'.[207] This trip was conceived to be akin to automatic writing and to avoid 'all purpose or destination', but turned out to be 'a source of stress and quarrelsomeness'.[208] This experimental trip illustrates that when the unconscious-led mode of automatism is applied to travel, it is unable to handle the physical influence of the external environment, the diverse and constantly evolving feelings that each person experiences, and the various challenges that physical travel entails.

These remarks, and similar attitudes towards travel on the part of many surrealists, make for an interesting comparison with Snead's practice of lifestyle travel. She wrote a lyrical essay dedicated to this:

> To travel, to go, to move across spaces; to be lost in strange cities, to find friends among strangers, to wonder and look, not minding to be lost, to know the importance of escape.… To be enchanted once again by the familiar, for there is no need always to discover a newness. To think in terms of geography and its possibilities;… welcoming the unexpected and incongruous, forever departing and arriving and wanting to go further.… All this and more is to travel; it is, as a friend once phrased it, to have an affair with the globe.[209]

Snead welcomed unplanned and open-ended trips, though not completely spontaneous ones as per Breton's experiment. Armchair travel, or sedentary travel, is a state of unworldliness, remote from the physical influence of external situations.[210] The lifestyle traveller, on the other hand, accepts itinerary modifications and braves an unpredictable range of changing terrains, encounters, and risks. For the lifestyle traveller, it is the interplay of arrivals and departures, planning and chance, flexibility and change, that is most fascinating, and that allows mobility to last longer. It is futile to depart purely for departure's sake.[211]

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[205] Ibid., 35.
[206] Elza Adamowicz, "Introduction," in Adamowicz, *Surrealism: Crossing/Frontiers*, 15.
[207] Ibid., 22.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Stella Snead, "To Travel," undated, unpublished essay, the Stella Snead archive.
[210] Syed Manzurul Islam, *The Ethics of Travel: From Marco Polo to Kafka* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 55–61.
[211] Jon Anderson and Kathryn Erskine, "Lifestyle Travel, Tropophila and Identity Transformation," in *Travel and Transformation,* eds., Lean Garth Russell Staiff and Emma Waterton (London: Routledge, 2016), 29.

Anderson and Erskine reveal that it is hard to categories lifestyle travellers into a certain socioeconomic class and to say that they always belong to the privileged group of people, because they are facing divergent situations every day and may lose their privileged position in various ways easily.[212] Snead practiced this way of living, in which individuals are aware of their choices of escaping from the shackles of daily routine and social norms, and their identities are constantly changing as they move from place to place, being an insider or an outsider in a cultural context, or somewhere in between. This nomadic identity should not be understood as a mere state of freedom; it also entails confusion, struggle, and constraints, intermixed with a sense of joy derived from a certain degree of freedom.

Snead's approach to photography is inseparable and closely intertwined with her style of travel. Embracing chance, encounters, the unknown, and deviating from tourist routes formed the foundation for developing her own photographic method. Photography, in turn, provided her with a means of companionship, documentation, and expression during her travels, allowing her to tangibly mediate her travel experiences both during and after her journeys. This way of living and travelling allows her to experience a profound shift in vision and consciousness. The notion of 'revelation' is crucial. It underlines a profound connection between the experience the interaction between body and material. These revelations are intricate and multifaceted, adding to the value of her long-term, immersive experiences in India.

[212] Ibid., and Anthony D'Andrea, "Neo-Nomadism: A Theory of Post-Identitarian Mobility in the Global Age," *Mobilities* 1, no. 1 (1 March 2006): 95–119, https://doi.org/10.1080/17450100500489148.

Embodied Experience in the Photographic Process

The slowness of the photographic process ensures photography's ability to mediate a mode of existence characterised by deliberate deceleration and a profound experience of the world. Snead's approach to decelerating this process was not something she brought with her to India; rather, it gradually developed after her arrival in the country. In her travelogue, she describes her initial experience with adapting to the unhurried pace of the joint family in India:

> There is always the relaxed atmosphere of an unhurried and traditional way of life which will quickly envelope you, especially if you are willing, and refresh you thoroughly. On my first visit in 1952 I had not been willing. In the first place I was wildly excited to be in India at all, and I had much of that Western restlessness and the urge to do and see everything all at once. My Indian friends had been somewhat overwhelmed and probably appalled by my desire to be constantly up and doing. 'What, do you want to do something every day?' they had asked in surprise. It had taken time to stop running, to let things unfold in their own time, to just be. I do not claim that I have really learned this art but when I arrived this time I was sufficiently tired to make it appear that I had. I fitted without effort into the reposeful yet animated rhythm of my Indian family and everybody was pleased, timeless and warm.[213]

Snead's practice resonates with her experience of the slower rhythms of life that she encountered in India. While she was not able to entirely overcome her Western habits, she consciously expressed her intention to align with the unhurried pace of life in India, and to learn to slow down.

This adjustment is crucial for understanding Snead's unique approach to photography, which extended to her contact sheets and prints. She did not simply aim for speedy production, unlike many of her contemporaries, who were driven by the desire to get their images to magazines as quickly as possible. Instead, Snead's process involved slowness, allowing her work to incubate over time. This approach enabled her to stand outside the Western temporal framework, and to refuse to conform to the homogeneous temporal standards that Western modernity aspired to impose globally. Her practice was a reflection of her exploration and celebration of a different mode of travel, and a different lifestyle. It was not about imposing a preconceived way of life onto India but instead allowing her lifestyle and photographic practice to develop organically as a result of her environmental influence.

[213] Snead, *From Istanbul to India*, 182.

This idea of slowness in the photographic process contradicts the prevalent trend towards social acceleration that we see not only in Western societies but also increasingly in developing countries. This acceleration is evident in various aspects of contemporary life, not least in the quick snapping of cameras, the rapid processing and dissemination of photographs, and the mass distribution of images. It parallels the broader cultural shift towards immediacy and the rapid gratification of desires.[214]

In the digital era, the gap between taking an image and viewing it has been significantly shortened. Technological advancements strive to disguise this process, making it appear instantaneous.[215] It caters to consumers' desire for immediate image access and encourages them to overlook the medium itself.[216] However, regardless of how this process is shortened through technology and concealed inside cameras and smartphones, it still exists.

Snead's method showcases not only the temporal gap inherent in this technology but also her deliberate extension of this gap, allowing the process to play a maximal role in her method. She continually revisited her contact sheets throughout her entire career, not merely for the sake of retrieving specific moments of travel from the past, but more importantly to underscore how unforeseen, experiential dimensions could arise during the process of handling photographs. Snead's approach to photography serves as a prompt to remain mindful of the medium's presence and embodied experience inherent in our interaction with it, even when using digital devices.

[214] John Tomlinson, *The Culture of Speed: The Coming of Immediacy* (London: Sage, 2007), 72–74.
[215] Dawn M Wilson, "Invisible Images and Indeterminacy: Why We Need a Multi-stage Account of Photography," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 79, no. 2 (Spring 2021): 169, https://doi.org/10.1093/jaac/kpab005.
[216] Ibid.

Snead's Photographic Connection with India

It has been discussed in this chapter that Snead's time in India greatly influenced the formation of her approach to travel and photography. However, I do not wish to assert that only India could have provided her with these insights, precluding the possibility of their manifestation in other countries and regions. I refrain from a reductionist approach of overessentialising India or perpetuating a binary opposition between India and Western nations.

It is crucial to emphasise that Snead's affinity with India extends beyond an aesthetic matter. Her engagement with India's landscape, culture, religion, and people is not merely driven by aesthetic or intellectual pursuits, but primarily motivated by a longing to nurture a deeply personal bond with India through exploring embodied experience. Eschewing the role of a detached observer, her photography actively interacts with her immediate surroundings.

In the 1950s, Snead resided within the joint family in Nasik, and throughout the 1960s, she and Didi were neighbours on Juhu Beach. Snead's journeys through India, regardless of the specific destinations or travel companions, always led her back to this family, her initial point of connection and anchor within the country. She frequently organised slide shows at home on Juhu beach, which garnered enthusiastic attendance from her circle of friends and their extended families.

In Snead's goddaughter Kirin Narayan's recollection:

> When Stella had returned from one of her trips, we were invited for slide shows. These were always at night. Her living room vanished into the vivid colors of distant places and people.… Stella narrated her adventures above the hum of the machine. Mostly it was my mother who asked questions.… As each of us grew older, we felt freer to speak up too.[217]

In contrast to the experience of processing photographs individually, slide show gatherings introduced another dimension of embodied engagement. The rhythmic soundtrack, characterised by the hum of the machine and the clicking of the advancing slides, added a unique cadence to the proceedings. The projection of colourful slides would offer visual effects different from the black-and-white photographic prints.[218] These slide shows allowed for narrative jumps with both selective sharing and improvisation. They offered Snead a means to share her experiences, initiate dialogues, and weave her personal encounters into

[217] Narayan, "Stella in Bombay."
[218] Kodak slide film projector was a popular way to share family photographs in the 1950s and 1960s.

her social relationships. As Narayan writes, 'her photography, then, was a crucial part of the story of her being here, in India, and next door to us.'[219]

From the 1960s until the late 1980s, Snead persistently produced 35mm Kodak slides and organised them in her archive (Fig. 1.81). Upon relocating to New York in the 1970s, she was invited to larger venues to deliver public speeches and present her slides about India (Fig. 1.82). A series of slides stored in sleeves, prepared for a speech supported by Nikon headquarters and the Sierra Club, reveal that the photographs selected for the speech were gathered by Snead during her travels in India spanning over a decade. These slides were not arranged chronologically or geographically; rather, they were sequenced based on the embodied experience triggered by her interaction with them over time. For instance, there are three slides next to each other in sequence in the slide sleeves, captioned: 'Nr Radio Club, Bombay', 'Construction – Bhuj', and 'India: Stone Eleph' (Fig. 1.83, Fig. 1.84 and Fig. 1.85). They were taken at various locations during different journeys. The first slide shows a sculpted figure propped up by wires and iron frames, lying down on a store's roof with outstretched hands showcasing a product. The second slide depicts several workers passing construction materials between scaffolds three stories high. In the third slide, on a platform, a dog (alive) lies beside a carved stone elephant and is stretching its front legs forward. The commonality among these scenes is the bodily experience of reaching out with arms to convey or receive something.

Snead's photographs can be viewed as one aspect of her broader exploration of human experiences. It is evident in her exhibitions and speeches, which highlighted her ambition to influence the perception of her audience and urged her audience to personally engage in the exploration of embodied experience, regardless of where they go.

Her public slide shows after the 1970s evolved from the format of family slide shows originated from Juhu Beach. This enduring fascination with embodied experiences, cultivated during her time in India, persisted throughout her career even after leaving the country. These sustained efforts enabled her to maintain a continuous connection with India, allowing her experience in India to continue influencing her work and life.

[219] Narayan, "Stella in Bombay."

Chapter Two Compiling Images: Stella Snead's Photobooks and Exhibitions about India

Introduction

The first chapter discussed Stella Snead's travel and photographic practice during her time in India in the 1960s. Her approach acknowledges the impact of the physical photographs on her bodily perception through years of mutual interaction. Through this ongoing process, the interaction with physical objects continually refreshes memories and generates new embodied experiences, such as association, imagination, et cetera. This sentiment also resonates with her attitude towards her travels in India, where she acknowledges and embraces India's influence upon her.

Hans Belting's anthropological approach towards the relation between picture, image, and body, distinguishes between 'picture' and 'image'—with the former being a physical entity and the latter encompassing the mental impressions and interpretations generated by our bodies, including memories, dreams, and imaginings.[220] The first chapter argued that Snead's practice intensifies the interaction between the body and the physical photographs by extending and amplifying the process of mental image formation after travel. By doing so, it brings to light the awareness of mental images that are often overlooked and highlights the dynamic and expanding nature of mental imagery. Building upon this premise, this chapter will delve further into the process and significance of her compiling of images, responding to the question of representing India. This will involve examining her photobook *Shiva's Pigeons: An Experience of India* (1972) and her exhibition *People Figures–India* (1982). Specifically, this chapter will evaluate the extent to which her works diverge from conventional, stereotypical, and ideological ways of representing India. Furthermore, it will explore how Snead leverages embodied experiences evoked by the compiling of her photographs to bridge the audience's experience, and the significance of doing so.

In her autobiography, Snead records that, during the mid-1960s, her photographic interests gradually shifted towards details and patterns in India.[221] By around 1966, she had amassed a considerable number of photographs taken in India of details and patterns, ranging

[220] Hans Belting, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 2.
[221] Snead, "Prelude to Photography and Then Some."

from beach patterns to plant cross-sections, architectural details, construction materials, mural drawings, et cetera. Consequently, she selected some of these and compiled them into an album titled *Indications of India: 70 Photographs by Stella Snead*.

In 1966, Snead presented her album to Chatto & Windus, a medium-sized independent publisher, with an idea to publish a book of her photographs taken in India.[222] Chatto & Windus, however, believed that a photobook about India like this would not have strong sales potential. Instead, they wanted a more comprehensive book about India, with text by famous writers. Snead then started to collaborate with the writers Jon and Rumer Godden. After six years, *Shiva's Pigeons: An Experience of India* was released in 1972. This raises several questions: Why was the album considered unsellable? What are the criteria for a successful photobook about India? Does the final book, *Shiva's Pigeons*, inherit the intended message from Snead's album? What was the model of collaboration between Snead and the Goddens? What category does this book fall into? What argument does it present, and who is the intended audience? This set of questions is crucial for examining how Snead's photobook represents India.

After the publication of *Shiva's Pigeons* in 1972, the photographs in this book became Snead's iconic works. She had the opportunity to exhibit them in many galleries and museums in the US and the UK in the 1970s and 1980s. However, due to the limited archival materials regarding these exhibitions that are available for research, my examination of Snead's exhibition strategies will focus on the exhibition *People Figures–India* at the Festival of India in 1982.

In 1982, Snead was invited by the Arts Council of Great Britain to present an exhibition at the Festival of India, which was the first festival to be jointly organised by Britain and India following India's independence in 1947. Ten years after the publication of *Shiva's Pigeons*, Snead was seventy-two years old in 1982 and had already gained a reputation in photography through her publications and exhibitions. For such a large event, Snead did not choose her most famous photographs to showcase her photographic achievements, nor did she include any images of political figures, tourist attractions, grand architecture, or

[222] The correspondence letters between Snead, Jon and Rumer Godden, and the publishers are held in the University of Reading Special Collections: "Correspondence Concerning *Shiva's Pigeons* / by Jon and Rumer Godden; Photographs by Stella Snead (Chatto & Windus)," three folders, 1966–70, CW 253/13; 1971–74, CW 294/12; 1975–83, CW 322/11, Special Collections, University of Reading, Reading.
Unless otherwise noted, information regarding the preparation, creation, design, and publication of *Shiva's Pigeons* in this section is taken from this archive.

picturesque landscapes to attract viewers' attention. Instead, most of the eighty-nine photographs in Snead's exhibition were of ordinary and contemporary folk objects, ranging from village guardians, sand carvings, and paper crafts, to dolls, puppets, and scarecrows in fields.

The second section will analyse Snead's selection of exhibits, as well as the installation and the visitor experience constructed for her audience. Given that Snead's contribution formed part of the Festival of India, it is crucial to assess her show against the backdrop of the Festival in order to to understand its relation to official expectations of the exhibition. By introducing the surrealist legacy of seeking encounters with, and appropriating, non-Western objects, this section will further explore Snead's visual strategies and her ways of representing folk figures in India.

Research in the history of travel/tourist photography has revealed that the power of photographic language shapes our knowledge, discourse, and beliefs about a country.[223] In the case of India, photographic representation of the subcontinent has been constantly changing through history. It is closely related to changes in the possession of the power to photograph India and in the processes of photographing, producing, and distributing images.

In the nineteenth century, photographs of India taken by British and Indian photographers were largely of ancient architecture, topographical views, anthropological studies, and portraiture of members of the ruling class, all of which served the colonial and commercials needs of the British Empire.[224] Photography was an integral component of the archaeological and ethnographic surveys conducted by British government officials during this period. For example, *The People of India,* edited by John Forbes Watson and John William Kaye and published between 1868 and 1875, was an eight-volume work containing 468 annotated photographs of the native castes and tribes of India.[225] Scholars have argued that the 'colonial gaze' was familiar to European audiences and reinforced the Empire's imagination and control of the colonies.[226]

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[223] For further discussion of travel/tourism and photography, see *Travel and Representation*, eds. Lean, Staiff, and Waterton; and Mike Robinson and David Picard, eds., *The Framed World: Tourism, Tourists and Photography* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).
[224] On the history of photography in India, see Aileen Blaney and Chinar Shah, *Photography in India: From Archives to Contemporary Practice* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Maria Antonella Pelizzari, *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture and the Politics of Representation, 1850–1900* (Montreal: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 2003); and John Falconer, *India: Pioneering Photographers: 1850–1900* (London: British Library and The Howard and Jane Ricketts Collection, 2001).
[225] Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 117.
[226] Blaney and Shah, *Photography in India*, 89.

In the mid-twentieth century, many Western and Indian photographers and photojournalists, such as Margaret Bourke-White, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Homai Vyarawalla, Sunil Janah, T. S. Satyan, and Raghubir Singh began to take photographs of India during its transformative period, and distributed their works in magazines, newspapers, photobooks, and exhibitions. They primarily focused on momentous events, political figures, modernisation, poverty, folk culture, and so forth, and contributed to shaping the photographic language of the post-independence nation. This photographic language is prominently manifested in the volume *India*, published in 1961 as part of the *LIFE World Library* series.[227] In a spread on pages 72 and 73 (Fig. 2.1), the image interacts with the concise text below, serving as evidence of the political moment in 1961 when Queen Elizabeth II of Britain visited India for the first time. The composition is clear and straightforward: the arrangement of the 'lawn party' is separated from the crowd in the background, creating distinct foreground and background areas. The photographer occupies a privileged position, providing their audience with a direct view of the Queen's visit, unlike that of the crowd in the background. In the foreground, an area enclosed by chairs, both the British and Indian heads of state are seated on either side of the same sofa, sharing the space equally within the frame. This suggests the new form of political exchange between Britain and India as two independent nations following India's independence. The *India* volume gathers photographs taken by *LIFE* staff photographers including Margaret Bourke-White, Eliot Elisofon, Dmitri Kessel, and Leonard McCombe. It serves as an encyclopaedic attempt to encompass every facet of India, from its cultural traditions to its politics and modernisation. Simultaneously, the use of a modernist photographic language to represent national construction and development in the 1950s and 1960s resonates with Nehru's progressive attitude to modernisation.[228]

Additionally, the development of India's tourist industry has also played a significant role in shaping the country's visual representation. In 1972, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture of India launched a campaign to promote India as a popular tourist destination with the slogan 'Incredible India'.[229] Mary Louise Pratt argues that following India's independence in 1947, and with the development of tourism, the 'imperial gaze' has been

[227] Joe David Brown, *LIFE World Library–India* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1961).
[228] Gujral and Gaskell, *Photography in India*, 15.
[229] David Geary, "Incredible India in a Global Age: The Cultural Politics of Image Branding in Tourism," *Tourist Studies* 13, no. 1 (2013): 36–61, https://doi.org/10.1177/1468797612471105.

replaced by the 'tourist gaze'.[230] In Snead's essay 'Paleographics: Early Cabbage,' she observes that this surge in tourism during the twentieth century has significantly influenced individuals' approaches to visiting and experiencing non-Western countries.[231] She writes about tourists who 'want to take it all home: red mud in the hair, bones through the nostrils and ears, paint on bodies, patterned gashes in flesh, the often beautiful but weirdly uncomfortable clothes and jewellery. They wallow delightedly; they do of course acquire objects, but mainly it's photographs.'[232] She satirises the tourists' avid desire to possess every exotic, unfamiliar, and mysterious object that they encounter as souvenirs, highlighting her deep concern for the rapid expansion of tourism.

John Urry draws attention to the 'tourist gaze', delineating its power relationships as well as the discourse surrounding the representation of tourist attractions and the notion of the 'other'.[233] Gazing is not merely seeing, but is mediated through camera and pictorial frame. Jonas Larsen argues that it 'involves the cognitive work of interpreting, evaluating, drawing comparisons and making mental connections between signs and their referents, and capturing representative signs photographically.'[234] Tourism and photography work together in the celebration of famous tourist destinations, the consumption of cultural products, and the global movement of large populations.

Snead's concerns are particularly evident in her desire to distinguish her photography from the ubiquitous images prevalent in photobooks, travel guides, photojournalism, magazines, and many other media which shape people's expectations, perceptions, understanding, and experiences of tourist destinations. Thus, the photobook and exhibition analysed in this chapter are both grounded in this overarching vision.

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[230] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).
[231] Stella Snead, "Early Cabbage," *archipelago* 1, no. 3 (Autumn 1997), http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-3/earlycab.htm.
[232] Ibid. For further discussion of Snead's essay 'Early Cabbage', see my Master's thesis: Yao, "A Global Flâneuse," 46–47.
[233] Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*; John Urry, *Consuming Places* (London: Routledge, 1995); John Urry, *Sociology Beyond Society: Mobilities of the 21st Century* (London: Routledge, 2000).
[234] Larsen, "Geographies of Tourism Photography," 247.

Section 2.1 The Photobook *Shiva's Pigeons* (1972)

The Album *Indications of India*

Snead assembled prints of her photographs to create the album *Indications of India: 70 Photographs by Stella Snead* in around 1966.[235] The majority of the images are paired on the spreads, with three instances where three images are juxtaposed (Fig. 2.2 and Fig. 2.3). Additionally, nine horizontal images are presented individually, spanning across the spreads (Fig. 2.4).

The images are not arranged by any geographical order or theme; instead, Snead pairs them according to suggested visual associations. This approach to juxtaposing images from distant and diverse contexts can be traced to magazines such as *Lilliput* and some publications of the European avant-gardes from the first half of the twentieth century. The juxtaposition of images in the album was also developed from Snead's photographic practice as discussed in the first chapter, namely as a method to encourage imaginative association and to broaden vision. Among the sets of images in the album, some series had been part of her mature conceptualisations for quite some time, such as the images of astronomical instruments and beach patterns (Fig. 2.4 and Fig. 2.5).

The album employs a large format with enlarged prints, demanding physical engagement from the reader, who must carefully turn over each page. The absence of captions reduces disruption of the visual flow.[236] The first photograph captures multiple handprints, while the last photograph captures two pairs of footprints on a beach (Fig. 2.6 and Fig. 2.7). This photograph of footprints, along with several photographs of beach patterns preceding it, resonates with Snead's 1965 exhibition of beach patterns at Gallery Chemould in Bombay, discussed in the previous chapter. Starting with details, without narrative or end, Snead's album implies a continuous journey of embodied experience. The compilation of images in this album integrates embodied perceptions from her travels in India, particularly tactile sensations. It also illustrates the embodied encounters with physical photographs that were inspired by repeated viewing and comparison after her journeys.

Titled *Indications of India*, the album explicitly emphasises an approach that transcends preconceived notions of the country. Instead, it guides imaginative associations through

[235] Snead, *Indications of India*.
[236] Snead did provide captions, but they were listed on a separate piece of paper, which was not attached to the album.

embodied experiences captured during her travels in India and her subsequent encounters with these photographs, activating experiences of place.

Snead's strategy resonates with anthropologist Tim Ingold's celebration of 'a patchwork of continuous variation, extending without limit in all directions.'[237] This way of compiling images, free from the constraints of geographical concepts, influences how readers perceive and imagine spatiality. Christopher Tilley advocates for a phenomenological approach to the experience of landscape, wherein the subject's perception and relationship with objects alters with their change of position.[238] Tilley also suggests that increased frequency of these practices will enhance the intensity of the experience.[239] Snead's album suggests that her strategy of interacting with photographs, after her travels, can offer a prolonged and extensive mediation of the body's experience of a place.

Conventional photographs representing India typically include panoramic views of tourist destinations, city and village landscapes, rituals, handicrafts, and so forth. The representativeness of these photographs makes India instantly recognisable. Yet, in Snead's album, no single image fulfils this demand. The Indianness within it is subtle and is only discernible through elements such as hand-drawn patterns and architectural styles. There is a conscious effort in this album to avoid the clichés and typologies often found in the history of Indian photography. Snead believes that these patterns and details convey a sense of 'India' to 'anyone who knows the country well'.[240] She consciously categorises herself as an insider informant, a long-time resident familiar with the country. Through her compilation of her photographs, she deliberately distinguishes her identity and approach from those who visit the country occasionally for tourism or other purposes.

[237] Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines* (London: Routledge, 2015), 81–82.
[238] Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), 74.
[239] Ibid., 75.
[240] Snead, "Prelude to Photography and Then Some."

The Conception of *Shiva's Pigeons*

In 1966, Snead presented the album *Indications of India: 70 Photographs by Stella Snead*, to Chatto & Windus, a London-based independent publisher primarily dedicated to English literature.[241] Chatto & Windus replied with great interest and regarded Snead's proposal as a major project, both for the quality of her photographs as well as for their expectation of a successful book about India. However, they suggested that Snead's photographs should be accompanied by a full text written by a notable author. Recognising a gap in the market for photobooks about India, they drew on their experience in publishing books about places, such as *London Perceived* and *New York Proclaimed*, a collaboration between photographer Evelyn Hofer and writer V. S. Pritchett, and firmly believed that pairing photography with literature was essential to secure successful sales.[242]

After taking Snead's album to the Frankfurt Book Fair to seek potential joint publishers in America, Chatto & Windus's assessment of the market was proved to have been shared by many American publishers. According to Chatto & Windus's internal report on their visit to the Fair, most of the American publishers who had reviewed Snead's album believed that a pure photobook without accompanying text would not work.[243] They were envisaging a book that would provide comprehensive information about India, its people, and its culture, while they felt that Snead's album primarily comprised biological patterns and seemed less representative of India. Viking was the only publisher at the Fair with a clear intention to join the project.

For publishers, the ideal book would have been one that combined elements of a travel guide and literature, and that aimed to provide readers with comprehensive information about India while also incorporating a compelling narrative to capture their interest. This vision evidently differed significantly from Snead's album. However, given the explicit requirements of the publishers and the practicalities of sales, Snead made concessions regarding her album's initial concept and agreed to collaborate with writers. Nevertheless, she insisted on retaining the right to choose the writers herself.

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[241] For more information about Chatto & Windus, see "Chatto & Windus Ltd. Archive," University of Reading Special Collections (Website), accessed 14 March 2024, https://collections.reading.ac.uk/special-collections/collections/chatto-windus-ltd-publisher/.

[242] V. S. Pritchett and Evelyn Hofer, *London Perceived* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962); V. S Pritchett and Evelyn Hofer, *New York Proclaimed* (London: Chatto & Windus and William Heinemann, 1965).

[243] Edmund Gray, "Frankfurt Book Fair 1966," in "Correspondence Concerning *Shiva's Pigeons*," CW 253/13, Special Collections, University of Reading, Reading.

Snead specifically suggested Rumer Godden (1907–1998) and Jon Godden (1906–1984) as the writers. She believed the Godden sisters shared her experience of residing in India and had a deep understanding of the country. The Goddens spent their childhood in Narayangunj, a jute trading town (now in Bangladesh).[244] In 1930, Rumer Godden founded the Peggie Godden School of Dance in Calcutta, where she notably admitted students of both Indian and Eurasian descent, breaking convention.[245] She left India to live in England in 1945, followed by Jon Godden in 1957. Both authors wrote novels set in India. Rumer Godden was a prolific writer with a body of work exceeding sixty pieces. Her readership and income peaked in the 1960s.[246] Because of her commercial success, publishers had full confidence in her writing and granted her the freedom to write as she pleased.[247] Jon Godden did not publish her first novel until 1947. Despite being less well-known than her sister, Jon Godden's novels received critical acclaim for their 'psychological insight and morbid, powerful atmosphere'.[248]

The publishers quickly agreed, not least since Rumer Godden was a contracted author with Viking. During the initial meeting in London in 1967, where Snead, the Goddens, and representatives of Chatto & Windus were present, Snead underscored that she aimed to avoid mere repetition of existing efforts at creating a general and informative book with illustrations to introduce India to a Western audience. Examples of photobooks that she had in mind were Richard Lannoy's *India*, published in 1955, and Suzanne Hausammann and Mulk Raj Anand's *India in Colour*, of 1958.[249]

Lannoy's *India* contains a brief text describing his first impressions of visiting India, accompanied by illustrations of six colour plates and 182 monochrome plates. These photographs were taken during Lannoy's trips to India and predominantly focus on portraits. In most cases, pairs of images are displayed on a spread according to shared subject matter, such as markets, construction sites, ancient architecture, tribal rituals, et cetera (Fig. 2.8).

[244] "Biography," Rumer Godden Literary Trust (website), accessed 1 December 2023, https://www.rumergodden.com/biography/.
[245] Anne Chisholm, "Godden, (Margaret) Rumer (1907–1998)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September, 2004, accessed 17 March, 2024, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/71256.
[246] Anne Chisholm, *Rumer Godden: A Storyteller's Life* (New York: Greenwillow Books, 1999), 261.
[247] Ibid., 262.
[248] Ibid., 203.
[249] Richard Lannoy, *India* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1955); Suzanne Hausammann and Mulk Raj Anand, *India in Colour* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1958).

Positioning itself as 'the map of Indian culture', the main goal of the book *India in Colour* is to introduce the key tourist regions of India.[250] Hausammann contributes seventy vibrant colour photographs that highlight India's sensory allure through its rich colours. Each section of the book comprises two to three pages of descriptive text accompanied by several photographs (Fig. 2.9). Despite featuring written contributions from Indian author Mulk Raj Anand, the narrative predominantly adopts a travel guide style, mostly focusing on general information about the country's religions, traditions, and history, and the key features of each region.[251]

William Wyatt Davenport, a correspondent for the Rome *Daily American*, was sponsored to travel to India in 1963. Before the trip, he searched American and French bookshops and libraries for guidebooks but found nothing useful.[252] What he found were either Victorian books or more recent guidebooks edited by the Indian government, whose misleading use of direct and indirect quotations left him confused.[253] Indeed, many travelogues, travel guides, and photobooks published in the 1950s and 1960s to introduce India to Western audiences uncritically inherited the conventional discourse of colonial-era representations of India.[254]

For example, in Darlene Geis's *Let's Travel in India,* first published in 1960 and reprinted in 1961, 1965, 1966, and 1969, a description of the 'south Indian village: the Nilgiri hills', states that

> this section of the country is isolated from the surrounding land, and parts of it are still primitive and wild. Many of its people are dark-skinned and Negroid, and the aboriginal tribes live quite untouched by modern civilization. Looking at this view, we might almost think we were in Africa.… Though Englishmen constructed towns and schools, clubs and golf courses, and brought their civilizing touch to this land, much of it is still untamed and romantically wild.[255]

The accompanying image was provided by the American photo agency Three Lions, Inc. (Fig. 2.10). Both the image and the text essentialise the southern villages of India, portraying them as savage, impoverished, disorganised, and in need of domination. The narrative not

[250] Hausammann and Anand, *India in Colour*, vii.
[251] Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004) founded the literary magazine *Marg* in 1946 in Bombay.
[252] William W. Davenport, *India: A Personal Guide* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), vii.
[253] Ibid.
[254] These include, but are not limited to, P. B. Ray, *India: A Handbook of Travel* (Calcutta: Saturday Mail Publications, 1954); George Biddle, *Indian Impressions* (New York: Orion Press, 1960); Davenport, *India: A Personal Guide*; George Woodcock, *Faces of India* (London: Faber & Faber, 1964); Darlene Geis, *Let's Travel in India* (Chicago: Children's Press, 1965).
[255] Geis, *Let's Travel in India*, 68–69.

only repeatedly emphasises the deep skin tones of tribal people, but also by drawing parallels with Africa, equates and hierarchises regions with entirely different cultures and societies, based solely on superficial similarities in skin colour and lifestyle.

Kathleen R. Epelde's research into travel guides investigates examples from the nineteenth century, represented by such early figures as John Murray and Thomas Cook, up to late twentieth-century India travel guides published by Lonely Planet.[256] She argues that the use of timeless and mystical photographs representing India has been a consistent and ingrained Orientalist feature of the genre and that even travel guides like Lonely Planet, which claim to provide a different experience for independent travellers and backpackers compared to standard tourism, still inherit this Orientalist representational mode.[257] These include iconic images of the Taj Mahal and the Ganges riverbanks in Varanasi, as well as numerous close-ups of smiling faces.[258]

Thus, when Snead sought to publish a photobook about India, she faced a book market with a well-established conventional discourse shared by many publishers, authors, and photographers. The Goddens shared Snead's aspiration to distinguish this photobook from the conventional practices of its predecessors and to negotiate with the prevailing editorial strategies of publishers. Following a project launch meeting, Snead and the Goddens collaboratively wrote a letter to Chatto & Windus in the form of meeting minutes, reaffirming this vision.

The process of preparing the book spanned six years. Given Rumer Godden's busy schedule writing her novel *In This House of Brede*, Jon Godden had to begin the research and preliminary writing alone. It was only in 1969, following the publication of *In This House of Brede*, that Rumer Godden could allocate time to participate in the project. Eventually published in 1972 under the title *Shiva's Pigeons: An Experience of India*, the book featured 130 photographs by Snead and over 40,000 words by the Goddens (Fig. 2.11).[259]

To actualise the goal of distinguishing itself from previous books on India, *Shiva's Pigeons* adopted an innovative visual structure and narrative style. Firstly, 'Shiva's pigeons'

[256] Kathleen R. Epelde, "Travel Guidebooks to India: A Century and a Half of Orientalism," (PhD diss., University of Wollongong, 2004).
[257] Epelde, "Travel Guidebooks to India," 8, 160–61, 225–26.
[258] Ibid., 192–95, 198–200.
[259] During those six years, Snead lived in Bombay and New York, while the Goddens lived in the UK. They wrote numerous letters to each other, so that the Goddens joked that the book's title could be 'pigeon post'. Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons*, 8.

not only serves as the title of the book but also functions as a metaphor interwoven throughout the text and images. According to the Goddens, their idea for the title came from Hindu mythology: 'Shiva, third god of the Hindu Trinity, once found some of his human followers so exasperating that he turned them into pigeons; they have haunted his shrines and temples ever since, hoping for release.'[260] This metaphor of 'Shiva's pigeons' is thus used to describe the lives of many Indian people and to reveal their relationships with the gods. In the preface, the Goddens acknowledge that in India, besides Hinduism, there exist many other religions, such as Sikhism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.[261] The Goddens clarify that their use of the metaphor of Shiva does not intend to overlook believers in other faiths, nor does it attempt to substitute the diversity of other individuals' lives with the experiences of Hindu followers.[262] Instead, it stems from the recognition that, even within other faiths, many ideas associated with Shiva have permeated the everyday lives of all those residing in India, regardless of their religious affiliation.[263]

The visual structure formed by the images at the beginning and end of the book engages with the metaphor of Shiva. The pigeons on the cover image are collaged by Snead over her photograph of a sculpture of Shiva's head (Fig. 2.11). Opening the book, the initial sequence is revealed to consist of three images related to pigeons, interspersed around the text in the preface (Fig. 2.12, Fig. 2.13, and Fig. 2.14). When the first chapter begins, Snead's photograph of a trail of pigeon footprints on the sand comes to the reader's attention, while the text begins to talk about the birth of a Hindu baby (Fig. 2.15). At the end of the final chapter, following a focus on death and cremation, the photographs conclude with the image of footprints that had been used in Snead's album (Fig. 2.16).

The orientation of the image of footprints in Snead's album is vertical, while in *Shiva's Pigeons* it has been rotated ninety degrees to become horizontal in direction (Fig. 2.7 and Fig. 2.16). The rotation of direction is crucial for the metaphor of 'Shiva's pigeons'. The most likely way to make these two pairs of footprints involves a backwards turn (Fig. 2.16). Commencing with the left foot taking the initial step at the top-left corner of the image, the right foot advances to the right-foremost position for the second step at the bottom-right corner of the image. Subsequently, the left foot follows for the third step at the top-right

[260] Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons*, 13.
[261] Ibid., 9, 13.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Ibid.

corner. At this point, the individual executes a 180-degree turn, allowing the right foot to leave its print at the bottom-left corner of the image, rejoining with the first step.

Shiva's Pigeons inherits this emphasis on the tactile and kinetic experience of the body from Snead's album. Moreover, by presenting this image of footprints horizontally, it enhances the sense of turning backwards. It visually and spatially represents the Indian philosophy of life as a cycle, the journey of life not stopping after death but continuing with 'unceasing transformations'.[264] Both the images of pigeon footprints and human footprints span across the spreads horizontally. When turning the pages or closing the book, the footprints on the two halves of the spread overlap, further intensifying the sense of a continuous, unending journey.[265]

It is also worth considering that bare feet and footprints have a complex cultural significance in India that is both secular and religious.[266]

Tiziana Lorenzetti points out that the Sanskrit word 'pāda' connotes multiple layers of meaning, including 'foot' and 'footprint', as well as 'sunray', thus symbolising sacred energy and the movement of the gods' walking on the celestial vault.[267] It suggests a direct encounter with the divine through tactile sensation rather than vision, serving as a pathway for the inner self to connect with the divine directly, bypassing the use of eyes or other tools. The image of the footprints implies both absence and presence and evokes associations with the direction and manner of bodily movement through tactile sensations. Thus, the serial arrangement of the images not only visually recreates the metaphor of 'Shiva's pigeons' but also provokes readers' imaginative and participatory experience.

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[264] Ibid., 9.

[265] Scholarly interest in multisensory experience within the realm of albums and photobooks has grown, with studies exploring relationships between photography and touch, sound, material, format, the turning of pages, installation methods, and surface textures. See Elizabeth Edwards, "Photographs, Mounts and the Tactile Archive," *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, no. 19 (2014): 1–9, https://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.716. Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, eds., *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (London: Routledge, 2004); and Margaret Rose Olin, *Touching Photographs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

[266] On the cultural significance of feet in Indian tradition, see Jain-Neubauer Jutta, *Feet & Footwear in Indian Culture* (Toronto: Bata Shoe Museum; Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 2000), 10; and Albertina Nugteren, "Bare Feet and Sacred Ground: 'Viṣṇu Was Here'," *Religions* 9, no. 7 (2018): 1–21, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9070224.Tim Ingold reveals that the stride of Europeans wearing boots reflects a longstanding trend in Western thought and science, influenced by evolutionary theories, where footwear is understood as an endeavour to intellectually overcome nature. See Tim Ingold, "Culture on the Ground: The World Perceived through the Feet," *Journal of Material Culture* 9, no. 3 (2004): 315–40, https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183504046896.

[267] Tiziana Lorenzetti, "The Cult of Feet and Footwear in the Liṅgāyat Tradition: Symbology and Peculiarities," in *In the Footsteps of the Masters: Footprints, Feet and Shoes as Objects of Veneration in Asian, Islamic and Mediterranean Art*, ed. Julia A. B. Hegewald (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2020), 342–43.

Secondly, through its narrative style, *Shiva's Pigeons* seeks to differentiate itself from conventional travel guides and travelogues about India. Lannoy, in his photobook *India* (1955), opens the text by describing his feelings upon arriving in India for the first time:

> I was suddenly startled by crude vermilion stones representing the popular deities, Hanuman the monkey, and Ganesa the elephant-headed.… At first I was shocked by a feeling of gross, malignant power in the image, until gradually I recognized in the almost indecent nakedness of the red stone,… carved not by any great artist but by one of the million anonymous craftsmen of the Indian villages.… I wondered, could a religion which produced a world of lofty conceptions of the Divine also create these curious, sub-human deities, in whose inflamed vitality there was a suggestion of primeval power?'[268]

Lannoy followed a tradition of writing travelogues by adopting a first-person narrative perspective.[269] He employed Western values and a hierarchical vocabulary to articulate his feelings when encountering sculptures of Indian religious figures, applying a dichotomy between the 'lofty' and the 'primeval' in his assessment.

The Indologist Ronald Inden, in *Imagining India* (1990), argues that many scholars of Indological research treat Indians as possessing 'Indian spirit' or a 'Hindu mind', rather than as 'rational subjects and knowing actors'.[270] This debate over whether Indians are traditional or modern, spiritual or secular, has persisted. Lannoy, too, faced similar accusations. During a panel discussion among senior scholars at an Indian university about his book *The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society*, Lannoy was accused of asserting that India is an aesthetics-oriented society.[271] The scholars insisted on portraying India in Western materialistic and scientific terms, arguing that the country had long abandoned such outdated and traditional perspectives and was rapidly progressing toward becoming one of the world's largest economic entities.

Western writers and advocates of Indian modernisation often employ a contradistinction between tradition and modernism to achieve their rhetorical goals. Portraying India as a country in which tradition and modernisation coexist in conflict has become a visual

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[268] Lannoy, *India*, 5.
[269] During the 1950s and 1960s, books introducing India to Western audiences often followed the colonial-era tradition of the travelogue and adopted a first-person narrative perspective. See, for example, Biddle, *Indian Impressions*; Woodcock, *Faces of India*; and Davenport, *India: A Personal Guide*.
[270] Róbert Gáfrik, "Representations of India in Slovak Travel Writing during the Communist Regime (1948–1989)," in Dobrota Alžbeta Pucherová and Róbert Gáfrik, eds., *Postcolonial Europe? Essays on Post-Communist Literatures and Cultures* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 283.
[271] Richard Lannoy, "Reread: In the Shade of the Speaking Tree," *Fourth Door Review*, nos. 2/3 (1998): 92–93, https://fourthdoor.co.uk/review/issue_2and3.php.

convention, as seen in publications like *LIFE* magazine, which adeptly amplifies the impact of its photo essays (Fig. 2.17 and Fig. 2.18).

Shiva's Pigeons avoids this narrative of tradition versus modernisation. The Goddens utilise their renowned storytelling approach, characterised by multifaceted narrative perspectives and frequently shifting viewpoints. At times, they introduce the fictional character Armor and his family into the narrative while, at other moments, they stage a direct conversation with the reader. For instance, *Shiva's Pigeons* begins with the following text:

> When a Hindu baby is born, honey is sometimes put on its tongue so that it will grow up to have a mild disposition, 'sweet talk'; in some families, on the fifth day a pen and ink, and a stone or brick from the nearest temple are laid out in the birth room, ready for the Unseen Presence, Brahma, the Creator, first God of the Hindu Trinity, who will come during the day or night and write the baby's karma on its forehead. At first sight these two 'baby' customs seem contradictory: how can a minute human action influence what God's hand will write?… Karma, too, is not, as most Westerners believe, fate; it is the baby's genes but, in Hindu thought, more than an inheritance from his parents and ancestors; it is also a legacy from the way he has lived in past lives. By deliberate 'choosing'—and discipline—he can alter or free himself even from his genes.[272]

While describing the rituals of a child's birth, the text unexpectedly shifts its tone to directly address the reader, posing the question, 'how can a minute human action influence what God's hand will write?' Through examples and contrasts, it elucidates how the Indian concept of life and human agency diverges from the stereotypical notions prevalent in the West.

John R. Frey and Andelys Wood have examined Rumer Godden's techniques of narrating time in her fictions, arguing that she succeeds in presenting a picture in which past, present, and future are closely intertwined, and that this confusion of temporal order reflects the complexity of unexplained human experience.[273] For example, in Rumer Godden's novel *A Fugue in Time*, the schoolboy Roly is always confused when he is tutored by his big sister Selina to 'take three tenses':

> 'Past, present and future.'
> 'Must I?'
> 'Yes, you must,' says Selina. 'Even a little boy like you has a past, a present and a future. You were a baby, you are a boy, you will be a man.'

[272] Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons*, 16.
[273] John R. Frey, "Past or Present Tense? A Note on the Technique of Narration," The *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 46, no. 2 (1947): 205–8, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27712863; Andelys Wood, "Rumer Godden's A Fugue in Time and (Inter)Modernism," *The Literary London Journal* 14, no. 2 (Autumn 2017): 18–30, http://literarylondon.org/the-literary-london-journal/archive-of-the-literary-london-journal/issue-14-2/.

> ‘And then dust,’ says Roly. ‘But *I am* always here, Lena. Like they say at school “Present.” I am always present so why not only one?’[274]

Rumer Godden’s conception of temporal experience—that the yesterday, the today, and the tomorrow are ever present—may have been partly influenced by the Indian concept of time. As Goddens mentioned in the preface, ‘the Hindi word for yesterday and tomorrow is the same “kal”,’ and for many Indians, time does not have to be linear.[275] In *Shiva’s Pigeons*, the disorientation of time is also reflected in the use of tenses. Interspersed throughout are moments where the text shifts from third-person storytelling to the direct address to the reader, serving as reminders to both the reader and the authors themselves to be mindful of certain stereotypical concepts and ideas about India. These elements reflect the authors’ aspiration to steer the book away from judging India through the lens of Western values and epistemology.

In summary, Snead and the Goddens work on visual structure and narrative style to achieve their vision of differentiating *Shiva’s Pigeons* from previous books about India. The subtitle of this book, ‘An Experience of India’, implies that its focus is on experience. The use, here, of the indefinite rather than definite article—‘an’ experience rather than ‘the’ experience—implies that the book presents one possible experience of encountering India. The text in the preface states:

> Stella’s camera can only tell what it has seen, and we can only try to interpret our pooled experience: what we have seen, heard, touched, smelled, and tasted since our babyhood days, learned since—there was so much to learn—and always remembered because, like the pigeons, our spirits haunt the places we have loved.[276]

This text demonstrates that the Goddens understood Snead’s emphasis on embodied experience in her album and sought to carry it forward into *Shiva’s Pigeons*. Moreover, the embodied experience conveyed in the book is multilayered. Firstly, it is rooted in the emphasis upon embodied experience in Snead’s own album, *Indications of India*, which closely aligns with her practice of travel and photography. Secondly, the Goddens recognised the book’s illuminating potential when working with Snead’s photographs. They acknowledged the challenging task of following the flow of experience in the ‘semi-abstract images of shadows on stone, ripples of water or sand, and studies of goats or cows’, given the dispersed nature of these elements ‘here, there, and everywhere’.[277] Thirdly, during the

[274] Rumer Godden, *A Fugue in Time* (first published in 1945; reprint, London: Macmillan, 1976) 34.
[275] Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva’s Pigeons*, 9.
[276] Ibid., 10.
[277] Chisholm, *Rumer Godden: A Storyteller’s Life*, 272; Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva’s Pigeons*, 10.

book's preparation, Snead resided in India while the Goddens were in the UK. Viewing Snead's photographs stirred the Goddens' sensory memories of India from their childhood. Additionally, the process of working with Snead's photographs not only prompted the Goddens' recollection of their existing memories of India but also reshaped them and evoked new experiences of the country. Finally, through its design, the book aims to encourage the reader's embodied engagement.

The metaphor of 'Shiva's pigeons' takes on an additional layer of meaning. It is not only employed to depict the relationship between Indians and the gods but also refers to the authors and their own connection with India. The affinity with India and the emotional intensity expressed here are clearly more than just an aesthetic matter.

In *Shiva's Pigeons*, the mediation of embodied experience takes place through the interaction between images and text, giving rise to 'a temporal-spatial duration' that enables experiences to take form.[278] In the preface to the book, the Goddens acknowledge that books about places typically either employ photographs as illustrations or utilise scattered texts for brief descriptions of images; however, *Shiva's Pigeons* distinguishes itself by running text and photographs in parallel, avoiding the dominance of either element.[279] The next part of this section will continue to evaluate some examples from the book to understand how the interplay of image and text in *Shiva's Pigeons* mediates experiences. It will also examine some cases where this approach may not have been effectively implemented.

[278] Helma Sawatzky, "Unfolding Presence: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Photography," (Master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2011), xii.
[279] Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons*, 7.

The Interplay of Image and Text

Case Study 1

Shiva's Pigeons rearranges most pairs from Snead's album, *Indications of India*, but also retains a few sets. One of these is the juxtaposition of an image of women devotees, who are listening to the guru at an ashram at Beas, and a bed of water hyacinths (Fig. 2.19).

In the first photograph, the women look in the direction of the guru to the right, barely paying attention to Snead's camera. Their sari pallus, all in uniform white, create a visual parallel with the appearance of the water hyacinths. Looking from Snead's location and perspective, the crowd appears to be in a spiral formation. In the distance, scattered individuals, who have just arrived and are still looking for seats, resemble water hyacinths proliferating and extending beyond the frame. The text refers to:

> …bodies still until, at the words of an inspired story-teller, a ripple of excitement or ecstasy runs through the crowd and sets them swaying; a whole village may resound with chanting: 'Hari Hari … Hari Hari', or 'Hari Rama, Hari', 'Ram Rama Nama'…[280]

The Goddens' text introduces dimensions of movement and auditory sensation to the scene. The textual intervention thus prompts readers not only to connect the two images visually but also, through sensory association and imaginative connection, to associate the scenes of the chanting and swaying crowd with the bed of water hyacinths swaying in the wind.

It is interesting to compare Snead's photograph of the women devotees with Raghu Rai's photograph *India, Lamas in Prayer, Ladakh, 1975* (Fig. 2.20). By blending into the crowd and making the camera as inconspicuous as possible, Snead positions the viewer as a part of the scene rather than as an intruder. In contrast, Rai photographs the lamas from the front, placing the camera in a position that should be occupied by a guru or shrine, creating a division between the photographer/viewer and the subjects. Some lamas in Rai's photograph are conscious of the camera's presence, with some individuals in the front row either avoiding or directly engaging with the lens. This composition places the viewer in a position of intrusion upon the lamas' sacred space, highlighting the privilege of the viewer in contrast to the passivity and stillness of the subjects. Additionally, Rai's use of colour photography emphasises the narrative aspect of the public event, aligning more clearly with conventions of photojournalism and *National Geographic*-style photography.

[280] Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons*, 322.

Snead photographed independently. She did not work under commission from any magazines or organisations, unlike many photographers and journalists who photographed in India in the mid-twentieth century, such as Raghubir Singh, Sunil Janah, T. S. Satyan, Homai Vyarawalla, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Margaret Bourke-White. Blaney and Shah argue that Steve McCurry's photographs for *National Geographic* have shaped viewers' expectations about India 'through images of acrobats, magicians, Hindu priests, shepherds, farmers and fishermen', representing an exotic and tourist-friendly India.[281] After the 1970s, there was a growth in the publication of photobooks about the country. For example, Cartier-Bresson published *The Face of Asia* in 1972, and Raghubir Singh published *Ganga: Sacred River of India* in 1974. Shanay Jhaveri argues that Singh's photobooks about India, published in the 1970s, display strong evidence of 'journalistic techniques' employed for *LIFE* and *National Geographic*.[282] Frequently employing a telephoto lens, many of Singh's photographs aim to convey a comprehensive narrative of Indian rituals (Fig. 2.21).[283]

LIFE magazine cultivated a visual language that is familiar to the Western reader, its photo essays vividly narrating stories of what was happening in other parts of the world. For example, in the book *LIFE World Library–India*, there is also a photograph illustrating the dynamics of a crowd (Fig. 2.22). However, with the textual cues, the direction of the heads in the photograph points to the recording of a historical moment and a clear narrative, the text stating that, 'at a meeting of the Congress party in 1958, all heads turn to watch the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru (left), proceed down the aisle.'[284]

In the *LIFE World Library–India* book, image and text collaborate to provide evidence of a specific historical moment, directing the reader's attention towards the arrival of the central figure, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. However, the spread in *Shiva's Pigeons* takes a different approach, omitting any visual depiction or textual information about the guru delivering the sermon. This departure diminishes the emphasis on delivering fact, evidence, or the dramatic elements typically associated with photojournalism. Instead, the spread leans towards illuminating a chain reaction of embodied experiences, allowing for an unfolding of

[281] Blaney and Shah, *Photography in India*, 5.
[282] Shanay Jhaveri, "The Journey in My Head: Cosmopolitanism and Indian Male Self-portraiture in 20th Century India: Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, Bhupen Khakhar, Ragubhir Singh" (PhD diss., Royal College of Art, 2016), 212.
[283] Raghubir Singh, *Ganga: Sacred River of India* (Hong Kong: Perennial Press, 1974).
[284] Brown, *LIFE World Library–India*, 92–93.

sensory perceptions and spatial dynamics to perceive the ongoing movement and growth present in diverse forms of life.

Case Study 2

The paired images of the shadow of a champa tree (frangipani) and the skeleton of a tea basket from Snead's album (Fig. 2.23) are placed in separate chapters of *Shiva's Pigeons* (Fig. 2.24 and Fig. 2.25). The former appears in the section related to children, while the latter is placed in the section about mountainous regions.

In *Shiva's Pigeons*, the image of the champa tree's shadow is accompanied by a section of Rabindranath Tagore's poem 'The Champa Flower' in *The Crescent Moon* (Fig. 2.24):

> … Supposing I became a champa flower … and grew on a branch high up on that tree … would you know me, mother?
>
> When after your bath, with wet hair spread on your shoulders, you walked through the shadow of the champa tree to the little court where you say your prayers, you would notice the scent of the flower, but not know that it came from me.…
>
> When after the midday meal you sat at the window reading *Rama-yana*, and the tree's shadow fell over your hair and your lap I should fling my … little shadow on to the page of your book … where you were reading, but would you guess it was the tiny shadow of your … child?
>
> When in the evening you went to the cowshed with the lighted lamp in your hand, I should suddenly drop on to the earth … and be me.…[285]

By introducing Tagore's poem into the spread, sensory associations of the champa tree scenes are evoked, such as the scent of the champa flower, the dampness of hair after a bath, the swaying shadows in the breeze, the warm glow of the lamp, and so on. The Goddens themselves are adept at describing the imagery of rivers, light, scents, and so forth, which recurrently feature in works such as *The River* (1946) and *Two under the Indian Sun* (1966), as exemplified by such descriptions as 'the sunbaked Indian dust between sandals and bare toes', and 'the honey smell of the fuzz-buzz flowers of thorn trees'.[286]

The Goddens' excerpted version of Tagore's poem focuses on four scenes, including the transformation of children into champa trees in the morning, the mother passing through the champa tree after a bath, the mother reading after lunch, and the mother in the cowshed in the evening. They omit some sentences in Tagore's poem that are unrelated to the description of

[285] Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons*, 42.
[286] Rumer Godden, *The River* (London: Pan Books, 1991), vii–viii.

embodied experience. They also condense the final sentence of the poem, modifying the original lines, which read:

> When in the evening you went to the cowshed with the lighted lamp in your hand, I should suddenly drop on to the earth again and be your own baby once more, and beg you to tell me a story.
> 'Where have you been, you naughty child?'
> 'I won't tell you, mother.' That's what you and I would say then.[287]

The Goddens shorten this to '… and be me …', omitting the child's transformation back into human form, the child's request for a story, and the subsequent dialogue. They evidently chose not to replicate the complete plot of Tagore's poem here, deeming the conclusion of the story after the child's return irrelevant to *Shiva's Pigeons*.

The emphasis is on encouraging readers to spend more time immersed in the sensory imagery and the child's psychological activities, such as their cautious inquiries, anticipation, and waiting, eliciting emotions and empathy. The Goddens acknowledge that being guided by Snead's photographs in their working process offers them an opportunity to re-encounter and re-experience India, a country they thought they knew well until this process.[288] The collaborative process thus encompassed Snead's photograph's reminding the Goddens of Tagore's poem, offering them a new experience by way of associating Tagore's work with Snead's image.

Snead insisted on using photogravure printing in her discussion with the publishers about printing techniques. She took pride in the quality of the book, considering it her best-produced work.[289] When comparing the image of the champa tree's shadow in Snead's album with its appearance in *Shiva's Pigeons*, it becomes evident that the details of the wall's texture are more visible in the tree shadows of *Shiva's Pigeons* (Fig. 2.23 and Fig. 2.24). The photogravure print provides a velvety texture and a subtle range of grey shades.

The perception of texture enabled by the photogravure print suggests an interaction between shadow and its physical medium. According to Belting, our perception of shadow has a dual nature, connecting presence and absence.[290] While the child's body may disappear from the world around the mother, the image can be perceived through the mother's sense of smell, hearing, and touch. The shadow cast on the wall is a manifestation of the image

[287] Rabindranath Tagore, "The Champa Flower," in *The Crescent Moon* (first published in 1919; reprint, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Pub Co., 2004), 29–30.
[288] Godden, *A House with Four Rooms*, 288.
[289] Snead, "Prelude to Photography and Then Some."
[290] Belting, *An Anthropology of Images*, 125.

through materiality. It encourages the viewer's embodied imagination of the presence and absence of the child, as well as the bonds between mother and child.

In contrast, the photograph of the skeleton of a tea basket does not receive a comparable treatment in *Shiva's Pigeons* (Fig. 2.25). With narrative coherence in mind, the Goddens place this photograph in a sequence with some others related to the material of bamboo, including an image of a young labourer carrying a basket in a mountainous region, and a detail of a growing bamboo plant (Fig. 2.25 and Fig. 2.26). The text provides information about the types and uses of baskets in mountain households, transitioning to the discussion of tea harvesting and further elaborating on bamboo as a commonly used material in India in the following pages. It reads:

> Where there is work, there will, too, always be bamboo. When an Indian touches a bamboo he makes beauty. He understands exactly how to work with it; the plants with their pointed leaves and green and yellow colour make innumerable things: … drinking cups and liquor flasks; water pipes; spoons; scalpels; and baskets.
>
> Bamboo is as strong as a man, as yielding as a woman, as simple as a child, and, in the country, it costs nothing.[291]

Snead's juxtaposition of the images of the champa flower's shadows and the tea basket's shadows in the album combines visually similar images from different spaces and contexts. It induces a powerful pause in the space, directing the viewer's attention and shifting their view beyond the object's functionality. However, the placement of the image of the basket alongside textual information about bamboo as a material merely mirrors the approach of a conventional travel guide, negating the significance of Snead's pair of images. The concluding sentence, 'Bamboo is as strong as a man, as yielding as a woman, as simple as a child, and, in the country, it costs nothing,' also risks essentialising and categorising people in India.

Case Study 3

Snead's initial interest in compiling a photobook about India did not extend to including portraits of people, as evidenced by the absence of any such image in her album. At the request of the publishers and the Goddens, Snead added many portraits for the final book, *Shiva's Pigeons*. Particularly noteworthy is the interplay between three dance-themed images and their accompanying texts (Fig. 2.27, Fig. 2.28, and Fig. 2.29). On the right-hand side of the spread, readers first encounter the image of a sculpture of Shiva (Fig. 2.27); upon turning

[291] Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons*, 132.

the page, on the reverse side of the same leaf, there is an image of a dancer's hand gesture (Fig. 2.28). Turning another page reveals a full-body shot of the dancer on the right-hand side of the spread (Fig. 2.29).

The text cites Ananda K. Coomaraswamy's summary of the significance of Shiva's dance:

> Shiva's dance is not an empty myth, but an image of the Energy which science must postulate behind all phenomena … its significance is threefold: first, it is the image of his rhythmic play as the source of all movement within the cosmos, which is represented by the arch: secondly, the purpose of his dance is to release the countless souls of men from the snare of illusion: thirdly, the place of the Dance, Chidambaram, the centre of the Universe, is within the heart.[292]

Besides the quotation, the Goddens' text introduces the reader to one of the classical dance forms of southern India, Bharata Natyam, by explaining the meanings of the gestures and the identities of the female dancers.

The image of the Shiva sculpture and the image of the dancer's hand gesture are printed on opposite sides of the same page, emphasising the continuity of the gesture from the god to the dancer (Fig. 2.27 and Fig. 2.28). The image of the hand gesture is arranged on the left and the text on the right, providing viewers with a strong visual impression prior to reading the text (Fig. 2.28). The text mentions the Bharata Natyam dancers' 'extraordinary control over the muscles', and the motion, rhythm, and spontaneity of their performance. Snead also provides a detailed caption for this photograph at the end of the book:

> Dancer's hands. One of the many mudras, or hand poses, that are an important part of Bharata Natyam. The dancer had just performed one of these strenuous and exacting dances when the photograph was taken—note the sweat on her neck and the disarray of her necklace.

Instead of drawing readers' attention to the facial expression, clothes, and jewellery of the dancers, the images and the text both emphasise the 'strenuous and exacting' discipline of the performance and this dancer's own skill, effort, and sweat.

Upon turning to the next spread, readers encounter a full-body portrait of the Bharata Natyam dancer on the right-hand side of the spread (Fig. 2.29). In contrast to the wealth of details in the portrait, the accompanying text on the left is succinct, consisting of a single line: 'If the dancer smiles, it is not at the audience, but for the god in the scene she is dancing.' Where readers have become familiar with the formula of this book, which frequently

[292] Ibid., 220. For Ananda K. Coomaraswamy's original text, see Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "Cosmopolitan View of Nietzsche," in *The Dance of Shiva: Fourteen Indian Essays* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1957), 7, https://www2.hawaii.edu/~freeman/courses/phil494/05.%20The%20Dance%20of%20Shiva.pdf.

juxtaposes long texts and a single image on a spread, this spread introduces a fresh reading experience.

The difference is clear if we compare Snead's photographs with Suzanne Hausammann and Eric Meola's photographs of Indian women (Fig. 2.30 and Fig. 2.31). Hausammann and Meola's images both employ a combination of images to guide the viewer's gaze across various parts of the female body. The images of henna-painted hands, bare feet, necks uncovered by colourful saris, exquisite jewellery, and other details revealing gorgeous and seductive young female bodies, are recurrent in a substantial number of books.[293] The images, supported by text, objectify and commodify the female body, especially those involved in dance. For instance, in *Let's Travel in India* (1965), Darlene Geis describes Manipuri dancers as 'sloe-eyed beauties whose calm faces are a delight to observe.'[294] Hausammann's photobook *India in Colour* was published in 1958 and Meola's book was published in 2016. Spanning six decades, their visual language has changed very little.

Shiva's Pigeons, however, tries to avoid reiterating the traditional image of the Indian woman's romantic, luxurious, and delicate appearance by emphasising the strength, accuracy, discipline, and hard work of the female dancer. Monochromatic photographs help reduce the visual distractions of clothing and accessories, eliminating noise and interference, and allowing the reader to focus more on experiencing the dancer's body language. Simultaneously, the text explicitly informs the reader that the dancer is not performing or smiling for their audience; rather, by emulating Shiva's dance, she forges her connection with Shiva, whose powers release souls from 'the snare of illusion' in performing the cycle of destruction and salvation.[295] Through the interplay of image and text, *Shiva's Pigeons* decisively disrupts the conventional 'tourist gaze' or 'imperial gaze' towards Indian women.[296]

As previously noted, Rumer Godden ran a dance school in Calcutta in the 1930s. Her novels frequently integrate elements of her understanding of performance.[297] In Rumer and Jon Godden's novel *Two Under the Indian Sun* (1966), they describe their childhood

[293] Lisa Lau and Om Prakash Dwivedi, *Indian Writing in English and the Global Literary Market* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 109–10.
[294] Geis, *Let's Travel in India*, 49.
[295] K. D. Verma, *Indian Imagination: Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English* (Delhi: Macmillan India, 2001), 146.
[296] See Larsen, "Geographies of Tourism Photography."
[297] Anne Harvey, "Rumer Godden: A Sense of Performance and Poetry," in *Rumer Godden: International and Intermodern Storyteller*, eds. Lucy Le-Guilcher and Phyllis Lassner (London: Routledge, 2016), 159.

experience of watching Indian ritual and folk performance.[298] Rumer Godden's novel *The River* (1946) was adapted into a film in 1951, directed by Jean Renoir. The setting of the story was the large house of an English family living at the side of the Ganges.[299] The novel was published a year before India's independence. Reviewing the novel and the film together, Lassner argues that the tension in the life of this Anglo-Indian family and their final departure from India question the continuing British presence in the country and respond to the nation's independence.[300]

The character Melanie, a mixed-race girl (half Indian and half English), is a new character in the film adaptation, and does not feature in the original novel. Radha Burnier, cast in the role of Melanie, provides a powerful solo Bharata Natyam performance in the film (Fig. 2.32). Lasser argues that 'Radha's dance is a text belonging to itself and moving within its own contextual sphere,' using a combined language of 'Indian symbolic and nonrepresentational movement'.[301] Even though the story is told from the perspective of Harriet, a British girl who has grown up in India, the confidence and 'self-contained' dance of Melanie mocks Harriet's 'all-knowing voice-over narrative'.[302]

In *Shiva's Pigeons*, the Goddens blend their lived experience of India during the late colonial period and their understanding of the significance of the Bharata Natyam performance into the interplay of text and images. As the reader navigates the book, they will soon realise the need to traverse both forward and backward, and the experience is shaped significantly by the flow of image and text.[303] It disrupts the conventional process of representation as well as the reader's looking habits and intellectual forging of connections between images. By intermittently breaking the flow of the narrative and directly addressing the reader, it forces the reader to make connections between the breaks and pauses in the book and promotes an awareness of historical complicity.

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[298] Chisholm, *Rumer Godden: A Storyteller's Life*, 267.
[299] The story was based on Rumer and Jon Godden's own childhood experience in India. They lived in Narayanganj (now in Bangladesh) and their father was a shipping company executive. Rumer Godden Literary Trust (website), "Biography."
[300] Phyllis Lassner, *Colonial Strangers: Women Writing the End of the British Empire* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 98.
[301] Ibid., 102.
[302] Ibid.; Katherine Golsan, "Desperately Seeking Radha: Renoir's *The River* and Its Reincarnation," *South Central Review* 28, no. 3 (2011): 115, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41261504.
[303] Eric Kim, "Robert Frank's 'The Americans': Timeless Lessons Street Photographers Can Learn," Eric Kim Photography (website), accessed 7 January 2024, https://erickimphotography.com/blog/2013/01/07/timeless-lessons-street-photographers-can-learn-from-robert-franks-the-americans/.

The Goddens demonstrate an adept handling of the topic of dance, which is familiar to them. However, their treatment of certain portraits seems insufficiently considered. A notable example is a spread featuring a portrait of a boy with the text '…. or an aboriginal boy ….' (Fig. 2.33). On the preceding pages, the text provides examples of the diversity among Indians:

> But this strict Hinduism is only for a few. Most Indians, though they worship gods and goddesses and hold to many beliefs, are not subject to taboos; they eat meat—but not beef—marry at the same age as Westerners; many do not go to temples at all;… He may be a jawan, a Jat soldier from the Punjab; a plump Marwari merchant; a turbaned Sikh taxi-driver with a heavy beard; a Parsee banker, cultivated, literary, probably speaking several European languages; a coolie woman in her thin cotton sari, sweeping the road with a twig broom.[304]

Even though the preceding text aims to explain the complexity and diversity of Indians, isolating these few words, '…. or an aboriginal boy ….', and juxtaposing them with Snead's photograph does not serve the purpose of demonstrating this diversity; instead, it reinforces a stereotypical understanding of tribal communities in the mountainous regions.

In contrast, in the caption section at the end of *Shiva's Pigeons*, Snead provides a detailed caption for this photograph: 'Toda boy. The Todas are an aboriginal people who live in the Nilgiri Hills in southwest India.… This particular boy goes to school and wants to become an engineer.' Snead's description suggests that this close-up frontal portrait of the boy was captured on the basis of an initial understanding and trust established between Snead and the Toda boy through their conversation, indicating Snead's personal connection with him.

The juxtaposition of image and text in the cases of the spreads containing Snead's photographs of the Toda boy and the bamboo basket's shadow appear inadequate, resembling a representational method commonly seen in traditional travel guides and travelogues about India. This could be attributed to the Goddens' lack of familiarity with tribal communities and mountain regions, resulting in a dearth of shared embodied experiences with Snead. This indicates that maintaining a consistent execution of the interplay between image and text to highlight embodied experience as an alternative to conventional methods of representing India was not an easy task. This inconsistency also suggests the challenges and complex politics surrounding the representation of India, which are not easy to reconcile.[305]

[304] Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons*, 38–39.
[305] Lau and Dwivedi, *Indian Writing in English and the Global Literary Market*, 13.

Evaluating the Representation of India in *Shiva's Pigeons*

In her autobiographical account, Rumer Godden recalls that among the portraits provided by Snead was one photograph capturing 'a ragged child looking on while other people ate'.[306] This photograph does not appear in *Shiva's Pigeons*. This raises questions about the criteria for the selection of photographs for the book and the considerations that may have led to the exclusion of certain images.

In Jon and Rumer Godden's collaborative memoir of their childhood in India, they explain their attitude:

> Book after book is written about India now, emphasizing her appalling problems of overpopulation, starvation, disease, her struggle to survive; all this is sadly true and anyone who loves India must grieve deeply over these things and feel apprehensive about the future—but they are not the whole truth. There are millions of beggars in India, thousands of disproportionately rich men, millions of refugees, but many, many, many millions of people in the middle way, living, as in any country, a middling way of life, dignified, honourable, content in their standard; even among the poor there is laughter, small pleasures in life, simply because it is life. Perhaps some of those dismayed authors had seen little beyond the big, often squalid cities, the new dams and factories, the acknowledged 'sights'; their books often give the impression that India is a drab country. Even in the small compass of our home, a child's world, some of that wonder filtered through to us; we hope a little of it has found its way, through us, into this book.[307]

This suggests that the Goddens aimed to present India not solely through the lens of religious, social, and political issues, but to provide a condensed experience of people's lives from a moderate perspective. This perspective is consistent from *Two under the Indian Sun* to *Shiva's Pigeons*.

The Goddens seldom explicitly refer to social and political issues regarding India, and this is likely influenced by their cross-cultural identities. Some scholars point out that diasporic writers bear a sense of duty for representing their 'homeland', as a result of their advantageous position.[308] When the Goddens were put in the position of being spokespeople for India, they were rather cautious about their power over this discourse. Implicit in this sense of responsibility is their awareness of their roles as informants or interpreters, attempting to bridge the gap between the East and the West. It is possible that this self-

[306] Rumer Godden, *A House with Four Rooms* (New York: Morrow, 1989), 288.
[307] Jon Godden and Rumer Godden, *Two under the Indian Sun* (New York: Knopf, 1966), viii.
[308] Lisa Lau and Om Prakash Dwivedi, *Re-Orientalism and Indian Writing in English* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 14.

censorship had an impact upon their selection of photographs and themes that best represented their fond memories and feelings about India, rather than provoking criticism or controversy.

At the end of *Shiva's Pigeons*, the Goddens provide a chronology of India and a list of chief Mogul emperors, which suggests the influence of conventional 'orientalist scholarship'.[309] In addition, the main text of the book includes numerous references to religious stories, historical narratives, and excerpts from Indian and English writers. This indicates their attempt to enhance the credibility of the book by incorporating seemingly more authoritative and historical supplementary content. Adopting Julia Kristeva's theory, Lean, Staiff, and Waterton emphasise that travel writing as a tool of communication is 'both enlarged and limited by the rules and codes of representational systems'.[310] The moderate nature of *Shiva's Pigeons* is related to the Goddens' experience of being brought up in India during the late colonial period, shaped by the disintegration of the colonial empire and their education in English literature.

Shiva's Pigeons highlights the authors' sense of responsibility as individual informants who have an intimate bond with India, yet it also carries traces of colonial influence. Upon further consideration, this matter is closely related to the ambiguity and hybridity of the Goddens' identities. Terms for India-born British and mixed-race people have varied over the years, having included such terms as 'Anglo-Indian', 'Eurasian', 'half-caste', and others.[311] The term 'Anglo-Indian' formerly was used to refer to Britons who lived in India for many years. The Goddens persisted in using this term to describe themselves, though its meanings have changed over time.[312] As both insiders and outsiders to India, they continually felt that they did not belong to a single place. The notion of 'hybridity' is constructed in many of the Goddens' works. Lassner contends that if the 'uneasy hybrid' in Rumer Godden's colonial homes anticipates Homi Bhabha's concept of 'hybridity', then the disconcerting situations faced by Rumer's female protagonists, who often find themselves living in 'an oppressively walled garden', also challenge Bhabha's 'happy hybridity'.[313] Similar to the Goddens, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala expresses her anxiety about living and writing in between cultures, as she admits that she consistently endeavours to depict India not for its own sake but for herself,

[309] Ibid., 74.
[310] Lean, Staiff, and Waterton, *Travel and Representation*, 19–20.
[311] Maslen, "Questions of 'Mixed Race' in The Lady and the Unicorn and The Peacock Spring," 66.
[312] Lassner, *Colonial Strangers*, 212.
[313] Ibid., 70–71.

aiming to establish her own foothold.[314] The Goddens' constant attempts to locate themselves and their literature and psychological travelling across the geography of cultures explain why the narration of *Shiva's Pigeons* is not coherent, but instead always jumps between description, lyricism, discussion, and direct address to the reader.

Adopting Kristin Bluemel's term 'intermodern', Lassner and Le-Guilcher argue that Rumer Godden falls into the category of intermodern writers, who lack alignment with the values shaping the prevailing English literary culture of their era due to certain perceived 'errors' in terms of gender, class, or colonial status.[315] 'I was ashamed of my blindness and ignorance,' writes Rumer Godden, 'ashamed of how little I knew of India or had tried to know.'[316] She was aware of her ignorance and her lack of knowledge about the cultural wealth of India.[317] Indeed, the Goddens once declined an invitation from an agent who approached them to write a book about Indira Gandhi because they acknowledged their lack of understanding of Indian politics.[318]

Not only the Goddens' work but also Snead's reveals a tension between different cultures and conditions. After the completion of the editorial work, Snead insisted on printing *Shiva's Pigeons* by photogravure because of its velvety texture and subtle range of shades of grey. The publishers calculated the difference in printing cost between gravure and litho and finally agreed to proceed with photogravure, handled by Viking's partner printer in Japan. Chatto & Windus decided to print five thousand copies for the UK market (priced at £5.10) and Viking chose to print 7500 copies for the US market (priced at $17.95). According to feedback from the publishers, when their offices received the advance reading copies, they passed them around, praised the quality of the photogravure printing, and expressed high expectations for the sales figures, as the choice of paper and binding of the book were first class.

The sales, however, did not end up as high as expected. By the end of 1973, over two thousand copies had been sold in the US and over three thousand in the UK. Snead wrote

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[314] Francis King, "Ruth Prawer Jhabvala: A Passage to India," *The Guardian*, 5 April 2013, accessed 20 January 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/apr/05/ruth-prawer-jhabvala-novelist-india.
[315] Lucy Le-Guilcher and Phyllis Lassner, "Introduction," in *Rumer Godden: International and Intermodern Storyteller*, eds. Lucy Le-Guilcher and Phyllis Lassner (London: Routledge, 2016), 8; Kristin Bluemel, *Intermodernism: Literary Culture in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).
[316] Rumer Godden, *A Time to Dance, No Time to Weep* (New York: Beech Tree Books / William Morrow, 1987), 68.
[317] Chisholm, *Rumer Godden*, 40.
[318] Godden, *A House with Four Rooms*, 288.

quite a few letters to both Viking and Chatto & Windus to express her disappointment at Viking's lack of publicity for the book in the US, writing: 'They haven't yet managed to arrange any kind of public display of the book and photographs.… Also I find their announcement rather miserable and unworthy of the book.'[319] According to Snead, the book did not appear in the recommended lists, nor was it prominently displayed in shops, and only sporadic newspaper reviews were available. Snead thought about having an exhibition, but Viking did not agree. Snead obtained the contact details of the Indian Transport Minister and Tourism Minister and sent these to the publishers, but they were not willing to contact the Indian authorities. Probably because of the political tensions between the United States and India at the time, as a result of the India-Pakistan conflict, and especially President Nixon's hardline attitude towards India, publishers did not wish to promote a book about India on a large scale or have any involvement with the Indian authorities.

There seems to be a number of reasons why sales of *Shiva's Pigeons* were not as high as expected. For one, the pursuit of print quality led to the book's high cost and pricing. Also, the Goddens' novels usually relied on book clubs and *Reader's Digest* to attract their middle-class readers. Both Viking and Chatto & Windus, however, found that both the book clubs and *Reader's Digest* considered high-quality, expensive photobooks like *Shiva's Pigeons* to be hard to sell to their readers and thus refused to promote it unless the publishers could offer a fifty per cent discount.

Snead's mobile lifestyle is also an important factor to consider. Snead was always travelling, and letters had to chase her all over the world. Although her mobility secured her plentiful sources and inspiration for her work, her continual travel meant that she was not able to plough in a particular art or book market. In contrast to the Goddens' renown as novelists, Stella Snead's career as a published photographer was still in its early stages. Living and travelling in India in the 1950s and 1960s diminished her opportunities to establish her name, build an audience, increase sales, and cultivate connections with publishers in the art and book markets of the UK and US. This resulted in her not having the opportunity to be involved in the promotional agenda and events programme for the book. In another letter, Snead expressed confusion about her name not being included on the jacket of *Shiva's Pigeons*. In fact, for the jacket design, the publishers asked the designer to highlight the names of Jon Godden and Rumer Godden in white ink and to place Snead's name at the

[319] Stella Snead, letter to G.W. Trevelyan, 23 October 1972, in "Correspondence Concerning *Shiva's Pigeons*," CW 294/12, Special Collections, University of Reading, Reading.

base of the cover image (Fig. 2.11). The texture of the stone in the cover image renders her name less visible, leading Snead to overlook the inclusion of her name here.

Snead believed that *Shiva's Pigeons* did not receive sufficient attention in terms of promotion from the publishers. Consequently, she initiated her own publicity efforts, including attending radio interviews and reaching out to the Indian Tourist Office in New York to secure the display of the book. The Indian Tourist Office agreed and gave her photographs a show for two weeks in February 1973 (Fig. 2.34). According to the on-site photograph taken by Snead, these works were displayed in the storefront windows of the Indian Tourist Office, facing the street.

In *Shiva's Pigeons*, portraits constitute only one third of the total number of images; however, the photographs shown at the Indian Tourist Office were exclusively portraits. Moreover, the exhibited portraits were all bordered by red and yellow frames. Evidently, Snead made compromises in the selection and presentation of her photographs here, possibly due to conditions set by the Indian Tourist Office, who chose what they deemed suitable for display. Notably, the selected portraits, perceived as conducive to promoting tourism, predominantly feature smiling faces. This display of Snead's photographs failed to do justice to the conception and aspiration of *Shiva's Pigeons*, as these smiling faces are prone to be relegated to the category of postwar humanist photography as featured in the exhibition *The Family of Man*, as well as of the typical images commonly used in the tourist industry.

When Snead made the compromise to work with the Indian Tourism Office for publicity, she inevitably relinquished her control over the use and interpretation of her works. By writing essays and giving speeches, Snead made concerted efforts to validate her identity as a traveller, distinguishing herself from the classification of mere tourist.[320] However, the collaboration with the Indian Tourism Office implies her ambiguity on this matter. J. S. Gates argues that the distinction between a traveller and a tourist has been a longstanding debate since the inception of tourism, and that the notion of a traveller is itself an ambiguous myth.[321] In other words, defining a particular photograph as belonging to a traveller rather than a tourist is inherently ambiguous. The juxtaposition of photographs, the display location, and the context of use can all influence the message and significance conveyed.[322] Simply

[320] Snead, "To Travel."; and Snead, "Early Cabbage."
[321] John S. Gates, "Home and Away: The Tourist, the Flâneur and Everyday Life," (PhD diss., Edith Cowan University, 2002), 8, https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/725/.
[322] Erik Cohen, Yeshayahu Nir, and Uri Almagor, "Stranger-Local Interaction in Photography," *Annals of Tourism Research* 19, no. 2 (1992): 213–33, https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(92)90078-4.

observing the photographs displayed in the windows of the Indian Tourism Office makes it nearly impossible to differentiate between Snead's photographs and the common images used by the tourism industry.

If we examine the portraits in *Shiva's Pigeons*, the majority of them reveal that the subjects in the portraits were aware of Snead's camera (Fig. 2.35 and Fig. 2.36). In the caption, Snead notes that the Bakriwal matriarch, a nomad in Kashmir, was 'fierce and hating to be photographed' (Fig. 2.35).[323] The matriarch gazes back directly towards the viewer with pursed lips, frowning brows, and determined eyes. The wooden fence behind her seems to refuse the viewer's entry into her space any further. Another photograph captures a girl from the Himalayas area carrying a heavy load (Fig. 2.36).[324] She carries a large burlap, taller than herself, and she wears a headband to help relieve the pressure on her shoulders. The loose strands of hair at the top of her head form a triangle, identical to the top of the burlap. The headband and the twine at either end also form a large triangle shape, suggesting forceful upward dynamics. Her whole face is covered in sweat, with two beads particularly visible on her cheek. Her eyes seem to be tinged with suspicion and impatience, gazing directly back to the viewer. The relationship between the subject and the viewer in these photographs is complex, rather than the one-sided power of the gaze. This complex viewing relationship is clearly more than just an aesthetic matter.

It is important to consider Snead's experience as a woman travelling and photographing in India. Even though her mother left her with an inheritance sufficient for her to embark on unrestricted travels, the reality was that Snead was not always in a privileged position during her journeys.[325] Very few women went travelling alone in Asia and the Middle East in the 1950s and 1960s, which made it almost impossible for her to be invisible in the crowd.[326] She

[323] Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons*, 360.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Snead, *From Istanbul to India*. In this travelogue, Snead recounts an incident during a train journey. Seated in a compartment predominantly occupied by male passengers, she was sternly requested by a male passenger, who looked like a military officer, to move to the mother-and-baby carriage. Despite the officer's insistence, other passengers suggested she had the right to remain in her current seat. Listening to Snead's conversation with the other passengers, the officer learnt more about who she was and her travel experiences. In a sudden and dramatic shift, his attitude towards Snead became notably warm and friendly. This anecdote suggests that one's identity can be easily destabilised by cross-cultural encounters. Others would have been unlikely to comprehend Snead's identity as a traveller from brief encounters alone. Also, the boundaries between the roles of photographer, traveller, tourist, short-term visitor, hippie, and so forth, are ambiguous and may lead to complex experiences, emotions, and treatment by others.
[326] For discussion of solo women travellers, see Ghose Indira, *Women Travellers in Colonial India: The Power of the Female Gaze* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998); Simone Fullagar, "Narratives of Travel: Desire and the Movement of Feminine Subjectivity," *Leisure Studies* 21, no. 1 (2002): 57–74, https://doi.org/10.1080/02614360110119546; Fiona Jordan and Heather Gibson, "We're Not Stupid… But

was often questioned by local Indians about the reasons why she travelled alone and why she was not married nor had children.[327]

Snead expressed that she was not adept at capturing portraits, as she often found faces disturbing and preferred photographing still subjects.[328] Her reservations relates to the discussions in recent years concerning the gaze, and the psychological and ethical relationships between visitors and hosts during travel and photographic encounters.

Previous research on tourist photography has primarily concentrated on the essence of the 'tourist gaze', building upon John Urry's concept.[329] This focus aims to understand such aspects as why tourists take photos, the manners in which they do so, the social construction and organisation of the tourist gaze, and how the camera, as a barrier, distinguishes the tourist from the subject being photographed.

Cohen, Nir, and Almagor shift the research focus from Urry's examination of the static gaze of tourists to the interaction between tourists and hosts, asserting that the dynamics between the photographer and the subject are ambiguous and evolve with changes in time and context.[330] Alex Gillespie's research, taking a deeper dive into the dynamics of relationships, introduces the concept of the 'reverse gaze' to describe situations in which tourists become conscious that their feelings and emotions—such as discomfort and embarrassment—are affected by the reverse gaze of hosts while taking photographs.[331] The reverse gaze may prompt photographers to realise that not only are their emotions impacted by the hosts, but that their identity as a traveller-photographer becomes contradictory, as their effort to distinguish themselves from other tourists is challenged.[332]

In the past decade, many scholars have embarked on exploring the phenomenological experiences of encountering others and perceiving places in tourist photography, as well as

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We'll Not Stay Home Either: Experiences of Solo Women Travellers," *Tourism Review International* 9, no. 2 (2005): 195–211, https://doi.org/10.3727/154427205774791663; Colin G. Pooley and Marilyn E. Pooley, "Young Women on the Move *Britain circa 1880–1950," Social Science History* 45, no. 3 (2021): 495–517, http://doi.org/10.1017/ssh.2021.14; Carly E. Nichols, "The Politics of Mobility and Empowerment: The Case of Self-Help Groups in India," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 27, no. 2 (2021): 470–83, https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12509.

[327] Snead, *From Istanbul to India*.

[328] Snead, "Me as a Photographer."

[329] Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*.

[330] Cohen, Nir, and Almagor, "Stranger-Local Interaction in Photography," 214–17.

[331] Alex Gillespie, "Tourist Photography and the Reverse Gaze," *Ethos: Journal of the Society for Psychological Anthropology* 34, no. 3 (2006): 343–66, https://doi.org/10.1525/eth.2006.34.3.343. For further discussion of the reverse gaze, see Darya Maoz, "The Mutual Gaze," *Annals of Tourism Research* 33, no. 1 (2006): 221–39, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2005.10.010.

[332] Gillespie, "Tourist Photography and the Reverse Gaze."

the ethical intricacies arising during photographic interactions.[333] Emily Höckert et al. apply Emmanuel Levinas's approach to ethics to their study of the tourist photograph.[334] They argue that Levinas's ideas of encountering faces may extend beyond in-person interactions to encompass both the process of capturing portrait photographs and the act of viewing portraits.[335] They contend that photographic portraits should not be simplified as 'biological, physical, or aesthetic' entities but rather insist on the increased responsibility and reflection on the situational and intersubjective dimensions of ethics within the realm of tourist photography.[336] Robinson contends that research in tourism should shift from positivism towards an emphasis on the emotional aspects of the tourism industry, advocating for an 'emotional turn' in tourism studies.[337] Hazel Tucker, meanwhile, discusses the emotional capacity of empathy in cross-cultural encounters and addresses issues related to cross-cultural understanding.[338] Although her paper does not present explicit conclusions, it serves as a reminder to emphasise discussion of the limitations and possibilities of empathy.[339]

These studies share a common focus on intersubjective experiences during cross-cultural encounters. The role of photography goes beyond merely documenting these experiences; it serves to recall, repeat, and evoke new experiences after travel and in sharing with others. *Shiva's Pigeons* triggers a moment of repositioning. Experiences such as shame, awareness of one's own ignorance, and the ambiguity and contradictions of identities, can be seen as the basis of an awareness for the potential for postcolonial and transnational perspectives to move beyond modernism's narrative adventure and to foster empathy and moral consideration of cross-cultural encounters.[340]

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[333] Marie-Françoise Lanfant, "The Purloined Eye: Revisiting the Tourist Gaze from a Phenomenological Perspective," in *The Framed World*, eds. Robinson and Picard, 241–56; Kellee Caton and Carla Almeida Santos, "Closing the Hermeneutic Circle? Photographic Encounters with the Other," *Annals of Tourism Research* 35, no. 1 (2008): 7–26, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2007.03.014; Brian Garrod, "Exploring Place Perception: A Photo-Based Analysis," *Annals of Tourism Research* 35, no. 2 (2008): 381–401, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2007.09.004.
[334] Emily Höckert, Monika Lüthje, Heli Ilola, and Erika Stewart, "Gazes and Faces in Tourist Photography," *Annals of Tourism Research* 73 (2018): 131–40, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2018.09.007.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Ibid., 133; Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 194–201; and Seán Hand, *Emmanuel Levinas* (London: Routledge, 2009), 36–37.
[337] Mike Robinson, "The Emotional Tourist," in *Emotion in Motion: Tourism, Affect and Transformation*, eds. David Picard and Mike Robinson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 23.
[338] Hazel Tucker, "Empathy and Tourism: Limits and Possibilities," *Annals of Tourism Research* 57 (2016): 31–43, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2015.12.001.
[339] Ibid., 40–41.
[340] Elizabeth Maslen, "Questions of 'Mixed Race' in The Lady and the Unicorn and The Peacock Spring," in *Rumer Godden: International and Intermodern Storyteller*, eds. Lucy Le-Guilcher and Phyllis Lassner (London: Routledge, 2016), 69.

Let us examine a final example from *Shiva's Pigeons*. Snead photographed a tool shop and its shopkeeper in Rajasthan, with dozens of iron tools dangling over the shopkeeper's head (Fig. 2.37). The rows of tools occupy most of the space of the composition. The pointed handles of the metal tools collectively create a sense of downward pressure, pointing directly towards the shopkeeper's head. From the half bodies of the two children shown at the right-hand edge of the photograph, it is likely that the shopkeeper is seated on a small stool, or on the floor. His eyes are not directed towards the camera but instead gaze diagonally upward, possibly looking at other customers. In this way, the contrast between the sense of force directed towards the shopkeeper's head and the apparent calmness in his eyes and his composed demeanour creates a sense of contrast for the viewer.

Judy Dater's photograph *Joyce Goldstein in Her Kitchen* (1969) shares a similar composition to Snead's photograph. Joyce Goldstein, a San Francisco chef, sits in her kitchen with her kitchen tools above her head (Fig. 2.38). According to Donna Stein, Dater acknowledged being fully aware of 'the utensils the kitchen utensils hanging behind' the sitter and 'their threatening medieval torture-like nature'.[341] Regardless of whether or not these tools manifest the 'medieval torture-like nature' that Dater suggests, this photograph goes beyond being a simple portrait of a professional with her typical occupational tools. While the composition emphasises her hands, she is not holding her professional tools; instead, she appears to be consciously or unconsciously protecting her inner thighs, because of the short skirt she is wearing. The gleaming wedding ring is particularly conspicuous amid the darker tones of the lower part of the photograph. This image reveals a tension between women's professional careers and domestic work.

Unlike Judy Dater's photograph, which implies a direct connection between the tools and the hands, Snead's photograph lacks this emphasis, as the hands of the shopkeeper are not visible. Multiple drilled holes on the display wall suggest that the tools have been rearranged several times. However, the organisation of the tools is not systematic; for instance, the plier heads are not arranged from small to large, and the handles are not ordered from short to long. This arrangement is not designed for either the logical organisation or convenient selection of the tools.

[341] Donna Stein, "The Art of Judy Dater and Her Photographic Memoir," *Woman's Art Journal* 35, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2014): 3, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24395358.

The Goddens provide several lines of text in the upper left corner of the photograph. Together with the preceding half-sentence from the previous page, they read:

> God is not only in the temple; He is in hands and hearts and the things of earth, stone, wood, iron; and so, like the farmer with his tractor, a mechanic will worship his tools on certain days, laying flowers before them, saying prayers. Why not? A worker's tools are his best friends, his means to creation, even though it may be in the most prosaic way.[342]

The text by the Goddens seems to offer its ideas as a response to Snead's photograph, suggesting that, in India, tools may serve as a conduit for communication and an exchange between humans and the divine, and that tools may even be personified as friends. However, since there is no clear indication of worship in the photograph, the text does not provide a precise explanation for the image.

In many Western critical discourses, discussions about tools often revolve around rationality, efficiency, the exploitation of labour, professional authority, and so forth. However, *Shiva's Pigeons* tries to provoke its audience to think about the relationship between tools and people beyond instrumental and rational considerations, allowing for more experiential interpretations.

An evaluation of this book through the lenses of race, class, gender, and other topics, will inevitably lead to allegations that it romanticises and oversimplifies these issues as they pertain to India. However, my analysis suggests that *Shiva's Pigeons* attempts to work in another realm—dealing with the way in which the interplay between visual and textual elements can evoke and extend the embodied experiences. It encourages readers to engage with India on a personal and experiential level rather than resorting to judgment and criticism. In this context, this book stands as an early exemplar of an exploration of the alternative ways of compiling photographs and text about India.

[342] Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons*, 147–48.

The Reception of *Shiva's Pigeons*

There is not enough information available to make a full assessment of the reception of *Shiva's Pigeons*. Jeffrey Alford, an American-born Canadian food writer and photographer, in one of his food books recalls his fascination with picture books on India, which he would borrow again and again from his local library.[343] He recounts his affection for *Shiva's Pigeons*, his favourite book of all, expressing how he 'memorised the photographs, page after page', and endeavoured to 'envision' himself in India.[344] When he finally went to India in the 1980s, he found *Shiva's Pigeons* on the shelf of a local library. Reflecting on the experience, he added, 'As I looked at all of the pictures I knew so well, there was no longer such mystery, but there was much more meaning.'[345] This suggests that while publishers may have valued Rumer Godden's renown for prospective sales, for Alford, as a reader, his true enjoyment derived from the act of re-reading and recalling each photograph in *Shiva's Pigeons*, which encouraged him to explore the personal significance of India for himself. The experiences triggered by this book continued to resonate with him after he arrived in India.

Chatto & Windus received a letter of complaint from the Sikh Council for Britain in 1974, arguing that a sentence on page 183 of *Shiva's Pigeons* was contradictory to the principles of Sikhism, which does not allow smoking, and asking for the removal of the statement that 'the solaces of most Indians—Hindu, Moslem, Sikh, Jain, Parsee, Christian—are more likely to be smoking or chewing tobacco … and chewing pan.'[346] This event can be considered a side note to the circulation of the book within the Indian immigrant community in the UK. Maroula Joannou points out that, since the 1950s, many Indian migrants and diaspora Indians have been 'economic migrants from lower socio-economic groups,' and that they have been haunted by the loss of their homelands, their feelings of rootlessness, and the ambivalence of cultural identities.[347] Accordingly, while the publishers had anticipated the book's primary readership to be the Goddens' middle-class Western audience, following publication *Shiva's Pigeons* became especially significant to the Indian immigrant

[343] Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid, *Seductions of Rice* (New York: Artisan, 2003), 277.
[344] Ibid.
[345] Ibid.
[346] The Supreme Council of the Sikhs in U.K., "Re: Shiva's Pigeons, Jon and Rumer Godden", 11 October 1974, in "Correspondence Concerning *Shiva's Pigeons*," CW 294/12, Special Collections, University of Reading, Readings.
[347] Maroula Joannou, *Women's Writing, Englishness and National and Cultural Identity: The Mobile Woman and the Migrant Voice, 1938–1962* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 137; Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London: UCL Press, 1997), 29.

community in the UK and reflected their search for cultural identification and religious conviction.

In September 1972, soon after *Shiva's Pigeons* had been released, Chatto & Windus were contacted by an Indian publisher who wished to issue an Indian edition and asked for a quotation. In 1977, they received a further enquiry about reprinting the book, from another Indian publisher, B. I. Publications, who had found that the Indian market was interested in the book and therefore wished to reprint 4,000 copies.

Shiva's Pigeons had great potential for the Indian market. When the Indian publishers wrote letters to express their interest, they asked Chatto & Windus to directly send them the signed reprinting agreement with details of the royalty rate, showing their confidence in the book's prospects in India. Viking, however, was less enthusiastic about producing the reprint and eventually the matter was dropped. Nevertheless, the reprint enquiries from Indian publishers in 1972 and 1977 suggest that the book had the potential to fulfil the Indian audience's desire for new ways to represent their country.[348]

[348] This period was marked by political and social unrest in India, and the declaration of a state of emergency that lasted from 25 June 1975 until 21 March 1977.

Section 2.2 The Exhibition *People Figures–India* (1982)

The Theme of *People Figures–India*

In 1982, Stella Snead was invited by the Arts Council of Great Britain to exhibit as part of the Festival of India, the first festival to have been co-organised by India and Britain after India attained its independence in 1947 (Fig. 2.39 and Fig. 2.40). In that year, Snead was seventy-two years old and had carved out a credible reputation in the field of photography, owing to her acclaimed exhibitions and publications. It is noteworthy that, despite the magnitude and impact of the Festival, Snead made the deliberate choice not to showcase her most celebrated and frequently exhibited photographs from *Shiva's Pigeons* to highlight her photographic accomplishments. Additionally, she excluded images of landscapes, tourist attractions, architecture, and notable individuals in India to captivate her audience. Contrary to expectations, she presented *People Figures–India*, a series comprising eighty-nine photographs of what she referred to as 'people figures'.[349] These encompass large numbers of road and village guardians; wood, clay, and wax figures for rituals; dolls and puppets; shop-window-display figures; and even scarecrows in fields, among others.

This section aims to examine why and how Snead compiled her photographs of 'people figures' to represent India at the Festival of India, and to explore the visual effects and visitor experiences that she designed for her audience.

Snead first used the term 'people figures' in her article in *London Magazine* in 1973 to describe man-made objects in India with anthropopathic features.[350] It is in this article that she began to conceptualise the prospect of assembling her photographs of the 'folk figures' that she encountered while travelling in India.[351]

Snead's 1982 exhibition provided a more elaborate presentation of her photographs of the people figures. In the exhibition catalogue, she initially acknowledges that the practice of creating people figures can be found among Indians of various religious beliefs, ethnicities,

[349] Stella Snead, *People Figures–India,* exhibition catalogue (London: London Borough of Camden, 1982), National Art Library, V&A, London. The exhibition was held at St Pancras Library, Camden between August and September 1982.
[350] Stella Snead, "People Figures, India," *London Magazine* 12, no. 6 (1 Febuary 1973); no page numbers, text and image totally 11 pages.
[351] Snead uses 'folk figures' and 'people figures' interchangeably in her writings.

and communities, with the exception of Muslims.[352] As such, the exhibition included people figures created by Indians from disparate regions and with diverse beliefs, though Hindu practices were particularly emphasised due to their extensive production of such objects.

Let us start by looking at a photograph in Snead's exhibition featuring the monkey god Hanuman (Fig. 2.41). In the Sanskrit epic *Ramayana*, when Ravana kidnaps Rama's wife Sita and a rescue group begins to search for her on the island, it is only Hanuman who can transform into a massive mountain and take a giant stride to rescue her. Snead's photograph captures the figure of Hanuman leaping forward, carrying two smaller figures on his shoulders.[353] The specific angle of her photograph places the emphasis on Hanuman's prominent head and its forceful leaping movement in such a manner that it appears to be propelling forward towards the camera. In the caption, Snead informs the audience that she found this figure 'in a wayside shrine in Assam', indicating its folk origins, and the fact that it is not drawn from a museum collection of exquisite art pieces.[354]

This example reflects several features of the exhibition. Firstly, by displaying and juxtaposing photographs of figures of gods, demi-gods, animals, and humans among other folk figures, Snead's exhibition aims to convey to her audience the perspectives of many Indians on the creation of anthropomorphic figures. In the exhibition catalogue, Snead emphasises that 'there is not always a very clear demarkation [*sic*] between gods and men in India'.[355] To denote the way in which these figures take human form, Snead deliberately chose the term 'people figures', rather than alternatives such as 'human figures', 'figures of people', or 'people's figures'. This may be due to the fact that she viewed 'people figures' as the best possible term to elucidate Indians' varied views on the inextricable bonds between gods, humans, and animals, and the blurred division between the animate and the inanimate in India.

A second feature of Snead's exhibition is that folk figures comprise the majority of subjects for the selected photographs. She was deliberate in her decision not to include

[352] Snead, *People Figures–India*.
[353] In the exhibition catalogue, Snead describes the image as the "the monkey god, Huniman [*sic*], in a wayside shrine in Assam. On his shoulders, he is supporting his brother Laksman and Rama whose wife, Sita, Huniman helped to rescue." This may be an error since Hanuman is usually depicted carrying Rama and his brother Lakshman to rescue Sita, instead of carrying Sita. For Hanuman's story, see Anant Pai, *Hanuman: The Epitome of Devotion and Courage* (Mumbai: Amar Chitra Katha, 1971), 1–32.
[354] Snead, *People Figures–India*.
[355] Ibid.

images of objects that could be classified as India's 'high art' or ancient heritage, which each have a long history of recognition within Western museums and archaeological studies. Instead, her exhibition emphasised her photographic encounters and interactions with these folk figures, rather than tracing their traditional craftsmanship and technical details.

Thirdly, the photographs selected for this exhibition not only deliver information about the religious or domestic significance of these folk figures, but also capture their postures and movements, which might appear unusual and unexpected to an audience unfamiliar with the context in which they are made. Snead included a photograph of a wooden figure sitting on top of a wardrobe in a domestic space (Fig. 2.42). This photograph appears in the catalogue with the caption 'Wooden figure of a man with movable limbs and the ability to hold a cigarette.'[356] Before arriving at this home, the figure may have served either as a religious object for rituals or as a puppet for shows. Its arms are stretched out, as if maintaining the posture of a performance in a public space. However, a cigarette has been inserted into the hole in its left hand—an unlikely item in religious or public ceremonies—while a paper roll has been inserted in its right hand. This photograph, taken from a low angle, seems to invite the viewer to consider the absurd and dissonant performance of this figure. Snead likely encountered it when she was invited to visit a local's home during her travels. This is a performative moment, collaboratively achieved by the photographer, the figure, and the members of this home. It demonstrates that, upon entering Indian private spaces, public figures acquire personalities, humour, and a touch of deviance. It also accords with Snead's words in the exhibition catalogue: 'The stories told of the gods show them as having many of the failings and weaknesses of humans and sometimes a little of their playfulness.'[357]

[356] Ibid.
[357] Ibid.

In the Context of the Festival of India

In 1980, when Indira Gandhi was elected as India's prime minister for the second time, she inherited a beleaguered economic situation fraught with severe inflation and economic recession arising from the policies of the Janata Party, who had formed the preceding government.[358] To accelerate the pace of economic recovery, she implemented a slew of domestic and foreign policies. As part of the Indian government's ambitious plan of commencing 'a new chapter in cultural diplomacy' in the 1980s, the Festival of India was launched as a series of projects. Specifically, the Festival was part of India's plan to refurbish its international reputation and present its 'heritage and achievement' on the global stage.[359] The Festival of India's venues included London in 1982, Paris between 1985 and 1986, several cities in the US between 1985 and 1986, and Moscow in 1987.[360]

The 1982 Festival of India was marked by the fostering of cultural and diplomatic ties between India and the UK. This is evidenced by the fact that Thatcherite Britain elevated India to the forefront of its foreign policy agenda in the early 1980s by encouraging a 'Raj revival', extolling the virtues of Britain's imperial past.[361] In this context, novels, films, and TV dramas gave rise to wide-ranging interests in the nostalgia-inducing British Raj.[362] Thus, the initial scheme of the Arts Council of Great Britain (one of the Festival's organisers) shows that the Festival events and exhibitions were intended to display the cultural glories of India, including its ancient manuscripts, paintings, costumes, sculptures, folk music, and more. However, the committee's Indian representatives requested that the Festival also showcase scientific and technological advancements in the country.[363] This suggests that while the British government attempted to reforge the imperial discourse, India wished to redefine its relationship with the UK by advancing a new national image. The confluence of contrasting intentions culminated in both countries' committees separately taking responsibility for the desired exhibitions and events.

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[358] Keith Hartley and Todd Sandler, *The Economics of Defence Spending: An International Survey* (London: Routledge, 1990), 192.
[359] Smriti Sawkar, "Exporting Culture: Festival of India 1982," *Contemporary South Asia* 27, no. 3 (March 2019): 407–21, https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2019.1584605.
[360] Kriti Kapila, "India Festival," in *Parallel Perspectives: Transnational Curation in London 2015–16*, eds. Mark W. Turner and Katherine Bond (London: King's College, 2017), 30.
[361] Sawkar, "Exporting Culture," 412. For the 'Raj revival', see Salman Rushdie, "Outside the Whale," *Granta*, 1 March 1984. Accessed January 10, 2024. https://granta.com/outside-the-whale/.
[362] Rushdie, "Outside the Whale."
[363] Sawkar, "Exporting Culture," 410.

The Indian committee achieved this by including science, technology, contemporary art, and around three hundred assorted products, 'ranging from terracotta toys to footwear', available for purchase alongside the exhibitions.[364] On the British committee's side, a number of exhibitions focusing on ancient and colonial India were congruent with their plan. Nearly five hundred paintings and sculptures were displayed at the Hayward Gallery, at the South Bank Arts Centre, under the title *The Indian Perception of the Universe through 2,000 Years*.[365] Many of London's major museums and cultural centres hosted events to capture public attention, including the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, Museum of Mankind, Visiting Arts Unit, British Library, and others.

The London Borough of Camden presented two photographic exhibitions at the Festival: Snead's exhibition and an exhibition of work by Lala Deen Dayal, titled *Lala Deen Dayal: The Eminent Indian Photographer 1844–1910*.[366] Snead's exhibition took place at St Pancras Library (now Pancras Square Library), while the Deen Dayal exhibition was hosted at Swiss Cottage Library. The on-site photographs of Snead's exhibition, taken by herself, show that folding display boards and light boxes were utilised to exhibit the photographs and to divide the exhibition space into multiple cells (Fig. 2.43). Large prints occupied entire boards, while many smaller prints were grouped together (Fig. 2.44). Though there is no available photographs of the installation of Deen Dayal's exhibition, its notably large number of exhibits suggests that the venue for this show was likely more formal and spacious than the space designated for Snead's exhibition enclosed by display boards.[367]

The finely printed catalogue for Deen Dayal's exhibition acknowledges its main sponsor, Grindlays Bank, and the significant support from the India Office Library, the Records of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Air India (Fig. 2.45). Ray Desmond, deputy librarian of the India Office Library and Records, wrote the text for the catalogue, showcasing his expertise in Indian photography and thus his suitability to provide an

[364] Sunil Sethi, "Festival of India: Biggest, Longest Jamboree of Indian Art and Culture to Open in London," *India Today*, 15 August 1981, accessed 14 March 2024, https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/society-and-the-arts/story/19810815-festival-of-india-biggest-longest-jamboree-of-indian-art-and-culture-to-open-in-london-773150-2013-11-14.
[365] William Borders, "London Sees 'Festival of India' Art," *New York Times*, 27 March 1982, accessed 14 March 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/1982/03/27/arts/london-sees-festival-of-india-art.html.
[366] Ray Desmond, *Lala Deen Dayal: The Eminent Indian Photographer 1844–1910* (London: London Borough of Camden, 1982).
[367] Ibid. The introduction of this catalogue acknowledges the efforts of the curatorial team, expresses gratitude to the sponsors multiple times, and articulates the ambition of this exhibition.

introduction to Deen Dayal. The catalogue suggests that this exhibition had more substantial commercial and official support than Snead's.

In contrast to Deen Dayal's exhibition, Snead's show did not receive any sponsorship. Snead was recommended to the Arts Council by an acquaintance, and she wrote the introduction and provided captions for the catalogue. Besides Snead herself, the only individual named in the catalogue is Clare Crick, her contact at St Pancras Library. Therefore, it can be inferred that Snead's exhibition, while part of the Festival of India, was relatively independent, and that she had substantial autonomy in selecting, arranging, and presenting her works.

Lala Deen Dayal's exhibition provided a retrospective of his professional journey and photographic achievements. As a professional photographer, he had served both British and Indian authorities.[368] The exhibited photographs were primarily portraits, reflecting his dual roles centred around the activities of each authority. The exhibition featured a total of 204 photographs, organised into ten sections, including 'Military Subjects', 'Colourful Personalities', 'Group Photographs', 'Historical Subjects', and 'The Glory That Was', among others.[369] The portraits of prominent Indian and British contemporaries, including British delegates, military officials, native princes, and chiefs, are a testament to Deen Dayal's ability to portray their social status, grace, dignity, and achievement in order to please his patrons. Indigenous Indians, however, appear as subservient dancers and servants in many photographs selected for the exhibition (Fig. 2.46 and Fig. 2.47).[370] Most of Deen Dayal's ethnographic portraits of Indigenous Indians were not included in the show, with only the section 'Glimpses of India at the turn of the Century' featuring several photographs of tribal people.[371]

The Lala Deen Dayal exhibition appeared amid a rise in public and scholarly attention to the history of Indian photography, and Deen Dayal's increased prominence in the 1970s and 1980s is attributable to several books and exhibitions.[372] In 1976 and 1977, Ray Desmond

[368] B. N. Goswamy, "Art and Soul: Portrait of A Photographer," *Tribune India*, 8 February 2004, accessed 14 March 2024, https://www.tribuneindia.com/2004/20040208/spectrum/art.htm.
[369] Desmond, *Lala Deen Dayal*.
[370] For further discussion of Lala Deen Dayal's career, see Falconer, *India: Pioneering Photographers*, 32.
[371] For discussion on the ethnographic surveys conducted by British government officials, see Blaney and Shar, *Photography in India*, 2–3.
[372] Sophie Gordon, "Monumental Visions: Architectural Photography in India, 1840–1901" (PhD diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, 2011), 80.

published two articles dedicated to the India Office Library's collection before publishing a book entitled *Victorian India in Focus*, in 1982, each of which included Deen Dayal's photographs.[373] Owing to two successful UK exhibitions of the work of Deen Dayal and Samuel Bourne in 1980, these figures became two of the best-known photographers to have worked in India.[374]

The exhibition of Lala Deen Dayal's photographs at the Festival of India was in consonance with the growing interest among contemporary audiences in the condition of India during the British Raj, and helped to reinforce an awareness of the discourse concerning photographic practices in nineteenth-century India. Deen Dayal himself is repeatedly referred to in the exhibition catalogue as 'India's most accomplished photographer in the 19th century'.[375] The reference to his 'images of the now vanished world of the Indian princes and the British Raj which provide a valuable record for historians' emphasises the value of photography as historical evidence, deflecting attention away from any analysis or discussion of colonial history.[376] The text further underscores the photographs' intrinsic aesthetic value, and prompts the audience to revere their materiality.[377] Celebrating the accomplishments of Lala Deen Dayal ignores the fact that, although he was an Indian photographer, the exhibited photographs were selected from his works for the authorities and that those photographs did not deviate from the colonial visual language that he had inherited.

Snead's exhibition, on the contrary, intentionally excluded images of official activities, prominent figures, grand architecture, exquisite objects, iconic landscapes, or anything else that might reinforce the established visual language of photographing India. Unlike the editing process for *Shiva's Pigeons*, where the publisher insisted on including many portraits of Indian people in order to satisfy the exigencies of sales and reader preferences, Snead had the freedom to make her own choices in curating the 1982 exhibition.

In contrast to Lala Deen Dayal's exhibition, which drew comparisons between the West and the East, the noble and the tribal, Snead's exhibition juxtaposed photographs of folk figures without necessarily classifying them or grouping them according to specificities such

[373] Ibid., 85.
[374] Ibid., 87. See Roger Taylor, *Samuel Bourne: Photographic Views in India* (Sheffield: Sheffield City Polytechnic, 1980); and Clark Worswick, *Princely India: Photographs by Raja Deen Dayal 1884–1910* (London: H. Hamilton, 1980).
[375] Desmond, *Lala Deen Dayal*.
[376] Ibid.
[377] Ibid.

as religious belief, ethnicity, location, or community. Snead's exhibition was not divided into sections to facilitate a narrative thread. Rather, she applied the approach from her album *Indications of India*, as discussed in the previous section, wherein she organised photographs according to visual and experiential similarities rather than content.

For instance, three photographs are displayed on conjoined folding display boards (Fig. 2.48), where, despite being placed on separate boards, the three featured figures collectively form a visual group. The right-hand photograph captures layers of carved figures of various sizes at an entrance of the Buddhist Ajanta Caves. In the middle is a photograph of a Brahmin boy attentively listening to a teacher inside a temple courtyard at Kanchipuram (a holy pilgrimage city for Hindus). The left-hand photograph depicts a Hindu priest blowing a conch under a giant village guardian near Madras (now known as Chennai).[378] Although these three photographs represent different religious practices and communities, all three figures are facing to the left, seemingly guiding the audience to continue their visit, and thus offering a plausible rationale for their sequential arrangement. Nevertheless, there is no clear instruction for the audience to associate these photographs of people figures with the ideological agenda promoted by the Festival of India.

Therefore, even though the works of Snead and Lala Deen Dayal were presented by the same festival committee—the London Borough of Camden—Snead's show did not serve to celebrate a nostalgic past under the British Raj, but departed from the ideological space of Deen Dayal's exhibition. The next sections will further discuss to what extent Snead's exhibition shifted the well-established conventions of representing folk objects.

[378] Nos. 89, 88, and 86 in Snead, *People Figures–India*.

The Question of Representing Folk Objects

Before further exploring the representation of folk objects in Snead's exhibition, it is necessary to initially examine the Festival of India against the backdrop of the long history of ethnographic exhibitions that entailed the removal of innumerable artefacts to Western countries.[379] For the UK Festival, as for the US iteration modelled after it, objects as well as Indian people were transported, the latter including puppeteers, magicians, clay makers, textile weavers, and others, who gave live performances at various festival locations.[380]

As one of the Festival's highlights, in both London and Washington, DC, the exhibition *Aditi: A Celebration of Life* presented artefacts alongside demonstrations of their production by representatives of Indian communities.[381] Photographs of the exhibition document Indian craftsmen handcrafting objects in museum spaces in each city (Fig. 2.49). For example, one image captures M. Palaniappan, a ceramic sculptor from Tamil Nadu, seated on a platform labelled with his name and an introductory text at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington (Fig. 2.50). [382] He is crafting clay horses, and is surrounded by larger finished ones. The introduction explains that these horses are made to offer to the village guardian deities as a sacrifice, as part of the folk tradition in south India. Scholars have discussed the importation and integration of non-Western cultures into the discourse of ethnographic exhibitions. Fabian argues that language plays a salient role in classifying and interpreting unfamiliar cultures to convey information to the audience.[383] The museum space reinforces its authority of language and responsibility for interpretation. Meanwhile, it is notable that the display platform ensures that distance is maintained between the performer and the audience. Indian representatives—including artisans, craftsmen, and folk performers, among others—convey a generalised image of Indian villagers, whose 'craft-centred, simple

[379] For example, in the Great Exhibition of 1851 (also referred to as the Crystal Palace Exhibition) in London, carpets, silverwork, furniture, tribal costumes, and many other crafts were presented by the East India Company to construct an image of richness in India.
[380] See Doshi Saryu, *Pageant of Indian Art: Festival of India in Great Britain* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1983), 7-8, 121; and James F. Clarity and Warren Weaver Jr., "BRIEFING; 'The Festival of India'," *New York Times*, 27 December 1984, accessed 15 March 2024, https://www.nytimes.com/1984/12/27/us/briefing-the-festival-of-india.html.
[381] See Saryu, *Pageant of Indian Art*, 89, 121; and "Mela! An Indian Fair," Smithsonian Folklife Festival (website), accessed 15 March 2024, https://festival.si.edu/past-program/1985/mela-an-indian-fair.
[382] Rebecca M. Brown, *Displaying Time: The Many Temporalities of the Festival of India* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), 32.
[383] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 143. Also see Henrietta Riegel, "Into the Heart of Irony: Ethnographic Exhibitions and the Politics of Difference," *The Sociological Review* 43, no. 1 (May 1995): 83–104, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1995.tb03426.x.

culture' is 'distanced in both time and space from the modern world'.[384] By categorising these clay objects as 'folk art' and emphasising the skills and traditions of Indian craftsmen, both the objects and the craftsmen are displayed together as exhibits, soliciting the attention and appreciation of the audience.

Barely a few minutes away from the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, on the National Mall, an Indian fair, *Mela!*, offered a gamut of items, including but not restricted to food, clothing, and objects made of brass, terracotta, wood, leather, and stone, as well as performances from acrobats, jugglers, kite makers, and others.[385] In this way, the Festival successfully transferred the audience's experience of the museum display into consumable cultural products. This state-sponsored spectacle transformed Indian folk objects into exotic, consumable products available internationally.

Moreover, the fact that 'folk' made its way into exhibitions and festivals as a parallel theme to the 'classical' in the twentieth century was a phenomenon of its own. Interest in folk objects has moved away from the erstwhile anthropological activities of researching and documenting them to become a 'global corporate capital'.[386] The Festival allowed both India and the West to celebrate the integration of folk objects into the realm of high art in museums, as well as their commercial value.

As mentioned above, painted clay horses were offered as a sacrifice to village guardians in south India. Interestingly, a photograph of such village guardians was chosen as the cover image of Snead's exhibition catalogue and was prominently displayed in the exhibition space (Fig. 2.51 and Fig. 2.52). Snead captioned this photograph as follows: 'Large figures of a type often found in fields or by the roadside to the south of Madras.'[387] Snead's captions provide each work with a descriptive sentence, covering such information as the location where she found the people figure, its material, its function, and its possible identity (with uncertainties noted for some figures). These captions are extended versions of the notes she wrote on the back of the photographic prints after she returned from her travels. Her approach to writing captions borrows some elements from the information panels used in ethnographic

[384] Brown, *Displaying Time*, 215.
[385] "Mela! An Indian Fair."
[386] Partha Chatterjee, Tapati Guha-Thakurta, and Bodhisattva Kar, eds., *New Cultural Histories of India: Materiality and Practices* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), 6.
[387] Snead, *People Figures–India*.

exhibitions; however, it diverges in its primary purpose, functioning more as a personal record and lacking validation from experts or authorities.

Snead captures these guardians from a low angle, framing them against the sky as their backdrop (Fig. 2.51). Another photograph by Snead featuring a village guardian, which was not included in the exhibition, captures its subject from a similar viewpoint (Fig. 2.53). This perspective highlights the viewer's experience of standing beneath the giants and looking upwards. Villagers in south India believe that these giant guardians protect the village from external threats.[388] Snead's photographs emphasise their animated appearance, as if they might stand up, bellow out their incantation, and obliterate evil forces at will. These giant figures are often positioned on elevated pedestals surrounded by offerings, such as terracotta horses. By focusing her lens on the giant figures themselves and excluding other elements beneath them, the photographs concentrate the viewer's attention on the sensory experience evoked by looking upwards towards the giants, rather than serving as an anthropological record detailing the religious customs of south Indian villages.

This photograph of village guardians was not placed in isolation in the exhibition. Upon entering the exhibition space, visitors' attention would be immediately drawn to four large photographs displayed on outward-facing boards (Fig. 2.52). These photographs all feature giant figures: the leftmost one displays a side view of a road guardian, the next image is that of the two village guardians mentioned above, while moving further to the right is a photograph of sand carvings of religious figures, with the rightmost image capturing five playground giants.

In the caption, Snead provides information about the sand carvings: 'Devotional Figures: Shiva, the Trimurti-Sadashiva and a Garlanded Saint, Bombay Beach' (Fig. 2.54).[389] The sand carving of Trimurti-Sadashiva (the three-headed version of Shiva) was very likely modelled after the stone sculptures of Trimurti-Sadashiva in the Elephanta Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Fig. 2.55).[390] Sand carvings are the most fragile of all figures, with the shortest lifespan, and are created for devotional purposes during short-term events. When Snead captured these images, the events had likely concluded, and the crowd

[388] David Stott, *Chennai & Tamil Nadu*, 2nd ed. (Bath: Footprint, 2014), 90.
[389] No.75 in Snead, *People Figures–India*.
[390] Ibid.

dispersed, since the beach is marked with many footprints, and the sand wall above is incomplete.

Snead's image of five large giants was captured at a playground outside Jalra Patan in Rajasthan (Fig. 2.56).[391] Their bodies, arms, and heads are made out of discarded materials such as oil drums, wood, and plaster. In the foreground, there is a low stone wall that distinguishes the space within the playground from that beyond it. It appears as if the spectator, positioned outside the playground, in front of the low stone wall, discreetly witnesses these giant creatures engaging in delightful conversations and hearty laughter, enjoying their time in an empty playground. Additionally, this photo was selected as the cover image of the exhibition invitation card (Fig. 2.57).[392] The connection between the clandestine assembly of giant creatures at the playground and the gathering of people at Snead's exhibition wine reception contributes to the sense of the exhibition as an amusing experience.

Perhaps with a view to the Festival's anthropological and museological inquiries into Indian objects, Snead opted to provide captions that appear to lean towards ethnographic entries, adopting a relatively objective stance. However, the exhibition installation of her photographs transcended anthropological investigations of folk objects. The large-format prints of the four giants, positioned side by side in the most prominent area of the exhibition space, emphasise their central role as protagonists of the exhibition. In the absence of any human presence in these photographs, they prompt the audience to engage with the giant figures individually and playfully. This contrasts with the celebration of the craftsmanship of folk objects in the exhibition *Aditi: A Celebration of Life*.

Alayna Heinonen has examined the displays of the Indian colonial market at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 and the Empire Exhibition of 1924, and contends that many of the modes of representation used in the Festival of India in 1982 are continuous with these earlier exhibitions.[393] Indeed, many of the Festival's methods of combining entertainment and education for audiences, such as its models of Indian villages and on-site performances

[391] No.18 in Snead, *People Figures–India*.
[392] Stella Snead, *People Figures–India*, exhibition invitation card (London: London Borough of Camden, 1982), the Stella Snead Archive.
[393] Alayna Heinonen, "Contested Spaces in London: Exhibitionary Representations of India, c. 1886–1951," (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 2012), 199–201.

featuring Indian artisans and performers, have been employed before.[394] The commercialisation of handmade goods to boost economic growth in the global market has also been a recurrent strategy.[395] Abigail McGowan argues that, whether in the colonial or postcolonial era, elites and authorities in both Britain and India have employed the concepts of 'tradition' and 'modernity' to legitimise their authority and governance.[396] From a perspective rooted in Orientalism, Britain has defined India's tradition as one of an eternal rural craftsmanship, while Indian nationalists have claimed the exclusive authority to lead India's economic development, including the protection of its cottage industries.[397] By essentialising the cultural distinctions between urban and rural areas, Indian nationalists have tended to regard Indian villages and their craftsmanship as embodiments of an ancient purity that is in need of guardianship and should be preserved outside the realm of modernisation.[398] The Festival of India thus served as a propagandastic platform to promote their governance and claims to represent India.[399] It simultaneously legitimised and celebrated both the colonial tradition of Orientalism and the aspirations of Indian nationalists.

The ethnographic exhibitions at the Festival of India introduced effective ways to understand and access folk objects, facilitating the rapid entry of mass-produced replicas into the consumer market. In contrast, Snead's works focused on objects that were less mobile and which were unsuited to mass production, being constructed from relatively unstable materials and thus unlikely to endure for an extended period. Unlike the Festival, which aimed to saturate the senses with colours, scents, textures, and sumptuousness to represent a romanticised India, Snead's use of black-and-white photographs weakened the sensory pleasure associated with India.[400] Rather than evoking a sense of exoticism, Snead used form, angles, composition, and space to personalise the viewer's encounter with the folk figures in her photographs. It did not provide an easy way for viewers to understand, access, or obtain them.

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[394] Ibid.
[395] Ibid.
[396] Abigail McGowan, *Crafting the Nation in Colonial India* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 6–8.
[397] Heinonen, "Contested Spaces in London," 266.
[398] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 26.
[399] For details of the organisers' aspirations, see Saryu, "Introduction," in *Pageant of Indian Art*, 5.
[400] Rebecca M. Brown, "The Gold, the Gold; the Glory, the Glory: Overcome by Colour in the 1870s and the 1980s," *Third Text Online*, 20 February 2020, accessed 14 December 2023, http://www.thirdtext.org/brown-thegold#fn16.

Surrealist Legacy

Snead's photographic approach to folk objects emphasises their playful and absurd dimension, resonating with the practices of many earlier surrealists. Though the surrealist movement is considered to have ended with the death of André Breton in 1966, Snead continued to employ surrealist visual strategies to engage with her encounters on the streets, paying particular attention to non-Western objects. Maria Kunda and Sarah Harvey contend that the surrealist strategy of combining myth and the occult during the postwar period aimed to transform people's minds and to resist institutionalisation and imperialism, and that this strategy proved more successful at this time than it had during the interwar period.[401]

A significant number of surrealists travelled to non-Western countries and regions during the exile and postwar periods.[402] For example, Breton travelled to Haiti, Mexico, and the Gaspe Peninsula in Quebec, expanding his collections of Native American artefacts and incorporating Native American mythologies into his book *Arcanum 17*.[403] Kurt Seligmann travelled to British Columbia to carry out research on Tsimshian life.[404] Max Ernst was interested in the Hopi and Zuni cultures of the American Southwest, and, together with Dorothea Tanning, he resided in Sedona, Arizona, from 1946 to 1953.[405] Wolfgang Paalen visited Mexico, where he launched the magazine *DYN*.[406] Many surrealists were eager to gather Native American artefacts, folklore, icons, and totems, and included images and drawings of Native American symbols in magazines such as *VVV* and *View*.

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[401] Sarah Harvey, "Late Surrealist Exhibitions and the Question of the Neo-Avant-Garde" (Master's thesis, University of Washington, 2013), 137–38. See also Maria Kunda, "The Politics of Imperfection: The Critical Legacy of Surrealist Anti-Colonialism" (PhD diss., University of Tasmania, 2010).
[402] For detailed accounts of surrealist activities in the exile and postwar periods, see Louise Tythacott, *Surrealism and the Exotic* (London: Routledge, 2003); and Sophie Leclercq, "The Surrealist Appropriation of the 'Indigenous' Arts," Arts & Societies (website), 23 November 2006, accessed 15 March 2024, https://www.sciencespo.fr/artsetsocietes/en/archives/2473.
[403] Claudia Mesch, "'What Makes Indians Laugh': Surrealism, Ritual and Return in Steven Yazzie and Joseph Beuys," *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 6, no. 1 (2012): 41, https://keep.lib.asu.edu/items/127801.
[404] Marie Mauzé, "Totemic Landscapes and Vanishing Cultures Through the Eyes of Wolfgang Paalen and Kurt Seligmann," *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 2, no. 1 (2008): 4, https://keep.lib.asu.edu/items/127755.
[405] Carolyn Butler-Palmer, "Max Ernst and the Aesthetic of Commercial Tourism: Max among Some of His Favorite Dolls," *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 10, no. 1 (2019): 62, https://keep.lib.asu.edu/items/127699; Samantha Kavky, "Max Ernst in Arizona: Myth, Mimesis, and the Hysterical Landscape," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 57/58 (2010): 210, https://doi.org/10.1086/RESvn1ms25769980.
[406] Timur Alexander El Rafie, "Wolfgang Paalen's Transnational Art Magazine *DYN*," in *Wolfgang Paalen: The Austrian Surrealist in Paris and Mexico*, eds. Andreas Neufert, Stella Rollig, and Franz Smola (London: Koenig Books, 2019), 93–104.

Many surrealists passionately collected non-Western objects, finding them particularly intriguing due to their departure from the Western aesthetic tradition. One of James Thrall Soby's portraits of Max Ernst shows him surrounded by his Hopi kachina dolls on the terrace of Hale House at East 51st Street in Manhattan, where he lived with Peggy Guggenheim (Fig. 2.58). [407] Soby took a series of photographs featuring Ernst with his dolls, including one showing Ernst standing with two dolls under his arms (Fig. 2.59).[408] During a summer trip in 1941 through the American Southwest, he acquired these kachina dolls at a souvenir stand.[409]

Snead also took a self-portrait in which she is accompanied by Rajasthan dolls (Fig. 2.60). This self-portrait was probably taken during a solo trip to Rajasthan, coinciding with her fifty-second birthday. The wooden dolls seem to act as her guests, participating in a birthday celebration.

In Ernst's portrait, the artist is depicted cradling and stroking his dolls, conveying his fondness for and ownership of them. The dolls are positioned towards the camera, explicitly showcasing the rich quantity and variety of his collection to the audience. In Snead's self-portrait, she sits on a towel in the garden of a hotel in Kota, Rajasthan, and looks to the left at one of the dolls, as if engaged in a conversation and fully engrossed by them. While she maintains a respectful distance from the dolls, the camera, likely supported by a tripod, encloses an intimate space, as if enveloping the audience within it. These dolls are most likely painted wooden Gangaur dolls, of the kind used in Rajasthan's festivals. However, divorcing them from their ritualistic context, this self-portrait highlights these objects' anthropomorphic quality and imagines an interactive experience with them. It underscores the role of the dolls as companions rather than as mere artefacts for collection and display.

In a 1936 essay titled 'Crisis of the Object', written at the time of the surrealist Exhibition of Objects of that year, André Breton identifies the surrealist method of engaging with objects, which transforms the way in which they are understood, moving beyond rational and utilitarian perspectives.[410] Surrealism emphasised the interaction between humans and objects: the discovery and appropriation of objects by individuals is contingent upon coincidence and chance; at the same time, objects exert a significant influence on the

[407] Butler-Palmer, "Max Ernst and the Aesthetic of Commercial Tourism," 46.
[408] Sanctuary Books (online catalogue), *Surrealism*, August 2020, accessed 15 March 2024, https://sanctuaryrarebooks.com/catalogues/.
[409] Butler-Palmer, "Max Ernst and the Aesthetic of Commercial Tourism," 46.
[410] André Breton, "Crisis of the Object" (1936), in *Surrealism and Painting* (Boston: MFA Publications, 2002), 277.

subject, unleashing the power of association and the unconscious, ultimately transforming everyday life.[411] Snead's approach to photography incorporates these surrealist ideas, not least in her embrace of chance encounters during her travels, undertaken with a surrealist sensibility, as well as her transformation of objects from lifeless to lively, and her sense of the object's impact on the perception and experience of the subject.

Certain scholars have criticised the surrealists' appropriation of 'primitive' objects as a form of ineffective elitism, accusing them of disregarding the social context of these objects and mirroring earlier artists' desire to retreat from Western society to the realm of the 'primitive'.[412] Kavky suggests that many surrealists attempted to mimic and reproduce the creative power inherent in 'primitive' objects, aiming for spiritual transcendence.[413] Belting argues that when modernist artists appropriated Indigenous artefacts, they extracted their images and translated them into a modernist style of gallery art according to their needs, thereby undermining the original symbiotic relationship between image and medium.[414]

However, I argue that Snead's exhibition of people figures does not question whether the photographs authentically represent the folk objects, nor does it seek to delve into any definition of the 'primitivity' of those objects. What is important, instead, is what exactly the exhibition allows the audience to experience. Further examination of examples from her show will shed more light on this matter.

Snead chose the photograph of the Hindu goddess Lakshmi as one of five illustrations to accompany her text in the exhibition catalogue (Fig. 2.61). This photograph depicts the goddess Lakshmi standing against a wall marked with Devanagari script. Her four arms symbolise Dharma (the pursuit of duty), Moksha (the pursuit of liberation), Artha (the pursuit of wealth), and Kama (the pursuit of pleasure), which are the four goals of human life in Hindu philosophy.[415] The upper arms represent wealth and prosperity in a spiritual sense while the lower arms represent wealth and prosperity in a material sense. In Snead's photograph, Lakshmi's two lower arms are obscured by garlands and other decorations.

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[411] Mesch, "'What Makes Indians Laugh'," 41.
[412] For discussion of the surrealists' appropriation of primitive objects, see Keith Jordan, "Surrealist Visions of Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica and the Legacy of Colonialism: The Good, the (Revalued) Bad, and the Ugly," *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 2, no. 1 (2008): 25–63, https://keep.lib.asu.edu/items/127754.
[413] Kavky, "Max Ernst in Arizona," 226.
[414] Hans Belting, "Image, Medium, Body: A New Approach to Iconology," *Critical Inquiry* 31, no. 2 (2005): 318, https://doi.org/10.1086/430962.
[415] This is a simplification of these key concepts, which have multiple meanings in many religions in India, such including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, among others. James G Lochtefeld, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism* (New York: Rosen, 2002), 55, 189, 340, 385, 443-444.

Coincidentally, the shadow of her upper arm on the wall compensates for the absence of the lower arm on the right, while the missing lower arm on the left is compensated by the arm of an individual crouched beside the statue, wearing a white shirt and a watch. Following Lakshmi's iconography, her hand on the lower left of the image signifies Artha (the pursuit of material wealth), which is often represented by golden coins slipping from her outstretched palm (Fig. 2.62).[416] The contemporary symbolism of time and wealth represented by the watch and shirt coincidentally align with the idea of prosperity conveyed by golden coins. Meanwhile, the absent hand at the lower right of the image, which would otherwise symbolise the pursuit of material pleasure, is replaced by a shadow, perhaps hinting at the emptiness of material indulgence.

Snead's contact sheet reveals that she pressed the shutter twice while capturing this scene (Fig. 2.63). The second exposure, slightly shifted to the left, includes more of the arms of the person crouched beside the statue. This indicates that the arms of this person are a crucial compositional element of the exhibited photograph. Snead's work does not regress to conveying the 'primitive' nature of the object, and its vast distance from and contrast with contemporary life. Instead, her photograph introduces an element of playfulness while implying the inseparable connection between secular life and the sacred, spiritual world in India, rather than setting them in opposition. The continual extension of the impact of these objects on the audience is deeply rooted in India's contemporary life. Unlike the surrealists' fixation on 'primitive' objects, which they considered uncontaminated by Western civilisation, Snead's photographs mirror her sensitivity to contemporary India's cultural hybridity.

The exhibition installation created a disorienting visitor experience. In particular, the exhibits were not arranged according to catalogue number, adding an element of disorder. For instance, the four photographs of the aforementioned giant figures are numbered 4, 6, 75, and 18 from left to right (Fig. 2.52). Moreover, even the sequence of the four small photographs displayed together on the same panel was disordered, their numbers being 45, 26, 77, and 61 (Fig. 2.64). The top left image showed a wooden sculpture from south India, likely depicting Saraswati, the goddess of learning and the arts, holding her musical instrument (currently, no negative or print of this work has been located in the archive). The top right image is of a

[416] Ibid., 385; S. R. D. Sastry, "Symbolism in Hindu Mythology" in *Symbolism in Hinduism*, ed. Swami Nityanand, 3rd ed. (Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 1993), 57.

seated female sculpture holding a black ball, captured by Snead in the botanical gardens at Ootacamund (Fig. 2.65). Moving to the bottom left of the display, the image here depicts a wax figure for sale outside a Christian church in Bandra, Bombay (Fig. 2.66). Lastly, at the bottom right, the photograph features clay figures found on the streets of Calcutta, still in the process of being crafted (Fig. 2.67). The standing clay figure has four arms and two legs. Coincidentally, the mother standing behind, along with the child in her arms, also possesses four arms. These four photographs are juxtaposed in the exhibition, possibly because they all depict female figures, or because they appear to have their arms in the position of holding something. The objects held might be identifiable entities—such as a child or a musical instrument—or they could be enigmatic black spheres or energies. Nonetheless, their collective arrangement creates an imagined sense of a connection between postures, tactile sensations, energies, and spiritual powers.

The discrepancy between the exhibition installation and the numbering in the catalogue raises the question of the reasons behind it. It is unclear whether this approach to the exhibition design was intentionally adopted or whether the numbering from Snead's initial list was used without modification for the catalogue. Regardless of the reason, the resulting visitor experience deviates from a conventional one. The exhibition lacks clear beginning and end points for the visitor, and the item numbers are widely dispersed. This arrangement may have offered a playful experience for some visitors, but it may also have induced a feeling of disorientation.

Stella Kramrisch argues that numerous interpretations of India's past have been obscured by a Western perception of mysticism as the essence of the country.[417] However, the intrinsic nature of Indian handicrafts arises from a profound experience of engagement with life. As Kramrisch writes: 'Works of art in India are known as existent (vãstu) and concrete (mütri); they can be approached, comprehended, seen, and touched.'[418] Her discussion suggests that

[417] Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of India: Traditions of Indian Sculpture, Painting and Architecture* (London: Phaidon, 1954), 9. Kramrisch curated the first Bauhaus exhibition hosted at the Samavaya Mansions in Calcutta in 1922. It showcased works by Bauhaus artists such as Paul Klee, Lyonel Feininger, and Johannes Itten, alongside paintings by Indian artists. See Regina Bittner and Kathrin Rhomberg, eds., *The Bauhaus in Calcutta: An Encounter of the Cosmopolitan Avant-Garde* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2013).
[418] Ibid., 13, 27. Kramrisch also explores how Indian artists employ the simultaneous interaction of consciousness and unconsciousness to perceive the external and internal worlds. Ibid., 26.

even beholders unfamiliar with the tradition might awaken to the quality of an Indian object, even if this is only a vague response.[419]

Snead's exhibition does not aim to impose her role as an expert, nor that of the audience. Instead, it responds to the experience of approaching an unfamiliar culture as an ignorant observer. It can be seen as a recollection of Snead's experiences of drifting in an overwhelming environment of cultural symbols without adequate means of interpretation available to her, something which was an unmistakable aspect of her travels in India. Tilley argues that with the advent of phenomenological theory, the consideration of space has shifted away from activities and events, departing from a previous notion of space as rational, coherent, and neutral.[420] A phenomenological perspective approaches space as a reference point and emotional centre for experience and creativity through lived activities, catering to human attachment and engagement.[421] Snead's exhibition mobilises the disorderliness of space, unfolding various possibilities of experience through its pathways. In such a space, the audience would have felt free to find the images inspiring, befuddling, confounding, or even incomprehensible.

Snead worked in an era in which the boundaries between ethnographic, artistic, and historical exhibitions were eroding, and beginning to reshape the language of exhibition-making.[422] The term 'ethnographic turn' describes the framework of debates on ethnography established by prominent scholars in the 1980s and 1990s.[423] Challenging long-held conceptions of ethnography, James Clifford redefined it as 'a hybrid activity'.[424] Celebrating surrealism's negation of the boundaries between ethnography and art, Clifford underscores the importance of exploring an interdisciplinary space of thinking about ethnography, confronting the difficulty that non-Western cultures are typically treated either as 'backward' civilisations or as seedbeds of exoticism for neoliberal capitalism.[425] Ever since, collaborations and experiments have been explored in many exhibitions to address issues

[419] Ibid., 10.
[420] Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape*, 9.
[421] Ibid., 9–10.
[422] Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz, "The Ethnographic Turn—And After: A Critical Approach Towards the Realignment of Art and Anthropology," *Social Anthropology* 23, no. 4 (November 2015): 421, https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12218.
[423] Ibid.
[424] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 13.
[425] James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Surrealism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 4 (1981): 539–64, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417500013554.

such as the representation of non-Western cultures, the exhibition setting, and community relations.[426] Snead's exhibition can be considered an early entry in this field. It adopted exhibition design strategies from the surrealist legacy so as to highlight playful, absurd, and disorienting experiences. Purposefully diverging from the conventions of colonial photography exhibitions, it also steered clear of the commodification of exoticism associated with neoliberal capitalism. The focus of Snead's exhibition was on eliciting the audience's perception and experience when encountering objects from unfamiliar cultures, prioritising this over approaches rooted in knowledge or aesthetics.

[426] For further discussion of ethnography exhibitions, see Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe, eds., *Theorizing Museums: Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996).

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed and evaluated Snead's photobook *Shiva's Pigeon* (1972), and her exhibition *People Figures–India* (1982), focusing on their representations of India. The first section explored the way in which *Shiva's Pigeons* differentiated itself from the visual conventions of many previous photobooks, travelogues, and tourist guides about India. It also examined how the interplay of image and text raises awareness and offers the audience an alternative experience of the country. The second section examined Snead's choice of people figures for her 1982 exhibition as part of the Festival of India. By further considering debates surrounding the exhibition of folk objects and the surrealist legacy, the discussion further assessed the effectiveness of the visual strategies she crafted for her exhibition audience.

Krupa Chandrakant Desai has provided an overview of the historical context of photography in India in the mid-twentieth century.[427] Exhibitions like *The Family of Man* and the documentary style employed in photojournalism had a profound impact on how India was portrayed; simultaneously, the use of a modernist photographic language in official Indian photography was harnessed to represent the vision and achievements of national development.[428]

India in the mid-twentieth century was in search of its own visual language. However, the break away from the representational conventions of Indian photography was not immediate. In the exhibition *The Family of Man*, curated by Edward Steichen, 503 photographs by 273 photographers in sixty-eight countries were categorised according to the spectrum of life from birth to death, portraying this as a natural and universal fact.[429] The exhibition has been repeatedly criticised for its universalising and essentialising depiction of humankind.[430] Among its critics, Roland Barthes's argument has been the most frequently cited, as he writes that 'for these natural facts to gain access to a true language, they must be

[427] Krupa Chandrakant Desai, "Photographic Histories of Postcolonial India: The Politics of Seeing (and Unseeing)" (PhD diss., Birkbeck, University of London, 2022).
[428] Ibid., 18–19, 61–62.
[429] "The Genesis of The Family of Man," The Family of Man | *Education* (website), accessed 20 January 2024. https://www.thefamilyofman.education/en/historical-context/the-genesis-of-the-family-of-man.
[430] Helen Lewandowski and Lisa Moravec, "Humanism after the Human: An Introduction," *Photography and Culture* 14, no. 2 (2021):125–33, https://doi.org/10.1080/17514517.2021.1925006; Sarah E. James, "A Post-Fascist *Family of Man*? Cold War Humanism, Democracy and Photography in Germany," *Oxford Art Journal* 35, no. 3 (December 2012) 315–36, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxartj/kcs032.
Recently, some scholars have defended this exhibition, arguing that Roland Barthes's criticism employed similar universalising strategies, and overlooked the exhibition's merits. See Gerd Hurm, Anke Reitz, and Shamoon Zamir, *The Family of Man Revisited: Photography in a Global Age* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020).

inserted into a category of knowledge … and precisely subject their naturalness to our human criticism.'[431] *The Family of Man* toured seven cities in India between 1956 and 1957 (Fig. 2.68). Among the thirteen photographs related to India in the exhibition, only one was taken by an Indian photographer, Satyajit Ray. In response to *The Family of Man*, India staged its own photography exhibition, *Images of India*, in 1960, celebrating Indian photographers.

In tandem with *Images of India*, seventy-two photographs from the exhibition were printed in *Marg* magazine in 1960. One spread features three images related to 'birth', depicting several infants on a bed, a calf suckling milk, and a mother feeding a child (Fig. 2.69). Desai observes that the metaphor of 'birth' here symbolises the birth of India as an independent nation, embarking on its life journey.[432] While *Images of India* attempted to position itself within a postcolonial framework, the use of a photographic language related to birth, with the representation of maternal love as universal nature, still clearly inherited the visual language of *The Family of Man*.[433] In contrast, *Shiva's Pigeons*, while also employing birth as its introductory theme, established a connection between pigeons and the lives of ordinary Indians through the use of Snead's photograph of pigeon footprints (Fig. 2.15). This approach diverges from the conventional visual language of birth and national narratives.

Desai mentions that India established a Photos Division and a national photographic archive in 1959, and employed modernist and photojournalistic photographic languages to shape the postcolonial image of the country.[434] During this era, photographers, artists, and photographic societies in India sought to develop an alternative postcolonial visual language that would be distinct from the official narrative, but photographic careers and opportunities were inevitably connected to official structures, leading to an ongoing struggle between adherence to and divergence from the established language.[435]

Snead's practice of compiling photographs also underwent changes influenced by factors beyond her control. During the preparation and publication of *Shiva's Pigeons*, Snead had to compromise with market demands, publishers, writers, official affiliations, and so forth, on various aspects of the project. Traces of a humanistic photographic language inevitably lingered in the use of her photographs. However, a decade later, in 1982, her

[431] Roland Barthes's article "The Great Family of Man," in his book: Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: The Noonday Press, 1991), 101–2.
[432] Desai, "Photographic Histories of Postcolonial India," 81.
[433] Ibid., 57.
[434] Ibid., 26.
[435] Ibid., 68.

exhibition *People Figures–India* at the Festival of India demonstrated her increased autonomy over her preferred approach to representing the country. She was no longer constrained to primarily featuring smiling faces and could strategically craft an alternative exhibition experience for her audience while negotiating official demands.

Over the course of ten years, spanning 1972 to 1982, India underwent notable transformations in its political, economic, and international situation. This period witnessed a shift from a phase marked by political turbulence and recovery to one of integration into the global capitalist framework and consumer-oriented society. These changes had profound implications for the nation's socio-economic structures and its position on the international stage. The spectacle of the Festival of India was aimed at catering to its audience's appetite for opulence and grandeur. It attempted to encompass all types of media over the centuries, thereby condensing India's national history by integrating an entire subcontinent into an image. This event comes across as an instantaneous mushroom cloud for sensory stimulation.[436] According to Brian Wallis, it embodies a 'self-Orientalising' process, since India was cultivating its own stereotypes to fulfil the demands of both foreign and domestic audiences.[437] Put differently, India was implementing its national branding strategy by attempting to transform negative stereotypes into positive ones. Christopher S. Browning contends that this kind of 'neo-colonial governmental technology' promulgates an idealised national identity and requires individuals to engage in the branding spectacle.[438] In the celebration of major events such as the Festival of India, the individual is burdened with the idea of a homogeneous nationalism.

However, Snead's exhibition neither met the British expectation of commemorating the British governance's supposedly glorious past nor contributed to India's earnest desire to transform folk cultures into commercially viable tourist attractions.[439] Her practice of compiling photographs outlines a framework for examining embodied experiences that is distinct from ideological and mass-produced patterns.

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[436] Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 6.
[437] Brian Wallis, "Selling Nations: International Exhibitions and Cultural Diplomacy," in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, eds. Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 271.
[438] Christopher S. Browning, "Nation Branding and Development: Poverty Panacea or Business as Usual?," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 19 (2016): 52, https://doi.org/10.1057/jird.2014.14.
[439] Caroline Scarles, "Becoming Tourist: Renegotiating the Visual in the Tourist Experience," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 27, no. 3 (2009): 465–88, https://doi.org/10.1068/d1707.

Snead's strategy of using photographs to evoke the individual's embodied experience of India in her 1966 album remained a consistent thread throughout the design of *Shiva's Pigeons* and *People Figures–India*. Her process involves altering the ways in which the audience engages with photographs through various mediums, such as the arrangement of photos, bookmaking, and exhibition installation. It involves directing attention towards embodied experience, cultivating and refining the ability to perceive encounters. Drawing inspiration directly from experiential data, rather than relying on preconceived knowledge or discourse, Snead's practice of compiling her photographs aims to facilitate a perceptual encounter with India that transcends conventional representations. Her approach not only records and explores her firsthand experiences but also consciously encourages her audience to engage with and expand upon these experiences, serving as a bridge between the photographer's encounter and the audience's experience.

Caroline Scarles suggests that the evolving dynamics of visual practices redefine the relationship between tourists and places.[440] Lean, Staiff, and Waterton argue that representation is not about evaluating whether a description is real or not, nor is it a 'semiotic decoding,' as 'the real and the represented are fused.'[441] Keith Moxey believes that representations have agency and the 'power to create fresh experiential worlds of their own'.[442] Belting suggests that images, like nomads, inhabit various media, challenging the notion of a linear media history and emphasising the dynamic interaction between our bodies and images.[443] Representation and perception are intertwined in the politics of images. While representation typically seeks to govern perception, Snead's approach can be regarded as a deliberate process of investigation and exploration aimed at reclaiming perception. This serves as a form of resistance against the structured influence wielded by representational conventions on our cognitive faculties. This fluidity challenges conventional narratives and calls for a nuanced understanding of the relationship between images and perception. However, this effort to dispel the many arbitrary judgments and stereotypes about India that are prevalent in both visual and written narratives is an ongoing process and cannot be accomplished in a single attempt.

[440] Ibid., 465.
[441] Lean, Staiff, and Waterton, *Travel and Representation*, 5-6.
[442] Keith Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 3.
[443] Belting, "Image, Medium, Body," 310.

Chapter Three Recycling Images: Reinventing the Personal Archive in Stella Snead's Photo-Collages

Introduction

Snead began to make photo-collages around 1965.[444] Her autobiographical text "Prelude to Photography and Then Some" records her initial ideas and method of producing these works:

> While working, ideas popped up: and both of these happened during the drowning monsoons. To employ the rainy hours indoors I started doing photo-collage, i.e., choosing a sizable background photograph and sticking cut out bits from others thereon. This brought my photography into surrealism, which pleased me. Rather quickly, I had enough for an exhibition in Bombay, and it was a near sellout.[445]

Snead's story of the genesis of her collages delivers four key messages. Firstly, it reveals that the initial circumstances that led to her idea to make photo-collages were those of physical immobility. The 'drowning monsoons' in India stopped her from going out to take photographs, but provided her with a chance to explore the medium of collage at her home on Juhu Beach in Bombay. In other words, under the condition of her physical immobility, the medium of collage provided her with an alternative mobility among the vast number of visual materials she had accumulated. Secondly, her account describes her method of creating collages, which involved selecting a larger photograph as a background and then cutting out fragments from other photographs to paste onto it. It is crucial to highlight that she exclusively used her own photographs for collage-making, which is why she consistently used the term 'photo-collage' to underscore the connection between her photographs and her collages.[446] Thirdly, she believed that her collages allowed her photography to more clearly embrace surrealism. After having ceased her surrealist painting practice in 1950, due to her depression, she found that the surrealist impulse resurfaced in her collage work. Finally, the text mentions her first photo-collage exhibition, in Bombay.

[444] Snead did not keep precise records of the time of making each photo-collage. The backs of many of her photo-collages are simply marked with the decade, such as 1960s or 1970s. Therefore, for the illustrations, I have estimated the approximate production time for each of Snead's photo-collages by considering the gap in years between the most recent relevant photograph being taken and the final photo-collage being photographed and archived by herself.

[445] Snead, "Prelude to Photography and Then Some."

[446] In this thesis, I adopt Snead's use of the term 'photo-collage' to refer to her collage works, instead of other terms such as 'photomontage', 'collage', etc.

Snead exhibited her photo-collages for the first time at Gallery Chemould in Bombay in 1968.[447] The show included twenty-three works and, according to her own description, 'was a near sellout'.[448]

Snead's photo-collage *The Iceberg Eaters* (1966–68) served as the cover image of the exhibition pamphlet and invitation card (Fig. 3.1 and Fig. 3.2).[449] In my view, this was likely due not only to the fact that the monkeys were eye-catching, but also because this was one of her most satisfying works and conveyed the main theme of the exhibition.

A comparison between *The Iceberg Eaters* and Salvador Dalí's painting *Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (1937) reveals similarities in the composition and configuration of the hand in each (Fig. 3.3). Dalí's painting was shown for the first time since 1937 in the exhibition *Salvador Dalí: His Art 1910–1965*, which toured Japan in 1964, before travelling to the Gallery of Modern Art, New York, in 1965–66.[450] Snead may have visited the New York exhibition and seen the painting there, or else have read about it in media reviews of the show.

Snead maintained a folder in her archive that was dedicated to clippings related to surrealism, encompassing news about surrealist exhibitions, as well as newspaper reviews and academic articles (Fig. 3.4). This indicates that, despite intentionally distancing herself from collective surrealist activities, she remained interested in how surrealism was perceived, understood, and reviewed in the mid-to-late twentieth century, as it became historicised and integrated into the narrative of Western art history. After a hiatus of over fifteen years from surrealistic painting and her transition to an extensive photographic practice during her travels in India, Snead's creation of photo-collages reflected her continued interest in surrealism. At the same time, she was confronted with the question of how to employ a surrealist style, and how to connect her works to her current life circumstances and concerns.

Before discussing my approach to the investigation of Snead's photo-collages, I shall provide some more information about her working method. It is interesting to note that

[447] Stella Snead, *Exhibition of Photo-Collage by Stella Snead* (Bombay: Gallery Chemould, 1968), exhibition pamphlet, National Art Library, V&A.
[448] Ibid.; Snead, "Prelude to Photography and Then Some." A few unsold photo-collages are now in the collections of the Stella Snead Archive, Weyauwega, Wisconsin and Pavel Zoubok Fine Art.
[449] Snead, *Exhibition of Photo-Collage by Stella Snead*; and Stella Snead, *Exhibition of Photo-Collage by Stella Snead*, invitation card (Bombay: Gallery Chemould, 1968), National Art Library, V&A.
[450] "Salvador Dalí, *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, 1937," Tate, accessed 9 March 2024, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/dali-metamorphosis-of-narcissus-t02343.

Snead's story of the genesis of her collages echoes that of Max Ernst, who also began to work on his collages on a rainy day:

> One rainy day in 1919, finding myself in a village on the Rhine, I was struck by the obsession which held under my gaze the pages of an illustrated catalogue showing objects designed for anthropologic, microscopic, psychologic, mineralogic, and paleontologic demonstration. There I found brought together elements of figuration so remote that the sheer absurdity of that collection provoked a sudden intensification of the visionary faculties in me and brought forth an illusive succession of contradictory images, double, triple and multiple images, piling up on each other with the persistence and rapidity which are peculiar to love memories and visions of half-sleep.… Thus I obtained a faithful fixed image of my hallucination and transformed into revealing dramas my most secret desires—from what had been before only some banal pages of advertising.[451]

There are similarities between Snead's and Ernst's stories. Both highlight the fact that the initial impetus for making collages came about as a result of rain restricting their physical movement, and that they discovered an alternative mobility among their vast collections of visual materials. Many collagists have conducted forms of mental travel by way of collaging materials that are temporally, spatially, culturally, and geographically disparate from one another.

The contrast between Ernst and Snead lies in their use of materials: while the majority of collagists have utilised pre-existing materials taken from various sources, Snead adhered staunchly to cutting and pasting her own photographic prints. Ernst welcomed the direct visual impact created through his use of disparate visual materials from a pool of banal images in magazines and catalogues in order to stimulate his hallucinations and desires. While Ernst primarily engaged with found visual and cultural symbols, the source materials for Snead's photo-collages were exclusively drawn from her personal archive, covering her travel experiences over the previous decade.

One of Snead's photo-collages was included in the exhibition *A Second Talent: Painters and Sculptors Who Are Also Photographers*, held at the Aldrich Museum, Connecticut, in 1985. Vivien Raynor mentioned Snead and her work in her review of this show in the *New York Times*:

> Stella Snead was originally a figurative Surrealist with a debt to Max Ernst.… It would seem from the 1974 photo-collage in which an Indian woman walks in a courtyard

[451] The quotation is from both Max Ernst, "An Informal Life of M.E. (As Told by Himself to a Young Friend)," in *Max Ernst: Prints, Collages, and Drawings, 1919–72,* Arts Council of Great Britain and Max Ernst, 2nd ed. (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1975), 6; and Max Ernst and Robert Motherwell, *Max Ernst: Beyond Painting and Other Writings by the Artist and His Friends* (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1948), 14.

> besieged by, among other things, a disembodied eye, an enlarged striped kitten and the bald head of a monk, that Surrealism continues to influence the artist as photographer.[452]

Leaving aside the question of the accuracy of Raynor's characterisation of Snead as 'a figurative Surrealist with a debt to Max Ernst', this brief text only describes the figures and objects that appear in Snead's photo-collage, without offering further interpretation. It mentions surrealism several times, as though it is only on account of its bearing the influence of surrealism that her work deserves to be in the show. My aim here, therefore, is to provide a more detailed understanding of Snead's method, and to move beyond mere descriptions of what is depicted in the works. Additionally, I wish to differentiate her method from those methods shared by many historical surrealists, and, in so doing, I aim to avoid categorising her as a surrealist solely on the basis of the presence of surrealistic elements in her artwork.

My focus in this chapter is on Snead's method of creating photo-collages. Specifically, I am interested in how she reinvents her personal photographic archive in these works, as well as the question as to why she exclusively employs her own photographs, and the significance of her doing so. Of particular interest to me is how she responds to surrealism stylistically while simultaneously distancing herself from many surrealists' exploration of the subconscious, instead opting to develop her own working methods.

Based on the evidence available to this research, Snead created a total of around seventy photo-collages in her life, with approximately twenty-seven produced in the 1960s and forty-three in the 1970s.[453] There are three main categories of photograph in her personal archive that she used for this purpose. The majority of photographic cutouts featured in her photo-collages come from the shots she took during her travels in India in the 1960s, with a few taken in other countries. The second set of cutouts are from photographs taken during parties at her house on Juhu Beach, featuring people, animals, and objects. The third set consists of cutouts obtained from her photographic experiments. Beginning in 1967, she occasionally collaborated with artist friends or else invited models to capture portraits of their interactions with objects and the environment, either at her home or on Juhu Beach.

After completing a series of photo-collages, Snead usually proceeded to photograph and then print them. For example, contact sheets show that she made photographic records of her photo-collages three times in the 1970s, in 1972, 1974, and 1976. She produced photographic

[452] Vivien Raynor, "Photographs by Painters at the Aldrich," *New York Times*, 6 October 1985. Newspaper clipping in the Stella Snead Archive.
[453] For the list of Snead's photo-collage, see appendix 3.

prints of her photo-collages extensively. Many works were repeatedly printed at different stages of her career, in various sizes. Some of the photographic prints of her photo-collages are stored together in folders labelled ‘collages’. Additionally, there are instances where photographic prints of photo-collages are mixed with her other photographic prints, possibly for such purposes as exhibitions, speeches, and further creative endeavours. The majority of illustrations used in this chapter are of photographic prints of her photo-collages. Many of her original photo-collages have been sold, and no buyer records are available so far.

Snead did not make any more photo-collages after 1976. There is no clear evidence as to why she stopped at this time. However, her frequency of travel notably declined after the 1980s, owing to her advancing age, and her diminishing eyesight rendered her incapable of processing negatives in the darkroom. The cessation of her collage practice in the late 1970s suggests that travel, photography, and photo-collage are closely integrated within her artistic practice, as she found new ideas and sources of inspiration in both travel and the processing of her photographs.

Before setting out the structure of this chapter, I would like to explain some key terms, and their relationships, that will appear frequently in what follows, including ‘personal archive’, ‘memory’, and ‘perception’.

Firstly, Snead had sorted the negatives, contact sheets, and photographic prints in her archive into order herself. However, since she cut her own prints and pasted disparate photographic fragments to make collages. This process breaks up the unity of the photographic archive and breaches its validity as a visual record of reality.

Secondly, Snead’s photo-collage method is linked to the relationship between archives and memory, given that the materials for her photo-collages all originated from her photographs of her own life experience. Laura Millar reminds us that archives are often equated with memory, which is presumed to be immutable, and that archives are thought to facilitate access to, as well as the preservation and display of, this unchanging memory in tangible evidential form across time.[454] I will discuss the way in which Snead’s method challenges this myth about the relationship between memory and archives, revealing that archives are constructed for specific purposes and in relation to specific experiences, and that, in turn, they influence how and what we remember.[455] I will examine Snead’s use of archives

[454] Laura Millar, “Touchstones: Considering the Relationship Between Memory and Archives,” *Archivaria*, no. 61 (September 2006), 106, https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/12537.
[455] Ibid., 105.

in making her photo-collages from a multifaceted and dynamic perspective, recognising that the interactions between archival materials, and between archival materials and human experiences, continuously develop during the use of archives, in turn influencing memory.[456]

Thirdly, in order to examine how Snead's photo-collages employ and evoke embodied experience, I will use the term 'perception', in this chapter, to analyse this type of experience. Perception—a process of observing, recognising, and interpreting stimuli in order to acquire a consciousness of objects, relationships, and events—is a fundamental aspect of experience.[457] It contributes to the way in which individuals interpret sensory information and lays the foundation for their understanding and engagement with the world. It is more than a mental event; we experience our sensory states through our bodies and bodily behaviours.[458] My analysis of perception in Snead's method of creating photo-collages will involve an examination of how her cutouts are extracted from their original contexts and how they are juxtaposed to evoke new perceptions.

Fourthly, the analysis of the perceptions evoked by Snead's photo-collages will require further consideration of the relationship between perception and memory.[459] The causal theory of memory posits that memories contain perceptual content from the past, and that the re-experiencing of past memories is closely linked to past perceptions.[460] C. A. Guerrero Velázquez's research suggests that individuals incorporate current perceptual information to generate and modify their narratives about the past for communicative purposes.[461] In this sense, the process of reminiscence not only involves past perceptual content but also continually interacts with new perceptions. The causal theory of memory assesses the authenticity of memories according to their degree of alignment with past perceptual

[456] Sue McKemmish, "Are Records Ever Actual?," in *The Records Continuum: Ian McLean and Australian Archives First Fifty Years*, eds. Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott (Clayton, VIC: Ancora Press in association with Australian Archives, 1994), 187–203, https://doi.org/10.4225/03/57D77D8E72B71.Peter Lester also argues that the making of archives should be regarded as a living experience. Peter Lester, "The Archive as a Site of Making," in *The Materiality of the Archive: Creative Practice in Context*, eds. Sue Breakell and Wendy Russell (London: Taylor & Francis, 2024), 106–21.
[457] "Perception," in APA Dictionary of Psychology, American Psychological Association (website), accessed 7 April 2024, https://dictionary.apa.org/perception.
[458] Taylor Carman, "foreword," in Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xiv.
[459] Christopher McCarroll, Kourken Michaelian, and Santiago Arango Muñoz, "Memory and Perception, Insights at the Interface: Editors' Introduction," *Estudios de Filosofía*, no. 64 (2021): 5–19, https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ef.n64a01.
[460] Sarah K. Robins, "Misremembering," *Philosophical Psychology* 29, no. 3 (2016): 435, https://doi.org/10.1080/09515089.2015.1113245.
[461] C. A. Guerrero Velázquez, "Memory and Perception in Autobiographical Interviews: An Episodic Simulation that Adapts in Real-Time to the Context," *Estudios de Filosofía*, no. 64 (2021): 21–45, https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.ef.n64a02.

experiences.[462] In the case of Snead's photo-collages, authenticity of memory is not a concern; rather, new experiences, guided by the review and manipulation of perceptions, impact upon memory, facilitating the formation of new constructive memories. This will lead to a consideration of creativity and imagination, as they relate to the making of collages.[463]

This chapter is divided into four sections, and refers to fourteen of Snead's photo-collages. I the first section, I will explore how Snead made her photo-collages with reference to the three main aspects of perception: sensory perception, spatial perception, and time perception. Each subsection will focus on a particular form of perception by considering examples of Snead's photo-collages, though this does not imply that any given work evokes only one particular form of perception. Perception is multifaceted and different forms of perception work together, involving the entire body.[464]

In the second section, based on the case studies, I will consider Snead's photo-collage *Trap to Capture the Marvellous* in order to examine Snead's connection to, and distinction from, surrealism.

In the third section, I will summarise Snead's photo-collage method and further analyse the significance of her reinvention of her personal archive, and of her exclusive use of her own photographs.

The fourth section of this chapter will examine the exhibition of Snead's photo-collages. Her first show of these works was held at Gallery Chemould in Bombay in 1968.[465] After the 1970s, her photo-collages were included in several group exhibitions.[466] I will assess to what extent the exhibitions of her photo-collages were able to reflect her working methods as I have outlined them and why the mainstream surrealist narrative falls short in accounting for the significance of her work.

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[462] Brady Wagoner, "Constructive Memory," in *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of the Possible*, ed. Vlad Petre Glăveanu (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 232–37.
[463] Ibid. See also Tania Zittoun and Alex Gillespie, *Imagination in Human and Cultural Development* (London: Routledge: 2018).
[464] Merleau-Ponty rejects empiricist atomism regarding the senses, emphasising that perception involves the entire body rather than isolated sense organs. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 225–26.
[465] Snead, *Exhibition of Photo-Collage by Stella Snead*.
[466] She did not have the chance to hold another solo exhibition of her photo-collages before her death.

Section 3.1 Collaging Perceptions

Sensory Perception

1. Ice, Anybody

Ice, Anybody was one of Snead's early photo-collages made between 1967 and 1968 (Fig. 3.5). A figure in the upper-left corner of this image appears to be carrying a large ice sheet, and is perhaps asking if anyone would like it. The toy train appears to be transporting ice blocks, while the two arms that reach out from the holes in the ice sheet seem to be waving and responding to the question, 'Ice, Anybody?'

The contact sheet reveals that the photograph of the large ice sheet with three small holes was among many taken during Snead's boat trip in Greenland in 1966 (Fig. 3.6). It is possible that Snead may not initially have noticed these three naturally formed holes in the ice sheet when she took the picture but that she did so while reviewing her contact sheets. By pasting two arms reaching out of the two holes on either side and leaving the middle hole empty, it seems that this person is enjoying the coolness of the ice cellar.

I believe the idea behind this work, and the transformation of the originally solid ice sheet into a hollow form, developed from Snead's experience of imaginative seeing when viewing her photographs, as discussed in the first chapter. The resulting work not only triggers the visual but also non-visual sensations involving the entire body, such as auditory and tactile sensations, thereby engaging the whole body in the sensory perception of temperature.

2. The Iceberg Eaters

Snead made another photo-collage *The Iceberg Eaters* in the same period as *Ice, Anybody* (Fig. 3.7). In *The Iceberg Eaters*, two identical monkeys, one near and one far, sit on an ice field eating small pieces of ice, while a human hand tries to get hold of another piece of ice to feed one of them.

A review of Snead's contact sheets reveals the circumstances in which the original photographs were taken. The background image of the ice field was taken during Snead's boat trip to Greenland in 1966 (Fig. 3.8). She captured many photographs recording the icebergs' and ice sheets' appearance in different shapes as the boat moved along.

The picture of the monkey being fed by a hand was taken at Virupaksha temple during Snead's first visit to Hampi, India, in 1960 (Fig. 3.9). Judging from the clothes people are wearing in other images on the same contact sheet, it is very likely that this trip to Hampi happened during the summer months. Hampi experiences scorching temperatures during the summer, which can soar to up to forty degrees Celsius.[467] As a historical town, Hampi offers extensive opportunities for sightseeing and the exploration of scattered ruins and temples, which are typically conducted on foot.

By collaging the monkey-feeding scene in Hampi and the ice field of Greenland, Snead's photo-collage draws upon her past travel experiences, encompassing perceptions of temperature in conditions of both extreme cold and extreme heat. This juxtaposition allows for contrasting memories of extreme weather to seamlessly intersect. The resulting composition not only contrasts weather phenomena but also evokes new perceptions. The sensation of touching ice is triggered by the hand as it reaches to grasp the ice, while the monkeys apparently consuming ice prompt thoughts of chilly sensations in the mouth and throat, as well as the sensations of chewing and swallowing.

In essence, through assembling images associated with perceptions from past travel experiences, the two photo-collages *Ice, Anybody* and *The Iceberg Eaters* both evoke multiple non-visual senses to generate new perceptions. Additionally, they both seek to stimulate imaginative engagement from the viewers. It is conceivable that they were made in tandem to provide a sense of relief from the sweltering summers of Bombay for Snead, her friends and anyone who saw these works in the late 1960s.

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[467] "Best Time to Visit Hampi," Indian Holiday (website), accessed 23 April 2024, https://www.indianholiday.com/hampi/best-time-to-visit.html.

3. Challenging the Representation of the Myth

The significance of evoking multiple sensory perceptions in Snead's photo-collages can be further considered through comparing Snead's *The Iceberg Eaters* with Salvador Dalí's painting *Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (1937) (Fig. 3.7 and Fig. 3.3). Dalí's work takes as its subject the myth of Narcissus, depicting doubled imagery of figures sitting beside the water in a complex landscape. On the left, the golden figure of Narcissus looks down at his reflection in the water, while, on the right, a bony hand holds an egg from which a narcissus flower blooms. Comparing the two works helps us further understand how Snead's manipulation of multiple sensory perceptions challenges the tradition of representing the myth of Narcissus in art history.

Stephen Bann traces the history of representations of Narcissus in Western art history.[468] The reflection of Narcissus in the mirror-like surface of the water, considered as a natural phenomenon, is a subject that many painters have competed to depict. For example, Caravaggio's painting *Narcissus* (1597–99) emphasises the point of connection on the water surface between Narcissus and his reflection (Fig. 3.10). Dalí's drawing *Study for Narcissus* (1937) reveals his inheritance of this rich iconographic history, the nearly spherical kneecap rendered in light and dark tones in Dalí's image echoing the knee in Caravaggio's (Fig. 3.11).

Snead's photo-collage departs from naturalism, however, in its lack of any reflection of the monkeys in the water (Fig. 3.7). There is evidence in Snead's archives that she took many photographs of reflections in various locations, indicating her interest in the phenomenon. For example, the contact sheets of her visit to Greenland show that she was particularly interested in the reflections of icebergs in the surface of the water (Fig. 3.8). Moreover, she also made a photo-collage titled *Some Reflections*, revealing that her working method allowed for the creation of reflective effects in these works (Fig. 3.12). The absence of any reflections in *The Iceberg Eaters* can be seen as a deliberate commentary on the tradition of naturalistic representation. What is ironic, here, is that the monkeys are so preoccupied with eating the icebergs that they do not even spare a moment to look at their reflections.

Snead's work can be further discussed in light of the visual mechanisms of representations of the Narcissus myth and their relation to the viewer. Caravaggio establishes a fine surface of water as a mirror, into which Narcissus's gaze at his reflection is rendered so

[468] Stephen Bann, *The True Vine: On Visual Representation and the Western Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 105–201.

motionlessly that the audience appears to be excluded from this internal, self-contained, and self-sufficient contemplation. Bann introduces the Ancient Greek sophist Philostratus's comments on the myth of Narcissus in his work *Imagine*:

> As for you, however, Narcissus, it is no painting that has deceived you, nor are you engrossed in a thing of pigments or wax; but you do not realize that the water represents you exactly as you are when you gaze upon it, nor do you see through the artifice of the pool, though to do so you have only to nod your head or change your expression or slightly move your hand, instead of standing in the same attitude; but acting as though you had met a companion, you wait for some move on his part. Do you then expect the pool to enter into conversation with you? Nay, this youth does not hear anything we say, but he is immersed, eyes and ears alike, in the water and we must interpret the painting for ourselves.[469]

Philostratus provides an early example of a reflection on the problem of the myth itself. He reminds the viewer that there are other senses besides the visual that Narcissus neglects. With the slightest movement of any part of his body, he could have realised that it was only his reflection in the pool. Bann describes the representation of Narcissus as a typology of posture.[470] By this he means that painting congeals all the senses, and the representation of Narcissus has thus been a tradition of visual congealment that has not allowed for a change of pose or position. At the same time, Philostratus discusses whether his audience can intervene in the conversation between Narcissus and the pool, and whether Narcissus can hear our voice. The visual tradition of Narcissus, however, only offers the viewer the visual experience of witnessing the congealment of Narcissus's posture—the viewer is never able to intervene in Narcissus's story.

In the case of Snead's *The Iceberg Eaters*, the insertion of the image of the hand in the foreground is crucial. The picture of the hand feeding the monkey was taken when Snead was walking in the cloister of Virupaksha temple. The act of feeding and the spatial relationship between the hand and the monkey in Snead's photograph are retained in *The Iceberg Eaters* (Fig. 3.9 and Fig. 3.7). Notably, the upper arm of the person in the original photograph is cropped, leaving only the forearm. By relocating the forearm from the left side to the centre of the composition, the collage clearly invites the audience to engage in the feeding role. The slight widening of the distance between the hand and the monkey in the photo-collage (compared to the contact sheet) accentuates the motion of the hand cupping the ice. The monkey's image is duplicated following the principle of perspective, creating the impression

[469] Philostratus, *Imagines*, trans. Arthur Fairbanks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 91.
[470] Bann, *The True Vine*, 110.

that the audience has just fed the distant monkey and is now attending to the closer one. As a whole, the photo-collage suggests a snapshot-like and first-person viewpoint.

This composition explicitly brings together the three perspectives of the feeder, the photographer, and the viewer. It solicits the viewer's presence and intervention in the picture and evokes the viewer's embodied experience of the act of feeding and moving across the water. In this way, Snead's work disrupts the privileging status of the visual in the representational tradition of the myth of Narcissus and the congealment state of the viewing experience offered to the audience.

Spatial Perception

Snead's photographs of Jantar Mantar (an assemblage of stone-built astronomical instruments in India) continually sparked her imagination, appearing in her draft album *Indications of India*, the photobook *Shiva's Pigeons*, her photographic exhibitions, and also several photo-collages. As discussed in the first chapter, Snead was interested in the embodied experience of architectural space in her photography. In this section, I examine three of Snead's photo-collages made between 1967 and 1968—*The Way of Ostrich*, *When the Cat Laughs*, and *New End Game*—each of which features her photographs of Jantar Mantar, in order to demonstrate how she progressively expanded her exploration of spatial perception (Fig. 3.13, Fig. 3.14 and Fig. 3.15).

In *The Way of Ostrich*, Snead presents an ostrich climbing the stairs of the world's largest sundial, Vrihat Samrat Yantra (Fig. 3.13). Given that the ostrich is the largest flightless bird, whose leg bones and joints are adapted to rapid running rather than stair-climbing, the work may be seen to convey a sense of absurdity and irrationality. Having ostriches, rather than humans, climb the sundial stairs challenges our expectation to see human activity on these astronomical instruments, disrupting our preconceived notions of the functionality of this space and questioning human ownership of it.

In *When the Cat Laughs*, spatial orientation shifts from the ascent of *The Way of Ostrich* to a downward glide (Fig. 3.14). Two fish descend along a circular structure, while several figures with outstretched arms seem to be directing traffic, and, below, a cat eagerly awaits the fish with an open mouth.

Examination of the contact sheets reveals that many of the figures in *When the Cat Laughs* originate from Snead's photographs of her guests, objects, and animals during a party she hosted at her home on Juhu Beach in Bombay in 1967 (Fig. 3.15 and Fig. 3.16). The occasion for this party arose from the decision of director James Ivory to film a scene for his movie *The Guru* on Juhu Beach (Fig. 3.17). Snead's camera captured Ivory and a boy both trying on funny glasses (Fig. 3.18). In the photo-collage, the portrait of Ivory wearing the funny glasses and holding a cup is positioned in a niche between the walls, as if he is observing the unfolding of this scene with amusement. This work solicits the audience's perception of space to determine the activity that is occurring, such as the sliding movement, speed, orientation, angle, position, and coordination among the figures.

The image of Ivory wearing the glasses suggests an unconventional perception of the world, and being perceived differently by others (Fig. 3.19). This involves interaction between the human body and optical devices that influence perception.[471] Ivory's portrait also recalls the photobooth picture of André Breton wearing glasses (Fig. 3.20). In 1929, Breton selected whimsical Photomaton portraits of male surrealists with their eyes closed from among various such pictures taken with the new photobooth apparatus, which had made its way to Paris in 1928, to create a collage featuring René Magritte's painting 'Je ne vois pas la [femme] cachée dans la forêt' ('I do not see the woman hidden in the forest') in the centre.[472] The reproduction of this collage was published in *La Révolution surréaliste* in 1929, aiming to demonstrate the collective activities of the subconscious and to emphasise surrealism as a collective movement with a cohesive group identity (Fig. 3.21).[473]

Similarly, Snead's photo-collage *When the Cat Laughs* is also driven by the idea of assembling a collective and playful activity shared among her friends at her party, though it lacks the ideological agenda evident in Breton's work. By symbolically associating the closed-eye portraits of male surrealists with the female nude in the composition, the surrealists equated the automatic nature of photobooth technology with the desires of the subconscious. However, Snead evidently deviates from this surrealist trope, as she has her own approach to exploring perceptions.

In Snead's collage, the alteration of visual perception indicated by the funny glasses suggests a change in perception of the relationship between the body and space. The sloped surface, rather than being part of the astronomical apparatus for enhancing observation, becomes a playground, inviting bodily interaction. The inspiration for a change of perception comes not only from the interaction between guests and dolls at the party but also from the interaction between these photographs on the contact sheet, during the subsequent activity of photographic processing.

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[471] For a discussion of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology in relation to science and technology, see Don Ihde, *Husserl's Missing Technologies* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).
[472] For other photobooth portraits of surrealists taken around 1929, see "Photo Booth Portraits," André Breton (website), accessed 2 March 2024, https://www.andrebreton.fr/en/work/56600100787040.
[473] For a further discussion of this journal, see Erin McClenathan, "Close-Up: *Documents* and *La révolution surréaliste* in 1929," *Dada/Surrealism* 24, no. 1 (2023): 1–30, https://doi.org/10.17077/0084-9537.31889; and Jonathan Jones, "André in Wonderland," *Guardian*, 16 June 2004, accessed 23 April 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2004/jun/16/1.

In *New End Game*, the background features the photograph of the hyperbolic staircase that is part of the Jantar Mantar complex, which we have already seen in the first and second chapters (Fig. 3.15). Several female figures adopt different poses in this multilayered space.

Besides the female figure holding a jar at the top of *New End Game*, who was photographed during Snead's trip in Rajasthan, the contact sheets reveal that the remaining female figures were selected from photographic experiments that Snead conducted with some models at her home in 1967 (Fig. 3.22 and Fig. 3.23). In the central part of the photo-collage, a figure in a jar extends her arms. The photograph of the jar was taken by Snead at her friend Hans Coper's sculpture exhibition, and emphasises the tactile perception of its texture (Fig. 3.24).

The space captured by Snead's photo-collage lacks a horizontal reference point, and depth intervals are compressed within the confined environment, due to the ambiguous gradient of the surfaces. It evokes spatial perceptions such as disorientation, confinement, and imbalance.

I interpret this photo-collage as a reference to Samuel Beckett's play *Endgame*, which premiered in 1957, featuring the main characters Hamm, Clov, Nagg, and Nell. Hamm is a blind, immobile, and tyrannical man who represents a sense of authority and control over others. Clov, Hamm's servant, is unable to sit down due to a physical disability. He is responsible for attending to Hamm's needs, despite harbouring a desire to escape his oppressive environment. Nagg and Nell, Hamm's elderly parents, reside in ashbins and are legless. The names Nell, Nagg, and Clov refer to the word 'nail' in English, German, and French, respectively, while Hamm is shortened from 'hammer'.[474] While the hammer denotes Hamm's tyranny, the relationship between hammer and nail reveals the futility of his dominion, since his survival requires the presence of others.[475] In Snead's photo-collage, the figure at the top holding a jar may be interpreted as a reference to Hamm, with her closed eyes and clenched fist. The figure at the bottom left may allude to Clov, who attempts to escape the scene despite having no clear way out. On the right-hand side, a chair spans three steps of the staircase, suggesting Clov's inability to sit down. The figure seated inside the jar in the middle suggests Hamm's parents.

[474] Dougald McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld, *Beckett in the Theatre: The Author as Practical Playwright and Director*, vol. 1: From *Waiting for Godot* to *Krapp's Last Tape* (London: John Calder, 1988), 238.
[475] Thomas Mansell, "Hard-to-hear Music in *Endgame*," in *Samuel Beckett's Endgame*, ed. Mark S. Byron (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), 9.

This analysis suggests that Snead's repeated viewing and recycling of her photograph of the Jantar Mantar not only evokes perceptions of the space itself but also enables her to connect her work to literature and theatre. By extracting variously posed figures from the archives, she develops the perception of this architectural space in order to visualise Beckett's play, combing spatial perception with an exploration of the psychology of its characters.

In summary, these three photo-collages all violate the spatial function of the Jantar Mantar as an authoritative symbol of astronomical knowledge and power.[476] The photo-collages create playful and absurd effects as a way to explore the diversity of perceptions that arise from the interaction between the body and space. They resonate with Edmund Husserl's discussion of kinaesthetic consciousness and James J. Gibson's perceptual theory, proposed in 1950, which highlights the impact of complex environmental information on spatial perception.[477] In typical circumstances, when navigating architectural spaces, individuals integrate their perception into a 'scene schema', drawing from muscle memory and proprioceptive habits triggered by past experiences, in order to process information swiftly and effectively as they transition between scenes.[478] Snead's photo-collages disrupt this cognitive flow, generating feelings of discordance, uncertainty, and confusion, and prolonging attention to the diversity of perceptions within the same space.

Snead's method demonstrates her continual revisiting and reuse of photographs of Jantar Mantar over an extended period, transgressing and rewriting the experience of this site. Snead's archive contains folders that she labelled as 'collage background' and 'cut out bits for collages', which hold materials selected and prepared for future collage projects. In her description of the process of making photo-collages, Snead records that she would select 'a sizable background photograph and [stick] … cut out bits from others thereon'.[479] Thus, the photographs prepared as backgrounds for the photo-collages do not play a mere supporting role, but rather are one of the main materials for evoking embodied experience. A photograph within her archive does not stand alone as a final artwork on account of its individual imagery

[476] Susan N. Johnson-Roehr, "The Spatialization of Knowledge and Power at the Astronomical Observatories of Sawai Jai Singh II, c. 1721–1743 CE" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011).
[477] Elizabeth A. Behnke, "Edmund Husserl: Phenomenology of Embodiment," Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed 2 March 2024, https://iep.utm.edu/husspemb/#H5; and James J. Gibson, *The Perception of the Visual World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950). In 1950, Gibson diverged from the prevailing theory of behaviourism and shifted the focus from internal mental processes to the dynamic interaction between organisms and their external surroundings, laying the groundwork for the ecological approach to perception and cognition.
[478] Aude Oliva, "Visual Scene Perception," in *Encyclopedia of Perception*, ed. E. Bruce Goldstein (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010), 1113.
[479] Snead, "Prelude to Photography and Then Some."

or style; rather, it presents a means of connectivity and growth within a network of photographs.

Time Perception

Snead moved to New York in 1971 and continued making photo-collages until 1976. Her photo-collages of this period include a mixture of cutouts from her photographs of the 1960s as well as new photographs taken during her travels in the US in the 1970s. The photo-collages made at this time reveal clearer references to surrealist work.

With its English title, the photo-collage *Time Transfixed (apologies to Magritte)*, made around 1974, pays explicit homage to Magritte's painting *La durée poignardée* (*Time Transfixed*) (Fig. 3.25 and Fig. 3.26).[480] Magritte's painting depicts the logical dislocation of an industrial perpetual motion machine rushing into a traditional living room, juxtaposing the rapid motion of a locomotive with a static fireplace. This juxtaposition symbolises the intrusion of modernity into traditional spaces, suggesting a critique of the Western bourgeois concept of standardised and synchronised time, serving the exigencies of clock synchronisation for railway schedules. Magritte's choice of title reflects his interest in the transformation of ordinary objects to create sensational effects. The disconnect between title and image underscores his deliberate effort to avoid conventional interpretations of his work.[481]

Snead's photo-collage *Time Transfixed (apologies to Magritte)* features a large wooden boat whose paddle is transformed into a dial plate. It is worth noting that some of the strokes denoting Roman numerals on the dial plate have peeled away, conjuring a sense of time oscillating between the hours of one and three. The person climbing the ladder struggles to steady the boat's sway, appearing to impact this temporal oscillation.

Snead's contact sheets reveal that she took the photograph of the large boat on a beach in Goa in 1965, and the photograph of the women devotees listening to the guru at an ashram at Beas, Punjab (Fig. 3.27 and Fig. 3.28). The photograph of a man climbing a ladder originates from her experiment with her friend Chris Barry to explore the dynamics of balance and tension between the individual and the ladder in an environment devoid of any

[480] "René Magritte, *La durée poignardée* (*Time Transfixed*), 1938," The Art Institute of Chicago, accessed 3 March 2024, https://www.artic.edu/artworks/34181/la-duree-poignardee-time-transfixed.
[481] René Magritte, "Life Line," in *René Magritte: Selected Writings*, eds. Kathleen Rooney and Eric Plattner, trans. Jo Levy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 65. For further discussions of Magritte's works, see Suzanne Guerlac, "The Useless Image: Bataille, Bergson, Magritte," *Representations* 97, no. 1 (2007): 28–56, https://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2007.97.1.28; and Patricia Allmer, *René Magritte: Critical Lives* (London: Reaktion, 2019).

supportive structures, on Juhu Beach in 1967 (Fig. 3.29). She encountered the clock with its strokes peeling off while wandering the streets of Manhattan in 1973 (Fig. 3.30).

Snead's work prompts us to consider photography's influence upon our perception of time.[482] The collaging of photographic fragments from various times and places revolves around temporal shifts that are related not only to personal memories of the past but also to the dynamic perception of time. The perception of the present is temporally stretched by the multilayered embodied experience of photographs, emphasising the perception of time as a bodily experience, rather than a conceptual task or act of recognition.

Climbing a ladder induces a shift in one's perception. Physiological rhythms come into play, since the climber must not only balance the ladder but also maintain their own equilibrium, navigating a dynamic interplay with time. The interaction with tools influences our bodily relationship with time, resulting in alterations in temporal perception—a stretching, compression, or oscillation between states. This experiential aspect of time challenges standardised narratives of past, present, and future, suggesting a more nuanced and subjective understanding of time as shaped by embodied experiences.

Additionally, it is worth noting the impact of emotional states on the perception of time. For instance, psychological research indicates that experiencing feelings of awe may slow down one's perception of time.[483] This could be the reason why Snead positions the photographs of the congregation below the boat. Were the person on the ladder to move to the left, the prominent bow of the wooden ship could potentially thrust into the crowd below, while moving to the right might cause the boat to sway away from the crowd. The person may be deemed a new 'guru' of the congregation.[484] Whether the emotion stirred is reverence or fear, this photo-collage illustrates how perceptions of time are impacted by mental and subjective activities.

Drawing inspiration from Magritte, Snead's photo-collage incorporates elements of a vehicle and a clock to develop her discussion of the perception of time. The perception of

[482] Bate prompts us to consider the effect of photography on the perception of time in the memory of the viewer. David Bate, *Photography After Postmodernism: Barthes, Stieglitz and the Art of Memory* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 4–5.
[483] Melanie Rudd, Kathleen D. Vohs, and Janifer Aaker, "Awe Expands People's Perception of Time, Alters Decision Making, and Enhances Well-Being," *Psychological Science* 23, no. 10 (October 2012): 1130–36, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0956797612438731.
[484] This photograph of women devotees listening to the guru was included in *Indications of India* and *Shiva's Pigeons*. Here in the photo-collage it takes on new meanings.

time is profoundly shaped by educational and cultural influences, particularly concerning the conceptualisation of time.[485] To disrupt the habitual way of recognising and processing time, Magritte employs an abrupt halt to disrupt the linear passage of time in a bourgeois domestic space. For Snead, the focus shifts from the attack on the core values of the bourgeois family and linear modernisation of many of the surrealists' works of the 1920s and 1930s, to exploration of the perception of time itself.

Using her own photographs in her photo-collages, here including the figures, the vehicle, and the clock, Snead's emphasis lies not on the concepts that the images symbolise, but rather on the images' connection to perception. For instance, the image of Chris Barry climbing a ladder was originally intended to evoke a sense of the body's attempt to control its balance, and was not directly related to the concept of time. However, juxtaposed with other photographs, it generates a new perception of time, a dynamic and subjective perception that is closely bound up with the body's movement and its augmentation through tools. As a departure from the Western concept of time's linear advancement, Snead's work reflects on how her perception of time and, accordingly, her conception of time, were influenced by her life in India, echoing her thematic exploration of the cycles of birth and death in *Shiva's Pigeons*.

So far in this section, my examples demonstrated how Snead's photo-collages work on the fundamental aspects of embodied experience, the sensory perception, the spatial perception, and the time perception. By celebrate the capacity of photography to capture and evoke perceptions, she strips away some of the connections between the photographs and their original contexts, extracting fragments that can evoke sensory responses. Merleau-Ponty articulates that, while we use our bodies to engage with external objects, observing our own bodies requires 'a second body' at a reflective distance.[486] Snead's method echoes this phenomenological stance by valuing photography as a medium to revisit earlier perceptions of our bodies.

At the same time, Snead's method not only identifies perceptions but also, through cutting and pasting, reassembles elements of previous perceptions in tangible ways in order to generate new perceptions. This approach not only records Snead's personal encounters and

[485] For a further psychological study of the perception of time, see Rose De Kock et al., "How Movements Shape the Perception of Time," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 25, no. 11 (2021): 950–63, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2021.08.002.
[486] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 93.

subjective perspective, but also, through the manipulation of fundamental aspects of perception, seeks to evoke the participation and imagination of the viewers. It also underscores the adaptability of our memories and associations as they adjust and reshape themselves in response to new perceptions, prompting viewers to be mindful of the way in which we are influenced from the bottom up.

Section 3.2 *Trap to Capture the Marvellous*: Snead and Surrealism

The Trap of the Marvellous

Drawing from the previous section's analysis regarding how Snead's photo-collages manipulates the fundamental elements of multilayered perceptions, this section seeks to investigate Snead's connections to and deviations from surrealism. Another photo-collage, *Trap to Capture the Marvellous* (1972), clarifies Snead's relationship with surrealism, understood in terms of the movement's stylistic and methodological development from the 1920s to the 1930s, with which Snead retrospectively engaged in her photo-collage practice of the late 1960s and 1970s.[487]

Trap to Capture the Marvellous presents a courtyard space in which a cat appears to chase an apple and an eye, which are rolling on the ground (Fig. 3.31). Additionally, a crane, standing atop a female figure's head, seems to try to join the chase. Above the courtyard, a long wall displays a repeated architectural pattern. On the left, a man appears to gaze directly at the viewer while, on the right, a hand drops another apple with an eye attached to it.

The elements and techniques that Snead uses to construct her surreal space are similar to those of many other surrealists. For example, a comparison of Snead's *Trap to Capture the Marvellous* (1972) with Conroy Maddox's *Theatre of Our Dreams* (1972) reveals that both works manipulate scale by featuring an outsized hand reaching down into a space filled with scattered human figures, animals, and objects (Fig. 3.31 and Fig. 3.32).

Snead's photo-collage emphasises the two motifs of eye and hand. The relationship between eye and hand was explored by many avant-garde artists and photographers. For instance, El Lissitzky's *The Constructor* (1924), made by the superimposition of negatives and direct exposure, integrates the artist's eye, hand, and a compass (Fig. 3.33). The image demonstrates the essence of New Vision photography by highlighting how the artist's vision passes through the brain to the eye, and thence to the hand and its tools.[488] Paul Galves reminds us that Lissitzky sent a print of this photographic self-portrait to his partner Sophie Küppers, declaring, 'Enclosed is my self-portrait: my monkey-hand.'[489] Considering the

[487] For a more comprehensive investigation into the subsequent diverse explorations of many artists from various countries influenced by surrealism, see Stephanie D'Alessandro and Matthew Gale, *Surrealism beyond Borders* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2021).
[488] Paul Galvez, "Self-Portrait of the Artist as a Monkey-Hand," *October* 93 (2000): 109, https://doi.org/10.2307/779159.
[489] Ibid.

Western iconography of monkeys and apes as symbols of ineptitude, Galves argues that this work can be interpreted as Lissitzky's critique of rationality, which he constantly undermines 'by the stupidity of his own monkey-hand'.[490]

The symbol of the eye was also a recurring motif in many surrealists' works, and the concept of the marvellous was likewise crucial for the movement.[491] Breton uses the word 'convulsive' to describe the concept of surrealist beauty, which he likens to a state between motion and repose, function and violation, and visualises as 'the photograph of a speeding locomotive abandoned for years to the delirium of a virgin forest'.[492] Many surrealists believed that through techniques of automatism, one could gain access to the marvellous realm of the unconscious mind, beyond the reach of reason and rationality.[493] The concept of the marvellous was often linked to the violation of the eye, suggesting fear and the threat of death in the unconscious.[494]

In the lower space of Snead's photo-collage, the apples with eyes attached roll around in the courtyard, having fallen from above (Fig. 3.31). One of the apples has reached the edge of the pictorial space, close to the viewer, and its eye seems to have become detached and fallen in a corner. Snead may be invoking the original meaning of the pupil as the 'apple of the eye' here, and the pupil's separation from the eye, with both being chased by the cat, mimics the uncanny effects of the surrealists' violations of eyes, the image as a whole thus amounting to her own version of a surrealist quest for the marvellous.

Meanwhile, Maddox's stage-like space, which appears in many of his works, reflects his interest in the French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot, director of the Salpêtrière hospital.[495] Dr. Charcot was famous for his 'hysteria shows', which were open to the public and showcased his clinical demonstrations of hysteria as well as his hypnosis experiments.[496] Many surrealists viewed Charcot's hysteria shows as an effective gateway into the subconscious; Breton and Aragon, for example, celebrated his work in 1928 under the title

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[490] Ibid., 110, 137.
[491] For a discussion of the marvellous in surrealism, see Bate, *Photography and Surrealism*, 35–40.
[492] André Breton, *Mad Love*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 10.
[493] Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text & Image*, 17, 69.
[494] Hal Foster, "Violation and Veiling in Surrealist Photography: Woman as Fetish, as Shattered Object, as Phallus," in *Surrealism: Desire Unbound*, ed. Jennifer Mundy (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), 206.
[495] Silvano Levy, *The Scandalous Eye: The Surrealism of Conroy Maddox* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), 209; John Howell, "Dr. Charcot's Hysteria Shows," *Artforum*, accessed 15 April 2024, https://www.artforum.com/events/dr-charcots-hysteria-shows-220095/.
[496] Manni Waraich and Shailesh Shah, "The Life and Work of Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893): 'The Napoleon of Neuroses'," *Journal of the Intensive Care Society* 19, no. 1 (2018): 48–49, https://doi.org/10.1177/1751143717709420.

'The Fiftieth Anniversary of Hysteria 1878–1928', in their journal *La Révolution surréaliste*.[497]

Maddox's painting makes many references to Charcot's practice. For instance, the stage with a wooden floor, the curtains, and a skeleton prop each allude to the theatricality of the hysteria shows. Additionally, the seated man, dressed in a suit, appears to be the doctor, possibly monitoring a female patient of hysteria. Instead of focusing on the woman, he stares directly at the viewer. The absence of the female patient in the painting may be interpreted as a way for Maddox to intentionally draw the viewer into the subconscious world of hysteria. Maddox believed that absurdity, instability, and the destruction of rationality could best be expressed through the unleashing of hysteria's potential.

Unlike Maddox's enclosed interior, Snead's photo-collage divides the courtyard space into two levels. On the lower level, various disparate elements combine to evoke a sense of absurdity, and to create a surreal space. On the upper level, the hand dropping the apples into the courtyard reveals to the audience the basis of this surreality. On the left-hand side of Maddox's work, the fact that the upper half of the hand is missing, along with the edge of the canvas, suggests that the image of the hand is in fact a wall painting, like those on the other side of the stage, which represent the various hallucinatory symptoms of Charcot's hysteria patients.[498] However, in Snead's work, the hand is not part of the lower space of the courtyard; rather, it reaches into the space from above. This suggests that the creation of Snead's surreal space is not organic but is instead influenced by larger external forces.

Maddox's picture harnesses the trompe l'oeil of the pictorial space at the back the theatre to reveal a landscape behind a curtain, guiding the viewer into the realm of the subconscious in an uncanny dream. In contrast to this common surrealist trope of creating a deceptive window into a deeper unconscious landscape, in Snead's photo-collage, the face of a child is pasted onto the panel of a closed door at the far end of the lower space. Accordingly, the audience's anticipation of this surrealist device is instead met with the child's mocking smile.

Maddox writes, 'I am not averse even to moving over into that world which we dishonestly suppose to be confined within the walls of asylums.'[499] In contrast to his desire to create pictures that lead spectators into the subconscious world of hysteria, Snead's work

[497] Levy, *The Scandalous Eye*, 208–9.
[498] Ibid., 215.
[499] Conroy Maddox, "The Object in Surrealism," *London Bulletin*, nos. 18–20 (June 1940): 39.

instead requires the viewer to maintain a distance from the scene, reminding them that the marvellous effects of surrealist pictures are artificially constructed.

An examination of Snead's contact sheet will enable a clearer picture of Snead's working method and its difference to that of many surrealists.

The inspiration for the cat chasing a round object may have stemmed from Snead's review of one of her contact sheets, in which a cat seems to be chasing a dry white sea urchin, a result of the juxtaposition of two adjacent images on the sheet (Fig. 3.34). This aligns with my discussion in the first chapter regarding Snead's inspiration as stemming from the coincidences she discovered while reviewing her contact sheets.

The motifs of hand and eye (vision) also appear in Snead's other photo-collages, as in *Snake Vista*, produced around 1974 (Fig. 3.35). The building depicted here is a textile factory, constructed by her friend, the structural engineer Mahendra Raj, where Snead went to take photographs around 1973 (Fig. 3.36). Snead's photographs show how the concrete arch structure seems to extend indefinitely. In *Snake Vista*, a large snake weaves in and out of the building and a hand touches its body. The image of the snake and the experience of touching its skin may be traced to a contact sheet of images taken when Snead visited a friend's home some time between 1958 and 1960 (Fig. 3.37).

Snakes and humans have different sensory perceptions. Snakes can only see in black and white but gather information about their prey and terrain by processing sensory signals of infrared thermal radiation, vibration, and smell. In *Snake Vista*, the extended arches and ripples simulate this sensory vista of the snake.

Furthermore, this experience of connecting vision with touch is not merely conceptual but is also evoked through Snead's tactile process of cutting her photographs (Fig. 3.38).[500] By neatly trimming the edges along the contours of the snake's skin with a knife, the cutout invokes the sensation of touching the skin. Additionally, the cutout of the snake is not merely two-dimensional; when held in the hand with its shadow cast on the tabletop, it evokes a sense of three-dimensionality. Therefore, by placing the cutout of the snake into the collaged space with her hand, and by allowing the photograph of the hand to touch the photograph of the snake, Snead creates a tactile experience that not only involves vision but also the

[500] This means that the broadening of embodied experience needs to be achieved physically, and not merely visually, situating Snead's work within the context of anti-ocularcentric discourse. Martin Jay, "In the Empire of the Gaze: Foucault and the Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Couzens Hoy (Oxford, 1986), 175–204.

coordination of hand and eye during the cutting process. Similarly, in *Trap to Capture the Marvellous*, the hand placing the apple reflects Snead's method of making photo-collages, which emphasises the multisensory perceptions involved in the touching and arranging of her photographic fragments (Fig. 3.31).

While Snead employs similar pictorial strategies to many surrealists, such as the juxtaposition of disparate images, she also diverges in significant ways from their working methods. For Maddox, the subversion of rationality is possible only through subconscious activity in dreams, rather than physical behaviour in reality.[501] However, Snead's work is not about purely subconscious activity; rather, the power of her photo-collages comes from their evocation of the embodied experience of interacting with the physical world.

Rosalind Krauss delineated the term 'index' in 1977, later arguing that the surrealist method of making images is actually a manipulation of the indexicality of photography.[502] According to Krauss, Breton's definition of convulsive beauty may be translated into semiotic terms as the effect of syntactical relations such as doubling, spacing, and transforming.[503] Krauss considers surrealist photography to be fundamentally 'semiological', disrupting and breaking down reality through the displacement and fragmentation of signs.[504]

Snead, however, does not follow this surrealist semiological method.[505] The lower courtyard area of *Trap to Capture the Marvellous* imitates the surrealist chase of the marvellous, while the upper area prompts the viewer to question whether the surrealist strategy of capturing the marvellous might in fact be a trap conjured through surrealism's construction of uncanny scenes. As such, this work reveals the fundamental contradiction within the surrealist method. While aiming to dismantle the conventional, rational connections between symbols and meanings, the surrealists themselves actually forged new semantic relationships, creating marvellous images to equate with the subconscious (especially its desires). Snead rejects this methodological approach of equating her imagery with the subconscious, criticising the artificiality of this connection rather than its automatic nature.

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[501] Levy, *The Scandalous Eye*, 212.
[502] Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America," *October* 3 (1977): 68–81. ; Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," 26.
[503] Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," 23.
[504] Ibid., 17, 25.
[505] This does not entail a contradiction between semiotic and phenomenological analyses of collage; rather, phenomenological analysis can complement the semiotic analysis of surrealism.

Maddox (1912–2005) and Snead (1910–2006) were near contemporaries in both birth and death. Maddox first became acquainted with surrealism in 1935, and Snead in 1936.[506] They belonged to the generation that experienced the peak of surrealism's development in the 1930s. However, reflecting on surrealism in the 1970s, Maddox mostly adhered to his interests and working methods from the 1930s, particularly his focus on hysteria and the subconscious. In contrast, Snead's works expressed a reflective criticism of the methods of historical surrealism.

When considering the crisis of surrealist movement in the postwar period, it becomes evident that its formerly transgressive aesthetics had settled into the repetitive creation of 'marvellous' images that had increasingly lost their edge and, hence, their subversive and liberating power. Faced with this situation, Snead chose not to continue to emulate surrealism's historical methods but instead forged her own path. Therefore, Snead's work embodies a strategy of 'iconoclasm' towards the principles of historical surrealist movement.

[506] Levy, *The Scandalous Eye*, 17. Maddox became one of the central figures in the Birmingham group of surrealists in the late 1930s. For Snead's biography, see Snead, "Stella Snead: Chronology of a Painter."

The Trap of Tourism

Snead's photo-collage method developed from her practice of travel and photography. As discussed in the first chapter, her ways of travel differed significantly from those of the surrealists in the 1920s and 1930s. The contact sheets allow us to identify the cultural context of the photo-collage *Trap to Capture the Marvellous*, and thus extend our understanding of this work.

Snead's contact sheet shows that the background used to make the photo-collage *Trap to Capture the Marvellous* was taken at a courtyard of the Lake Palace in Udaipur, after she visited the town of Pushka (Fig. 3.39). This photograph was included in both her unpublished album *Indications of India* and in the published photobook *Shiva's Pigeons*, indicating that it is one of her signature works.[507] Lake Palace (formally known as Jag Niwas) was built under the direction of Maharana Jagat Singh II between 1743 and 1746, and was a summer retreat for the Mewar royal family (Fig. 3.40).[508] From the late nineteenth century, this once elaborately carved and decorated palace gradually fell into disrepair. Pierre Loti writes in his turn-of-the-century travelogue of India that Lake Palace was 'slowly moldering in the damp emanations of the lake'.[509] He continues: 'amidst the ruins of this lonely isle the evening seems instinct with an almost menacing melancholy.'[510] Loti's account typifies the complex feelings of many Western visitors coming to this once glorious and luxurious palace in the oasis city Udaipur, within the desert landscape of north-western India, whether in his lament for its decay and ruin, his fear of the Palace's desolation, or in his nostalgic imagination that connects the site to its pre-modern past.

The imagery of ruins is found in the textual and visual works of many surrealists, since it is associated with the marvellous. Breton recorded his 'phenomenal experiences' of encountering the marvellous in a 'ramshackle colonial mansion' in the Mexican city Guadalajara, in his text 'Souvenir du Mexique', published in *Minotaure* in May 1939.[511] He writes of glimpsing a beautiful young girl in a ragged white dress while looking at the dark

[507] Godden, Godden, and Snead, *Shiva's Pigeons,* 38–39.
[508] For a tourist narrative of Lake Palace, see Tristan Parker, "Taj Lake Palace," History Hit (website), 20 September 2021, accessed 13 November 2022, https://www.historyhit.com/locations/taj-lake-palace/; and "Lake Palace Udaipur," Udaipur Guide (website), accessed 13 November 2022, http://www.udaipur.org.uk/tourist-attractions/jagniwas.html.
[509] Pierre Loti, *India*, trans. George A. F. Inman (of Bowdon), 3rd ed. (London: T. W. Laurie, 1913), 188.
[510] Ibid., 189.
[511] Cardinal, "Breton's Travels," 27. For the original text, see André Breton, "Souvenir du Mexique," *Minotaure*, nos. 12–13 (May 1939): 31–52.

rooms of the colonial mansion with its 'tumbledown baroque staircases and collapsed colonnades'.[512] Roger Cardinal argues that Breton's central concern in travelling to non-Western places was 'the encounter with a seductive yet alien Otherness'.[513] This is to say that, for Breton, any analysis of specific cultural issues, or any understanding of the contemporary situation of a place, comes second to the surrealist marvellous that captures his imagination and desire for such 'Otherness'. In Breton's encounter, the various elements of the deserted colonial mansion—its Mexican cultural heritage, the historical aristocracy, the contemporary poverty, the dark rooms and collapsed colonnades, the girl in white, and so on—are all seen as factors contributing to his pursuit of a poetic and extraordinary coincidence.[514]

Cardinal recounts that when the girl in the ragged white dress smiled at Breton, he shunned any further interaction and retreated.[515] The image of the female figure was considered by the surrealists to be a marvellous medium through which to channel the unconscious, yet many surrealists avoided the threat of being gazed back at by the non-Western other.

The surrealists' search for encounters with the marvellous was part of the 'revolutionary dimension' of the movement, since such encounters were considered to harbour the potential to bring about change by resolving the opposition between the psychic world and the 'world of facts'.[516] Raymond Spiteri argues that the political ambivalence of the surrealist agenda and Breton's relationship to Nadja together expose the failure and limitations of the surrealist project of reconciliation.[517] As he writes, 'Nadja, for the reader, exists through Breton, who gives consistency to her as the focus of his desire; yet simultaneously, his desire veils and distances her.'[518] This goes to the heart of the problem of surrealist politics, where the object is always in the service of the subject who conjures it, and 'never completely shed[s] its mystical guise'.[519]

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[512] Cardinal, "Breton's Travels," 27.
[513] Ibid.
[514] Ibid.
[515] Ibid.
[516] Raymond Spiteri, "Surrealism and the Political Physiognomy of the Marvellous," in *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*, eds. Raymond Spiteri and Donald Lacoss (London: Routledge, 2003), 58; André Breton, *Break of Day*, trans. Mark Polizzotti and Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 34. See also Mark Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of Andre Breton* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996), 285–91.
[517] Spiteri, "Surrealism and the Political Physiognomy of the Marvellous," 64.
[518] Ibid., 58.
[519] Ibid., 64.

Many male surrealists explored non-Western countries and regions in the early twentieth century as part of a conscious attempt to escape the colonial gaze of imperialism. Yet they remained captivated by the diverse imageries, narratives, and fantasies that could be woven around ruins, consequently maintaining their power of the gaze and the projection of their desires onto others.

Rudyard Kipling, in *Letters of Marque XVII* (1887–88), describes an Englishman's experience of walking through Boodi Palace (known today as Bundi Palace), which is located between Jaipur and Udaipur, and not far from Lake Palace.[520] He writes:

> But before he had crossed the garden the Englishman heard, deep down in the bowels of the Palace, a woman's voice singing, and the voice rang as do voices in caves. All Palaces in India excepting dead ones, such as that of Amber, are full of eyes. In some, as has been said, the idea of being watched is stronger than in others. In Boondi Palace it was overpowering—being far worse than in the green-shuttered corridors of Jodhpur. There were trapdoors on the tops of terraces, and windows veiled in foliage, and bulls' eyes set low in unexpected walls, and many other peep-holes and places of vantage.[521]

The 'Englishman' in Kipling's text has been interpreted as typifying the Anglo-Indian community of the time.[522] Bart Moore-Gilbert observes that the Englishman reveals a relativist attitude towards India.[523] On his unofficial trips, he attempts to discover an alternative knowledge of India, beyond the official record, and on many occasions he expresses his reverence for Indian art, architecture, scientific achievements, and religious wisdom.[524] At the same time, his identity and his imperial mission tear at his psyche. Kipling's text details the Englishman's anxiety and fear of being surveilled by the Oriental other while walking through these Indian palaces, with their infinite repetition of windows, peep-holes, and potential eyes.

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[520] Rudyard Kipling's *Letters of Marque* were first published in the *Pioneer*, between 14 December 1887 and 28 February 1888.
[521] Rudyard Kipling, "Letters of Marque XVII," The Kipling Society, accessed 22 November 2022, https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/journalism/letters-of-marque-17.htm.
[522] Mary Condé, "Constructing the Englishman in Rudyard Kipling's 'Letters of Marque'," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 34 (2004): 230-239, https://doi.org/10.2307/3509496.
[523] Bart Moore-Gilbert, "'Letters of Marque': Travel, Gender and Imperialism," *Kipling Journal* 71, no. 281 (March 1997), 18–19, https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/pdf/KJ281.pdf.
[524] Ibid.

The experience of travel is thought to erode the subject's fixed positionality and to perturb or disrupt the security of a monocultural identity.[525] The Englishman's uncanny and frustrated feelings arise from his struggle to maintain the imperial hierarchy and to distinguish his identity from that of the natives, only to find that the integrity of the British ego is beginning to crumble.

Similarly to Kipling, Snead's photo-collage also places the audience in the position of passing through a palace filled with repetitive architectural details. In her work, the deterrent of potential surveillance is rendered as a permanent presence that the audience cannot avoid or evade. According to her contact sheet, Snead took a few photographs of Tibetan Buddhist monks at Bhaja Caves (in Maharashtra, India) in 1961 (Fig. 3.41). The monks sit cross-legged on a stone platform atop three stone steps, while Snead stands at the bottom of the steps taking photographs of them. The camera is at exactly the right height to meet the monks' line of sight. The direct gaze of the monk on the left must have made a deep impression on her, as she circled two pictures of him looking directly into the camera with orange markings on the contact sheet and developed these into prints (Fig. 3.41and Fig. 3.42).

By deliberately framing only the upper half of the Buddhist monk's face in the photo-collage, and by playing with scale, Snead compels the viewer to take notice of his returned gaze. This not only directs the viewer's attention to his fixed look but also keeps it suspended.[526] Hans Belting suggests that photography serves as a way both to gaze upon the world and to gaze upon oneself.[527] Without the aid of its tools, individuals mostly remain unaware of the constant occurrence of their own gaze, but photography provides a means to reflect on one's gaze after the event. Snead's photo-collages, in essence, can be viewed as a conscious effort to observe how one senses, to scrutinise the process of one's perception, and to intervene in and alter subjective experiences of the scenes depicted.

As discussed in the previous chapter, recent research on tourist photography has employed the concept of the 'reverse gaze' to discuss the relationship between tourist and host, and between photographer and subject photographed.[528] Gillespie claims that tourist photographers often experience shame and discomfort when they encounter the reverse gaze

[525] Discussing the formation of hybridity in contact between different cultures, Homi Bhabha argues for the 're-creation of the self in the world of travel'. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2009), 9.
[526] McCarroll, Michaelian, and Muñoz, "Memory and Perception," 15–16.
[527] Belting, *An Anthropology of Images*, 146.
[528] Maoz, "The Mutual Gaze."; Gillespie, "Tourist Photography and the Reverse Gaze." and Höckert, et al., "Gazes and Faces in Tourist Photography."

of local people, as a prolonged stare or raised eyebrow is enough to reverse the relationship and bring into doubt the professed identity and subjectivity of the photographer.[529] Jonas Larsen and John Urry provide a multisensory analysis of the mutual gaze, examining not only the visual but also the non-visual senses, since the tourist gaze often 'takes place in and through multidimensional space', and the power relationship between photographer and subject is fluid and complex as a result of the situatedness of the performance.[530]

The notion of 'capturing the marvellous' in the title of Snead's photo-collage may also be interpreted as referring to her capture of the marvellous sights of famous Indian landmarks through her lens. 'Capture' suggests serendipity, but behind this serendipity, the dynamics and power relations of viewing are often overlooked. The monk's reverse gaze holds a significant position in the photo-collage, suggesting Snead's own reflection on her contemporary travel experiences.

In the 1960s, when Snead visited Lake Palace, the ruling Maharana Bhagwant Singh was converting the site into a luxury hotel. A photograph by Robert MacDougall (1940–87) shows us how the palace looked following its renovation (Fig. 3.43). The tightly closed latticed windows, which made Kipling's protagonist feel anxious, now hide luxurious hotel rooms. Through doors to the exterior, guests can step directly from their rooms to the central pool. The Mewar royal family's life at Lake Palace gives way to the personal pleasure of hotel guests in the context of the development of global tourism. This may also be considered as a purging and reshaping of the colonial and mystificatory narratives of Indian palaces in the post-independence period. Snead's photograph of Lake Palace thus captures one corner of the ruined palace in the process of its renovation to serve the tourist economy.

On Snead's contact sheet, it is very likely that the woman carrying a basket on her head is one of the workers transporting materials for the renovation of Lake Palace (Fig. 3.44). Rather than stop at the photograph of the courtyard of Lake Palace as the final work, Snead reworks the space in her photo-collage. With the crane standing in the basket on her head, the woman now appears to be busy transporting animals rather than any construction materials. The bracelet on her right hand echoes the bracelet on the hand in the upper-right corner that drops the apples and eyes (Fig. 3.31). This transforms the role of the woman from a worker in

[529] Gillespie, "Tourist Photography and the Reverse Gaze," 347.
[530] Jonas Larsen and John Urry, "Gazing and Performing," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29, no. 6 (1 December 2011): 1122, https://doi.org/10.1068/d21410.

the tourist industry to an active agent who is turning the palace into a space of humour and absurdity.

According to Felix Driver, many colonial-era travel guides and manuals were designed 'to direct the inquiries of the traveller in a manner useful to science: in a sense, to define his field of vision'.[531] In particular, the images in such guides and manuals affected how people saw, imagined, understood, and remembered tourist destinations, suggesting perspectives and angles, and framing views to be circulated in the mass media—what Osborne calls 'Kodakisation'.[532] Whether travel destinations are considered 'exotic, erotic, sensual, dangerous, adventurous, pleasurable' or 'relaxing', they are fed by 'representations, imaginings, communications, technologies and objects'.[533]

Under the title *Trap to Capture the Marvellous*, Snead's photo-collage may be interpreted as a critique of the marvellous as captured by camera, as a reflection on photography's influence on tourism. Snead's working method reminds us that the reflection and manipulation of perceptions has the potential to reverse the power relations of the gaze between visitors and locals, to challenge colonial perspectives, and to reshape the experience of visiting non-Western destinations.

[531] Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 56.
[532] Peter D. Osborne, *Travelling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 9.
[533] Lean, "Transformative Travel: A Mobilities Perspective," 159.

Section 3.3 Snead's Photo-Collage Method

Reinventing the Personal Archive

Based on the findings in the previous sections, in this section, I aim to summarise Snead's method of making photo-collages by discussing how she handles her personal photographic archive and the significance of exclusively using of her own photographs to make photo-collages.

Snead continually revisited and reused photographs from her personal archive over an extended period. This process involved various steps, including drawing from her travel experiences, repeatedly examining contact sheets and prints, and integrating new life experiences into the creative process.

Snead's photo-collage *Inside Out* (c. 1967–68) is helpful for thinking further about the relationship between her photo-collages and her personal archive (Fig. 3.45). In an architectural space, a zebra, a camel, and a cow have been let loose. The zebra has exited the door and entered the meadow, and the cow and camel are preparing to move. By contrast, two people and two folk figures, confined to window frames on the right-hand side of the space, are staring at the mobile animals with an incredulous look.

Snead visited the camel market in the desert of Pushka (Rajasthan) in 1966 (Fig. 3.46). Before visiting the town of Pushka, and later Lake Palace, she took several photographs of camels, the animals in each case secured by chains between their legs (Fig. 3.47). In the same year, she visited Serengeti, the protected area in Tanzania, where she photographed herds of zebras and two male lions catching and eating a zebra (Fig. 3.48). Her memory of witnessing the immobilisation of these animals, during her travels, may have served as an inspiration for her exploration of motion perception in this photo-collage.

Snead applied the principle of diminishing perspective while selecting and printing the photographic fragments, enhancing the perspective of the corridor leading towards the zebra and grassland beyond the opening. Additionally, as spectators, we are positioned at the corridor's midpoint, just behind the cow, which seems to be beckoning us, urging us to accompany it on its outdoor journey.

The photograph of this architectural space was taken during Snead's visit to a newly built factory at Chinchwad, designed by her friend, the architect Pravina Mahla (Fig. 3.49). In the photo-collage, Snead replaced the wall at the end of the corridor with her photograph of a

zebra in the meadow. This prompts a sense of movement, guiding the viewer to break free from the confines of this space. This is in contrast to the surrealist construction of space, which often aimed to provoke anxiety and disorientation.

The motif of a passageway frequently appears in many surrealists' works, such as in Conroy Maddox's *The Departure* (1971) (Fig. 3.50). The function of passage is to connect and exchange.[534] Michel Remy argues that the settings of Maddox's passages do not allow for either sojourn or passing through, but instead are places of ceaseless internal movement.[535] People and animals are confused and confined by the display boards, paintings, and windows. The lion in *The Departure* is turning around, suggesting that there is no way out at the viewer's end of the space.

Snead inserted images of people and folk objects into each of the building's inwardly protruding window frames in the photo-collage (Fig. 3.45). This arrangement likely refers to that of a strip of negatives, where each negative is separately framed but also connected to those adjacent, so as to form the strip as a whole. The images of animals on the left also suggest loose and movable negatives that have been cut out from their strips. For example, in Snead's archive, the negative of her photograph of Lake Palace is placed in a separate sleeve from the others on its strip (Fig. 3.51 and Fig. 3.52).[536] This negative was cut out to be sent to Japan, together with other cut-out negatives, for the printing of Snead's photobook *Shiva's Pigeons*. After the printing was done, it was returned to the negative strip sleeves in the archive. But while it was returned to its approximate original position, the fact that it had been cut out meant that it could not be fully restored to the original strip. These cut-out negatives, whether printed as photographs or compiled into books, have interacted with others among Snead's photographs, leading to new interpretations and experiences. Upon their reinsertion into the sequence of the negative strips, both their physical appearance and meanings change with regard to their uncut counterparts. Therefore, I would argue that this photo-collage not only reflects Snead's personal longing for animals to escape but also alludes to her method of handling her personal archive, by which photographs would step out from their fixed positions, in accordance with the work's title, *Inside Out*. As such, the

[534] Michel Remy, "British Surrealist Painting and Writing: Re-Marking the Margin," in *Surrealism: Crossing/Frontiers*, ed. Adamowicz, 179.
[535] Ibid.
[536] My photo reveals only a small portion of the negative sleeves. There are more columns.

corridor may be seen as a metaphor for her approach to enhancing the mobility of her photographs.

The arrangement of the architectural space in the photo-collage also resembles that of an art gallery with light boxes, recalling the way that photographic works, once framed and hung on a gallery wall, become enclosed and immobilised, each occupying a narrow space of display. Snead's arrangement recalls László Moholy-Nagy's *The Shooting Gallery* (1925) (Fig. 3.53), in which a metaphorical equation is drawn between the act of shooting pictures on a gallery wall with a gun and the act of 'shooting' photographs with a camera. Moholy-Nagy here explores the optical unconscious of photography, blurring the line between replica and original by manipulating photography's inherent reproducibility.[537] Unlike the isolated framing of photographs on the right-hand side of Snead's photo-collage, the photographs of animals on the left evoke perceptions of movement, infusing her own images with vitality and freedom, and thus allowing them to escape confinement within gallery light boxes.

Snead's photographic practice responds to the increased interest in personal archives amid the archival impulse of the second half of the twentieth century.[538] In general, the establishment of a personal archive serves as a response to fears of forgetting and loss, as well as a means of defining one's personal accomplishments and identity.[539] Archives are subject to a set of norms and specific rules that dictate how documents, including photographs, are materialised. Through Snead's process of cropping her own photographs, she effectively deconstructs images that were once considered artistic representations and personal milestones. This action disrupts the norms and order represented by the archive, as well as the sense of control imposed by the mind on the material world. Snead's handling of her personal archive allows for new interpretations, uses, and configurations, rather than being bound to the predetermined meaning and value assigned to the photographs as final products. This approach fosters openness and unpredictability, leading to the unexpected and spontaneous outcomes that fuel her artistic creativity.

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[537] Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, "Unprecedented Photography," in *Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Article Writings, 1913–1940*, ed. Christopher Phillips (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Aperture, 1985), 83–85.
[538] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Gerhard Richter's *Atlas*: The Anomic Archive," in *The Archive*, ed. Charles Merewether (London: Whitechapel; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); Okwui Enwezor, *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art* (New York: International Center of Photography; Steidl, 2008).
[539] Joanna Zylinska, "On Bad Archives, Unruly Snappers and Liquid Photographs," *Photographies* 3, no. 2 (2010): 143–44, https://doi.org/10.1080/17540763.2010.499608.

Discussing the relationship between memory and material, Leah Dickerman notes that Walter Benjamin talked about memories in corporeal terms, 'pointing to the significance of sensory stimuli, like the savor of Proust's madeleine, in triggering remembrance'.[540] Snead's photo-collages are not displays of collected items made to express nostalgia for the decadent past, but rather are the results of a process of condensing, colliding, and amplifying perceptions. The archive of contact sheets is, for Snead, like a semi-random and semi-purposive playlist, which generates a network of visual forms and multisensory perceptions. This playlist affords her the opportunity for composite encounters that remix her corpus, and ultimately reshape her memories of her life experiences.

Tim Ingold's consideration of our perception of and interaction with material objects can further illuminate Snead's approach to the archive, since it emphasises the sensory dimensions of experience.[541] Ingold proposes a shift from a predetermined view of materials as 'artifacts' to an understanding of them as part of a dynamic process of growth.[542] In my view, Snead's handling of her archives, as reflected in her photo-collages, resonates with Ingold's concept of 'meshwork', which denotes a sense of embodied experience shaped by a broader environment, and of bodies constantly engaging in mutual interactions with their environment.[543] Snead's method focuses on the growth of, and her experimentation with, her perceptions, embracing the unexpected and coincidental, and maintaining their vitality and significance. For this reason, I refer to Snead's corpus as a photographic archive of embodied experience.

[540] Leah Dickerman, "*Merz* and Memory: On Kurt Schwitters," in *The Dada Seminars*, eds. Leah Dickerman and Matthew S. Witkovsky (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2005), 117.
[541] Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2013), 20–21.
[542] Ibid.
[543] Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 63–64.

The Significance of Snead's Exclusive Use of Her Own Photographs

Since its invention, the medium of collage has developed its own history, systems, and functions. Throughout the twentieth century, a succession of revolutionary art movements staked their claims to collage, assuming a special ownership of the form and avowing its special powers.[544] Summarising the relationship between consumerism and readymades, David Banash describes collages made from found objects and images as composed of 'what other human hands have worked over, shaped, formed, completed, and almost always at some point sold as a commodity'.[545] Making collages and scrapbooks expresses 'a longing to explore the world from the safety of home', whether the materials are obtained from junk piles, flea markets, auctions, newspapers, magazines, or journals.[546] Many avant-gardistes and later collage-makers have used the medium of collage to alter, expose, ridicule, or transform the conventions of discourses and ideologies embedded in the materials.

Collecting, cutting, and collaging images found from diverse sources of circulated cultural products, such as newspapers, magazines, journals, and advertisements, has thus been a long-standing practice for modern and contemporary artists. Snead, however, chose not to pursue this in her own work, instead opting exclusively to use photographs that she had taken herself, and thereby emphasising her diverse experiences of events, encounters, and places in her mobile life. Snead's two photo-collages *Ceiling* and *Feather Centre Beach* are helpful for exploring the significance of her method.

During 1967–68, Snead made the photo-collage *Ceiling*, in which a space defined by two opposing skyscrapers is occupied by a female figure in different poses (Fig. 3.54). The contact sheets reveal that the photographs of the female figure were sourced from Snead's photographic series of models posing for her in 1967, some of which had been previously used in the photo-collage *New End Game* (Fig. 3.55, Fig. 3.22 and Fig. 3.15). Photographing

[544] For histories of collage in the twentieth century, see Diane Waldman, *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object* (London: Phaidon, 1992); Rona Cran, *Collage in Twentieth-Century Art, Literature, and Culture: Joseph Cornell, William Burroughs, Frank O'Hara, and Bob Dylan* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); and Susan Laxton, "Photomontage in the Present Perfect Continuous," *History of Photography* 43, no. 2 (2019): 191–205, https://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2019.1678292.
[545] David Banash, *Collage Culture: Readymades, Meaning, and the Age of Consumption* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2013), 19.
[546] Clare Pettitt, "Topos, Taxonomy and Travel in Nineteenth- Century Women's Scrapbooks" in *Travel Writing, Visual Culture and Form, 1760–1900*, eds. Mary Henes and Brian H. Murray (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 26.

these images from above, Snead positioned the model on a blanket, exploiting her supine position to simulate various postures suggestive of flight.

The background image for this work is Snead's photograph of the sky between three prominent buildings on Park Avenue in Manhattan, from around 1966, these including the Pan Am Building (completed in 1963), 277 Park Avenue (completed in 1964), and 280 Park Avenue (whose east tower was completed in 1968) (Fig. 3.56). A postcard image and a photograph by Andy Blair from the early 1970s illustrate how these glass-box, International Style buildings had begun to boom in midtown Manhattan (Fig. 3.57 and Fig. 3.58). Snead captures the emerging spectacle that was shaping Park Avenue in the 1960s; the camera's upward perspective records the compression of the visible sky between these glass-curtain-wall buildings, evoking feelings of awe.

Snead's photo-collage evokes kinaesthetic perception to imagine the female figure breaking free, floating, exploring, and playing within this masculine space, defined by the skyscrapers as vertical symbols of patriarchal society. The kinaesthetic movement of the female figure appears to diminish the buildings' imposing shapes, disrupting their repetitive patterns and oppressive regularity.

In the centre of the contact sheet titled *Sheila Lalvani, Model I* are two shots of the model seated backwards on a chair (Fig. 3.59). It is likely that Snead intended to reference Lewis Morley's infamous portrait of Christine Keeler, who was photographed naked astride a plywood chair in 1963 (Fig. 3.60). Because of her scandalous affairs, including her involvement with married British politician John Profumo, the Secretary of State for War, as well as with a Soviet naval attaché, Yevgeny Ivanov, Keeler was accused of being a prostitute and her affairs a threat to national security. Morley's photograph of Keeler became widely known and was eagerly imitated. Meanwhile, many artists paid tribute to Keeler through their works, seeing her as an icon of women's sexual freedom, as in Pauline Boty's painting *Scandal '63*, of 1963 (now lost), and the exhibition *Dear Christine*, which toured between 2019 to 2020 (Fig. 3.61 and Fig. 3.62).[547]

Boty's painting and many works in the *Dear Christine* exhibition rework Morley's photograph of Keeler, most of them focusing on altering its colours, as well as on Keeler's

[547] The exhibition *Dear Christine* toured to three locations between 2019 and 2020, including Vane in Newcastle upon Tyne, the Elysium Gallery in Swansea, and Arthouse1 in London. Since this exhibition is very recent, it also features some recent works not in direct response to Keeler in the context of the 1960s. "Dear Christine—A Tribute to Christine Keeler," Christine Keeler (website), accessed 8 March 2024, https://www.christine-keeler.co.uk/dear-christine.html.

appearance, and the relationship between the affair's characters. Snead's photo-collage stands out for its interrogation of the fundamental perceptual relationship between this widely circulated media image and the viewer. As Laura Mulvey argues, mainstream cinema often presents female characters as objects of voyeuristic pleasure for male viewers. Morley's photograph of Keeler exemplifies this in still photography, its composition guiding the viewer to focus on her body as sexualised object.[548] Snead challenges the traditional lateral perspective of images by positioning the viewer on the ground, where they can only look upward at the flying female figures in the air, lacking any means of reaching them. In so doing, her image also prohibits the conventional role of the viewer that is implied by the lateral view, namely, as voyeur, positioned behind the camera peering at female bodies. In Morley's image, furthermore, the plywood chair and Keeler's seated posture have become images layered with complex historical and sexual connotations.[549] Snead's photo-collage duplicates the photograph of the model's face to present her peeking out from both sides of the building, endowing the female figure with a mocking attitude towards any potential sexual innuendo suggested by the image of the chair and Keeler's body (Fig. 3.54, Fig. 3.59 and Fig. 3.60). Additionally, by eschewing the circulated image of Keeler and instead collaborating with models to create the photo-collage, Snead is able to offer alternative bodily dynamics and movements to subvert the constructed relationship between the female body and the symbols of patriarchy.

Snead's inclination to rework Keeler's image in her photo-collage may also stem from her views on gender roles. Kirin Narayan, Snead's goddaughter, wrote in her recollection of Snead:

> 'I always preferred to be a mistress than to be a wife,' Stella liked to pronounce, nose airily turned upward. She used this line through most of her life. If her amazed listeners burst into laughter, she would hunch slightly, green eyes alight, allowing herself a throaty, slightly snorting laugh.[550]

Snead rejects traditional family roles. By proudly declaring herself a mistress and challenging societal labels with her nonchalant attitude and laughter, she questions the

[548] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 11, https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6.
[549] "Dear Christine," Vane (website), accessed March 8, 2024, https://www.vane.org.uk/exhibitions/dear-christine.
[550] Kirin Narayan, "Stella Stories," in *The Folklore Muse: Poetry, Fiction, and Other Reflections by Folklorists*, ed. Frank de Caro (Denver, CO: University Press of Colorado / Utah State University Press, 2008), 128.

ideology behind these labels and the fear of sexual taboos that they entail.[551] These subtle moments related to bodily perception, movement, and emotion are what unsettle the usual associations of the term 'mistress', allowing it to acquire more flexible connotations.

Bikinis also have significance in Snead's work. Her photographs of the model in a bikini may allude to the Indian actress Sharmila Tagore, who famously posed in a bikini for *Filmfare* magazine in 1966 (Fig. 3.63).[552] Tagore's bold move caused considerable controversy in the 1960s, as she became the first Bollywood actress to wear a two-piece bikini in a fashion magazine. Some of Snead's model's poses bear a striking resemblance to those of Tagore in the pages of *Filmfare*.

As mentioned in the first chapter, Snead and her close friend Didi lived as next-door neighbours on Juhu Beach in the 1960s. This area was renowned as a neighbourhood for people associated with the Hindi film industry, including Bollywood's celebrities, directors, and producers. Kirin Narayan recalls how her mother Didi's hospitality transformed their home on Juhu Beach into a popular stop on the hippie trail for Western travellers, including hippies en route from Iran and Afghanistan to Goa and Kathmandu.[553] Didi was also famous for hosting salons at weekends, attracting artists, filmmakers, writers, editors, and musicians from Bombay.[554] The writer Bhaichand Patel recounts meeting Sharmila Tagore at one of Didi's salons.[555] Kirin Narayan also mentions that Snead and Didi's family often attended each other's parties and salons, suggesting that Snead likely knew Tagore, or, at the very least, was aware of the sensation caused by her bikini photoshoots in 1966.

Snead herself always loved sunbathing in the nude. Under her mother's influence, she had belonged to a nudist club in Britain in the 1930s. After living in India, she kept 'sunbathing as usual, though she made the concession of wearing a bikini' (Fig. 3.64).[556] Kirin Narayan recalls that Snead loved to tan in the garden without clothing, which caused a

[551] Humour may be seen as a form of performance that can carry a sense of threat, possessing the ability to turn hierarchies and power dynamics upside down. Joanne R. Gilbert, *Performing Marginality: Humor, Gender, and Cultural Critique* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), xii–xiv; Helga Kotthoff, "Gender and Joking: On the Complexities of Women's Image Politics in Humorous Narratives," *Journal of Pragmatics* 32, no. 1 (2000): 59, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(99)00031-4.
[552] "Throwback: When Filmfare and Sharmila Tagore Took India by Storm with this Cover," Filmfare (website), 7 March 2022, accessed March 12, 2024, https://www.filmfare.com/features/throwback-sharmila-tagores-iconic-bikini-look-for-a-magazine-cover-on-filmfares-70th-anniversary-52540.html.
[553] Narayan, *My Family and Other Saints*, 17.
[554] Ibid., 14. Kirin Narayan depicts her family's life in Juhu during the 1960s as lively and international, with a constant stream of Indians and Westerners conversing in various languages and accents.
[555] Bhaichand Patel, *I Am a Stranger Here Myself: An Unreliable Memoir* (Noida, Uttar Pradesh: HarperCollins Publishers India), part II, Kindle.
[556] Narayan, "Stella Stories," 131.

stir among neighbours: 'Boys were lining up and climbing the wall and bringing binoculars to the balconies.'[557]

The bikini has served as a battleground for societal norms and pressures, particularly regarding women's control over their own bodies.[558] Living in India as a Westerner in the 1960s, Snead was familiar with the circulation of the images of women in mass media in both Western and Indian contexts. Her photo-collage, titled 'Ceiling' rather than 'sky', hints at the idea of a glass ceiling, an invisible barrier for women. By evoking perceptions of flying and frolicking above Manhattan, it illustrates the radical potential of the bikini-clad body as a symbol of female empowerment, resisting patriarchal structures that seek to control and constrain women.

Made in India between 1967 and 1968, *Ceiling* was Snead's initial exploration of photo-collage as a way to discuss gender issues. However, following her move to New York in the 1970s, her subsequent photo-collages became more explicitly influenced by the feminist movement. Her close friend Sari Dienes, an artist active in New York and a core member of the A.I.R. gallery, might play a significant role in this influence.[559] Snead's photographs were included in the group exhibition *Sectional Images: An Exhibition of Photographs and Drawings* at the Women's Interart Centre Gallery in 1977.[560]

During 1975–76, Snead created a photo-collage titled *Feather Centre Beach*, featuring a large eagle feather, symbolising Native American culture, alongside the twin towers of the World Trade Centre, symbolising the United States' economic power (Fig. 3.65).[561] Positioned out at sea, they stand tall, dominating the skyline, while on the beach in the

[557] Ibid.
[558] Beth D. Charleston, "The Bikini," The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, October 2004, accessed 7 March 2024, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/biki/hd_biki.htm; Saumya Arora, "The Feminist Politics around Wearing a Bikini," *Feminism in India* (14 August 2020), accessed 12 March 2024, https://feminisminindia.com/2020/08/14/the-feminist-politics-around-wearing-a-bikini/.
[559] Sari Dienes was a core member of the A.I.R. Gallery, which opened in New York in 1972 to show work made exclusively by women. Roxana Fabius, Taylor Bluestine, YiWen Wang, and Nancy Princenthal, "A.I.R. Gallery: Chapter 2," The Feminist Institute (website), 30 September 2022, accessed 12 March 2024, https://www.thefeministinstitute.org/digital-exhibitions/14-a-i-r-gallery-chapter-2.
[560] Snead's photographs of beach patterns were exhibited alongside work by seven other women artists, including Ronnie Geist, Carole Goldner, Susan Sadler Hoeltzel, Jacqueline Livingston, Dianora Niccolini, Helen Soreff, and Susan Weil. See the exhibition catalogue Women's Interart Centre Galler, *Sectional Images: An Exhibition of Photographs and Drawings* (New York: Women's Interart Centre Gallery, 1977), 28–31, MoMA Library, New York.
[561] A discussion of the making of this photo-collage and a brief analysis of its significance in relation to gender issues feature in my master's thesis. See Yao, "A Global Flâneuse," 12–14, 55.

foreground, a female figure on the left gives a thumbs-up, mirroring the large feather, and on the right she lifts her legs, mimicking the twin towers.

The female figure in the photo-collage is Snead's friend Pat van Ingen, captured performing yoga during Snead's home party on Juhu Beach in 1967 (Fig. 3.66). Pat van Ingen, who claimed to be of partly Native American descent, lived an extraordinary life. When she was twenty-one years old, she was accused of murdering her lover, a Chicago lawyer, on his yacht in Cuba.[562] She was given a fifteen-year prison sentence, but was unexpectedly pardoned by the Cuban President. She then lived in India, pursuing spirituality and yoga training for several years, before living among the art community of New Mexico after the 1970s (Fig. 3.67).

In Snead's photo-collage, van Ingen's body gestures, and the kinaesthetic perception they evoke, may be interpreted as mocking the enormous national and cultural symbols that define the horizon line, proclaiming their power and control over society. In addition, in light of the common ground shared by Snead and van Ingen with regard to their cross-cultural, cross-geographical experiences and pursuit of non-traditional lives as women, the female bodily gestures and movements in this work may be seen to challenge the dichotomy between East and West, and between White and Native American identities. They portray a sense of in-betweenness, transcending geographical locations, cultures, and social classes.

During the late 1960s and 1970s, many feminist artists were particularly attracted to the medium of collage for its ability to disclose and disrupt patriarchal stereotypes and ideologies, among them such artists as Martha Rosler, Linder Sterling, Penny Slinger, and Anita Steckel. Rosler began to make photomontages in the mid-1960s, working on the representation of women in magazines and newspapers.[563] Her series of photomontages, *Body Beautiful, or Beauty Knows No Pain,* and *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*, were created between 1967 and 1972.

Snead's *Feather Centre Beach* shares certain similarities with Anita Steckel's *Giant Women* series of the 1970s, insofar as they each rework the Manhattan skyline (Fig. 3.68). The intimacy of the female nude and the play with scale in Steckel's works provide an

[562] Lou Hebert, "Whatever Happened to Toledo Satira?" Answers Revealed!!" *Toledo Gazette*, 27 March 2016, accessed 23 April 2024, https://toledogazette.wordpress.com/2016/03/27/whatever-happened-to-toledo-satira-answers-revealed/.
[563] Laura Hubber, "The Living Room War: A Conversation with Artist Martha Rosler," Getty, 16 February 201 7, accessed 23 April 2024, https://www.getty.edu/news/the-living-room-war-a-conversation-with-artist-martha-rosler/.

alternative form of interaction with the male-dominated cityscape. Steckel's overt provocations express her concerns about institutional censorship and stereotypes of the body, sex, and desire.[564] Diverging from Steckel's approach of directly inserting content into the environment of Manhattan's skyscrapers, Snead positions the viewer on the beach in the foreground, alongside the female figure, maintaining a vigilant distance from the patriarchal symbols across the sea.

I believe this vigilant distance should not be seen simply as a compromise or retreat. Rather, the kinaesthetic perception evoked by each of these two photo-collages, which juxtapose the dynamism and flexibility of the female body against the prevailing architectural-symbolic markers of patriarchal society, directs attention to the transformative power of embodied experience.

David Bate highlights the difficulty of distinguishing between the mediated sphere and our psyche, as we are uncertain whether the processes of signification that we engage in originate from our minds or are ready-made cultural products.[565] We encounter a multitude of images through various media, making it increasingly challenging to distinguish between our firsthand experiences and what we see in films, prints, photographs, and on the internet. Our memories are susceptible to alteration since they are not isolated but continuously interact and interfere with each other, influenced by the constant influx of new information encoded in our minds.[566]

Hal Foster observes a pervasive 'archival impulse' in contemporary art, adding that this 'is hardly new … [but] was variously active in the pre-war period when the repertoire of sources was extended both politically and technologically'.[567] Foster notes that artists often draw on the vast resources of mass culture to accumulate their archives as well as to 'ensure a legibility'.[568] In his essay 'The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism', Douglas Crimp discusses the generation of artists, including Sherrie Levine and Cindy Sherman, who began using photography in the 1970s to examine representation in visual culture by way of

[564] For a further discussion of Steckel, see Rachel Middleman, "Anita Steckel's Feminist Montage: Merging Politics, Art, and Life," *Woman's Art Journal* 34, no. 1 (2013): 21–29. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24395331.
[565] Bate, *Photography After Postmodernism*, 24.
[566] For psychological studies of episodic memories, see Sonja Wichert, Oliver T. Wolf, and Lars Schwabe, "Updating of Episodic Memories Depends on the Strength of New Learning after Memory Reactivation," *Behavioral Neuroscience* 127, no. 3 (2013): 331–38, https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032028; and Elizabeth F. Loftus and Hunter G. Hoffman, "Misinformation and Memory: The Creation of New Memories," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 118, no. 1 (1989): 100–104, https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-3445.118.1.100.
[567] Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse," *October* 110 (2004), 3, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3397555.
[568] Ibid., 4.

strategies of reproduction, and addresses the relation between presence and absence in their work through the notion of the unbridgeable distance between reproduction and original.[569] Renewing interest in photomontage, *October* critics such as Crimp attempted to determine a precedent for the postmodern critique of photography in strategies of the historical avant-gardes.[570]

This resurgence of collage as a medium marked a shift towards the fragmentation of imagery in the postmodern era, with meaning understood to transcend its original context.[571] Jean Baudrillard's concept of simulation centres on the shifting relationship between objects and signs, suggesting that technology and consumerism have fundamentally altered our perception of reality in an era dominated by mass production and the dissemination of mass media.[572] The self-portraits that make up Cindy Sherman's series of *Untitled Film Stills* mimic the conventions of Hollywood films' construction of femininities, thereby revealing the ambiguity of representation. As both producer and object of consumption, Sherman blurs the distinction between subject and object, signifier and signified, aligning her work with Baudrillard's agenda.[573]

Snead's approach does not express total pessimism towards the simulacra of postmodernism, and the relationship between representation and reality.[574] Rather than envision her audience as composed of passive and easily deceived subjects, her approach attests to her belief in the transformative power of embodied experience, through which individuals may gain possibilities for resistance.

Moreover, Snead's approach does not engage with the semiotic or symbolic operation of images but rather provides a transformative glimpse into the malleability of perception and the importance of agency. In everyday life, we often become absorbed in our tasks and routines to the extent that we overlook the profound role that our bodies play in shaping how we perceive and interact with our surroundings.[575] Snead's exclusive use of her own

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[569] Douglas Crimp, "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism," *October* 15 (1980): 91–101, https://doi.org/10.2307/778455.
[570] Andrés Mario Zervigón, "The Photomontage Activity of Postmodernism," *History of Photography* 43, no. 2 (2019): 130–43, https://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2019.1676982.
[571] Anna Dahlgren, *Travelling Images: Looking Across the Borderlands of Art, Media and Visual Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 57.
[572] Jean Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," in *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, ed. Brian Wallis (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), 253–54.
[573] Kim Toffoletti, *Cyborgs and Barbie Dolls: Feminism, Popular Culture and the Posthuman Body* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 54.
[574] Sean Cubitt, *Simulation and Social Theory* (London: Sage, 2001), 5.
[575] Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 12.

photographs to make her photo-collages attempts to interrupt the individual's habitual perceptual routines. This disruption extends to the cognitive pathways, challenging ingrained habits formed within the memory and prompting a departure from the familiar cognitive patterns established in the mind.

Snead's archive reveals that she repeatedly printed and reviewed her photo-collages. In doing so, she focused on how to seamlessly fuse the collaged fragments, obscuring the visible evidence of her cuts so that the images might more closely resemble photographs. For instance, the photo-collage *Be Seated* (Fig. 3.69) presents a scarecrow in a field extending its arms and inviting the viewer to sit on a massive chair. Close examination reveals that the chair's front legs are embedded in reeds, while its rear legs rest on a sprawling hillside, so that the chair spans a vast geographical distance and induces a sense of instability at the thought of sitting upon it. The top rail of the chair extends beyond the upper edge of the pictorial space, reaching into the real world. Snead's treatment of the chair here is not exclusive to the original photo-collage; in subsequent prints of this work, the top edge of the chair's top rail is carefully trimmed to maintain this feature (Fig. 3.70). This approach exemplifies her ambition to use her photographs to alter and transform reality.

Recent research by Richard Görler, Laurenz Wiskott, and Sen Cheng suggests that episodic memory plays a pivotal role in enhancing perceptual abilities by repeatedly revisiting significant events from our past.[576] This reshaping of significant past events and the construction of self-identity are, in turn, closely intertwined with projections of future events.[577] Snead's decision to exclusively use her own photographs to make her photo-collages enables the localisation and juxtaposition of the perceptual elements of her earlier life experiences. It allows her to reflect on, revise, and reshape her memories. Most importantly, this method affords her agency over the conventions of discourse and representation circulated in the mass media, facilitating new possibilities of empowerment and transformation.

[576] Richard Görler, Laurenz Wiskott, and Sen Cheng, "Improving Sensory Representations Using Episodic Memory," *Hippocampus* 30, no. 6 (2020): 638–56, https://doi.org/10.1002/hipo.23186.
[577] Arnaud D'Argembeau, Claudia Lardi, and Martial Van der Linden, "Self-defining Future Projections: Exploring the Identity Function of Thinking About the Future," *Memory* 20, no. 2 (2012): 110–20, http://doi.org/10.1080/09658211.2011.647697.

Section 3.4 Exhibiting Photo-Collages

Exhibiting Photo-Collages in 1968

1. The Catalogue

Up to this point, I have explored Snead's method of reinventing her personal photographic archive and the significance of exclusive use of her own photographs to make photo-collages. In this section, I aim to examine how Snead's photo-collages were exhibited and whether the significance of her working method can be effectively conveyed through exhibitions.

Snead held her first photo-collage exhibition at Gallery Chemould in Bombay in 1968, featuring twenty-three works.[578] As can be seen from the exhibition invitation card (Fig. 3.2), the show was titled after the artist and the medium of 'photo-collage' was stated, without further specification of a theme. The catalogue is simple in design, printed as a thin yellow pamphlet with a folio listing the works' titles (Fig. 3.71). It gives neither a biography of Snead nor any context for her creation of these photo-collages. Thus, the pamphlet's cover image plays a crucial role in hinting at the theme of the exhibition, serving as the primary visual way for Snead to capture her audience's interest.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the work *The Iceberg Eaters* (1967–68) was used as the cover image of the exhibition pamphlet and invitation card, and it shows reference to Salvador Dalí's painting *Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (1937) (Fig. 3.72 and Fig. 3.73). A comparative analysis between these two works would offer additional insights into Snead's decision of selecting *The Iceberg Eaters* as the cover image for her exhibition catalogue.

According to Stephen Bann, in addition to the reflection, the other fundamental aspect in the representation of the myth of narcissus is the metamorphosis.[579] Dalí represents this by doubling the image of Narcissus, juxtaposing his figure against the now transformed, insensate body with a flower growing from the split in its head. The double becomes a foreshadowing of death and a source of fear, echoing Freud's essay 'The Uncanny', that begins with the psychoanalyst's attempt to define his subject:

[578] Snead, *Exhibition of Photo-Collage by Stella Snead*.
[579] Bann, *The True Vine*, 106.

> It is undoubtedly related to what is frightening—to what arouses dread and horror;… One is curious to know what this common core is which allows us to distinguish as 'uncanny' certain things which lie within the field of what is frightening.[580]

Freud refers to the German words *heimlich* and *unheimlich*: the former meaning 'familiar' and the latter meaning 'hidden' or 'invisible'.[581] When something unfamiliar is added to something familiar, the result is uncanny.[582] Freud's discussion of the uncanny leads to the idea of the 'double', which relates to the various stages of psychical development and to his psychoanalytical theory of narcissism.[583] According to Freud, after passing the 'primary narcissism which dominates the mind of the child and of primitive man', the double 'becomes the uncanny harbinger of death'.[584] Thus Dalí's painting of metamorphosis not only assimilates the Western tradition of depicting the Narcissus myth, but also visualises the psychoanalytical mechanism of the uncanny through its configuration of the double.[585]

Differing from Dalí's representation of the metamorphosis by way of the painted double, Snead's photo-collage reproduces the image of the monkey as an exact duplicate, eliminating the process of metamorphosis altogether. The doubled image of the monkey here emphasises photography's capacity to resize and reproduce. By replacing the human figure with the photographic reproduction of a monkey, Snead's work can be seen as deploying photography to blatantly reject the representation of mythological figures and the psychoanalytical mechanism of the unconscious.

The doubling of the image of the monkey in Snead's work also opens onto questions of mimicry and repetition. René Girard gives an alternative account of Freud's theoretical model of narcissism and the Oedipus complex.[586] He argues that mimesis is itself a desire that is not specific to humans but can be found in animals, and that the two poles of desire, the Oedipus complex and narcissism, are merely assumptions on Freud's part, whereas in fact there is

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[580] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," in *Writings on Art and Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 193-194.
[581] Ibid., 195.
[582] Ibid.
[583] Ibid., 212.
[584] Ibid., 211.
[585] Of course, Dalí's working method drew from his shared interest with Jacques Lacan in paranoia and labelled his method 'paranoiac-critical'. See the exhibition catalogue Dawn Ades and Freud Museum, *Freud, Dalí & the Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (London: Freud Museum London, 2018), 18.
[586] René Girard, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, trans. Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), 352–82.

only one single desire, namely 'mimetic desire'.[587] Girard thus exposes Freud's uncritical return to mythology, which only gives way to further 'mythological delusions'.[588] He writes:

> Narcissism is in fact the final manifestation of the idol worshipped by the Romantics. It gives its own mythological character away when it turns uncritically to the narcissus myth and interprets it as a myth of solipsism, while in reality the image behind the mirror (as in the story of the nymph Echo) conceals the mimetic model and the struggle between doubles.[589]

Accordingly, the photographic reproduction of the monkey in Snead's photo-collage can be seen to allude to mimetic desire. The incongruity of the humour in Snead's work lies in its substitution of a reproduced image of a monkey for the human psyche, bringing Freud's theory, and its heavy reliance on the illusion of mythology, into question.[590]

Alberti added a further dimension to the myth by describing Narcissus as the inventor of painting in his treatise *On Painting*.[591] Alberti's account reflects the increasing focus on the self and its reflection in the history of Western art, and on the artist's ability to exploit the illusionistic, realistic, and mimetic nature of painting. As Bann explains, the process of painting is an 'interchange between the artist and the material', and through 'narcissistic projection' another body is realised on the empty canvas.[592] Therefore, since the protagonist of Snead's photo-collage is a monkey rather than a human, this work can be considered a satire on the celebration of humans as the inventors and masters of painting.

By designating *The Iceberg Eaters* as the principal work of her exhibition, Snead sets the tone for her show, highlighting the broader aim of her photo-collages to challenge the illusion of the human ego's integrity. It is important to note that the image of the monkey derives from a photograph taken during Snead's travels in Hampi, a site known as the

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[587] Ibid., 358, 375.
[588] Ibid., 381.
[589] Ibid., 377.
[590] Ibid., 370. In addition, to further consider the landscape, why would the monkeys be placed in Greenland to eat icebergs? It is likely that this work refers to the influential 'iceberg model of consciousness' associated with Freudian theory of mind: that our conscious minds are only the tip of an iceberg, with the bulk of our psychic content lying beneath its surface. Thus, it is interesting to consider that either the conscious or unconscious mind is eaten up by the monkeys in Snead's photo-collage. According to Christopher D. Green, the iceberg model of consciousness was never mentioned in Freud's published writings, but may derive from the work of G. T. Fechner or Granville Stanley Hall. See Christopher D. Green, "Where Did Freud's Iceberg Metaphor of Mind Come From?," *History of Psychology* 22, no. 4 (November 2019): 369–72, https://doi.org/10.1037/hop0000135_b.
[591] Bann, *The True Vine*, 137. See also Cristelle L. Baskins, "Echoing Narcissus in Alberti's 'Della Pittura'," *Oxford Art Journal* 16, no. 1 (1993): 25–33, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1360534.
[592] Bann, *The True Vine*, 160.

'monkey kingdom' and as the birthplace of Hanuman, the Hindu monkey god.[593] It is common to feed monkeys in Hampi as a way to worship the monkey god. Thus, by moving the feeding and worshipping of monkeys to an ice field, this religious ritual is supplied with a never-ending source of food (ice) to feed the deity. The ritual of feeding monkeys, and monkey worship in India more generally, reverses the hierarchical relationship between humans and monkeys in the Western tradition.

Opened in 1963 as the first contemporary art gallery in Bombay, Gallery Chemould had by 1968 attracted a large group of contemporary Indian artists and an enthusiastic audience.[594] Visitors to Snead's exhibition would likely have included both local Indians and non-Indian residents of Bombay. The humour and absurdity of this work would probably not have been recognised had it been exhibited in a country without a culture of monkey worship. Thus, by using *The Iceberg Eaters* as her cover image, Snead demonstrates how she employs the medium of photo-collage to evoke unconventional, unfamiliar, and absurd experiences, as a satire on the myth of representation in Western art history.

Let us turn to images used by other women artists to promote their exhibitions in this period. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, many women artists adopted the medium of collage in their artistic practices. For example, Penny Slinger exhibited her graduate works in her exhibition *Young and Fantastic* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in 1969.[595] Photographs and press records of this exhibition show Slinger posing with a cast of her face and mummified body in a bathtub and sarcophagus to present her works *Bride in the Bath* and *Mummy Case* (Fig. 3.74 and Fig. 3.75). Slinger later recalled that it was during her time as a student at Chelsea College of Art that she first realised the centrality of the female muse in art history, and that women had mostly been portrayed from the perspective of male artists.[596] Instead, as she recounted in 2017, 'I wanted to be my own muse. I wanted to be the one who was actually observing, as well as observed.'[597] This realisation was central to her artistic path, as it led to the discovery of her own body as the most suitable material for her

[593] AnnaMarie Houlis, "Inside India's Lost Temple City Where Monkeys Rule," *The Daily Beast*, 5 December 2019, accessed 25 April 2024, https://www.thedailybeast.com/hampi-inside-indias-lost-temple-city-where-monkeys-rule; and hampi.in (website), "Kishkinda," accessed 25 April 2024, https://hampi.in/kishkinda.
[594] Gallery Chemould, now renamed Chemould Prescott Road, was the first contemporary art gallery in Bombay, founded in 1963 by Kekoo and Khorshed Gandhy.
[595] Penny Slinger, "1960's 3D Works," Penny Slinger (website), accessed 12 March 2024, https://pennyslinger.com/Works/1960s-3d-works/.
[596] ZB and Penny Slinger, "Art, Feminism, Magic: An Interview with Penny Slinger (part one)," *The Wild Hunt*, 16 April 2017, accessed 12 March 2024, https://wildhunt.org/2017/04/art-feminism-magic-an-interview-with-penny-slinger-part-one.html.
[597] Ibid.

practice. Since then, Slinger's work has appropriated many non-Western cultural symbols as a way to sculpt her body image, and to emancipate the female body from traditional historical and discursive frameworks concerning the roles, positions, and responsibilities of women.

Yoko Ono's exhibition *Unfinished Paintings and Objects* was held at Indica Gallery in London in 1966. The cover image of the exhibition card for this show depicts Ono's portrait in profile (Fig. 3.76). The portrait refers to the tradition of intaglio printing, yet the slightly misaligned arrangement of straight lines also hints at a screen glitch, indicating her departure from artistic conventions.

Nevertheless, the images of Slinger's and Ono's faces are considered part of their work, contributing to the visual impact of the exhibitions and their publicity strategies. Snead must have been aware of these strategies. However, her use of *The Iceberg Eaters* as the cover image of her exhibition pamphlet and invitation card suggests the monkeys' clownish imitation of human behaviour as a way to mock the worship and replication of the self-images of human beings (Fig. 3.1 and Fig. 3.2). By placing her audience in the position of continuously feeding ice to monkeys, Snead enhances this dynamic and absurd cognitive disjuncture.

2. The Installation

Recognising the institutional stagnation of the Bombay art world, Kekoo Gandhy, co-founder of Gallery Chemould, sought to provide an open space for artists to exhibit their works with a minimum of curatorial intervention.[598] Since Snead's exhibition pamphlet does not mention the involvement of a curator, it is likely that she substantially installed her own show.

Snead's contact sheet shows that *The Iceberg Eaters* and *Ice, Anybody* were displayed side by side in the exhibition space, so as to highlight their shared exploration of sensory perception (Fig. 3.77). *The Way of Ostrich, When the Cat Laughs,* and *New End Game* were also displayed side by side, emphasising their exploration of spatial perception amid the architecture of the Jantar Mantar (Fig. 3.78).

Displayed in a grouped manner within the exhibition, the arrangement of the exhibits highlighted the shared approaches to the manipulation of perception evidenced in the artworks. This layout also serves to illuminate Snead's working process for the viewers. For example, the three works were arranged from left to right in accordance with their increasing complexity, suggesting Snead's developmental process in the making of her photo-collages.

A notable feature of the installation may be observed on the ceiling of the exhibition space, where two works, both titled *Ceiling Photo,* hung diagonally on either side (Fig. 3.79 and Fig. 3.80).[599] The installation of these works very likely references Yoko Ono's work *Ceiling Painting*, first exhibited in the show *Unfinished Paintings and Objects* at Indica Gallery in London in 1966 (Fig. 3.81). Ono's audience was invited to climb a white ladder and use a magnifying glass to observe the word 'YES' written on a plexiglass-covered canvas, the plexiglass and text serving as a departure from the tradition of painterly representation (Fig. 3.82). Snead also draws on this idea, as the works of *Ceiling Photo* challenge the photographic reproduction of reality.

Snead consistently used the term 'photo-collage' to define her works, presumably following the popularity of the term 'collage' in American art history. Having moved from the US to India in 1960, she often returned to New York to see exhibitions and meet friends. Although the 1960s were the time of Abstract Expressionism, MoMA had begun to collect and give shape to a history of American collage and assemblage. For example, the exhibition

[598] Kekoo Gandhy, "The Beginnings of the Art Movement," *Seminar*, accessed 16 April 2024, https://www.india-seminar.com/2003/528/528%20kekoo%20gandhy.htm.
[599] These two photo-collages were both later re-named *Ceiling*. Snead wrote this title on the back of her prints of each work, now in the Stella Snead Archive. The reason for this change remains unclear.

The Art of Assemblage, held at MoMA in 1961, traced the history of collage back to Picasso, Duchamp, and many surrealists, and extended the concept and method of collage to include all forms of assemblage made by American artists.[600] This was followed by another exhibition at MoMA, *American Collages*, in 1965. The aim of this show was to highlight some of the most important collage-makers in the US, namely 'Robert Motherwell, Esteban Vicente, Conrad Marca-Relli and Joseph Cornell', in addition to exploring the French origins of the practice.[601] Snead would have been familiar with these New York exhibitions and thus aware that the medium of collage was moving from the historical to the contemporary.

Snead, therefore, installed her *Ceiling Photo* works in the exhibition as a clear reference to Ono's *Ceiling Painting*, signifying her continued interest in the art scenes of New York and London, despite her residing in India. This demonstrates her endeavour to respond to contemporary artistic practice by way of the exhibition.

Reflecting the viewer in the plexiglass, Ono's *Ceiling Painting* transforms the object into a site for performance, soliciting the viewer's action and attention to their literal and figurative reflection, and inviting thoughts about the work's multivalent semantic potential. Joan Rothfuss points out that the ascent of the ladder in Ono's work can be interpreted as a Buddhist metaphor for the meaning of life as a journey.[602] Snead and Ono both encourage audience engagement, yet Snead does not provide a ladder to assist her audience in drawing closer to the works. Instead, her audience is required to maintain an uncomfortable head tilt in order to view them.

I have discussed one of the two *Ceiling Photo* works in the third section of this chapter (Fig. 3.54). In the other *Ceiling Photo*, the space is formed by Snead's photographs of three different geographical locations: the three skyscrapers in New York, the landscape of Greenland, and the landscape of Kashmir (Fig. 3.83). Snead took the photographs of Kashmir in 1964, those of Greenland in 1966, and the skyscrapers on Park Avenue in 1967 (Fig. 3.84, Fig. 3.6, and Fig. 3.56). The flower in the centre of the photo-collage belongs to the datura

[600] William C. Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961).
[601] Museum of Modern Art, "American Collages, May 11–Jul 25, 1965," press release, accessed 25 April 2024, https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2569.[602] Joan Rothfuss, "Somewhere for the Dust to Cling: Yoko Ono's Painting and Early Objects," in *Yes: Yoko Ono*, eds. Alexandra Munroe and Jon Hendricks (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000), 96.
[602] Joan Rothfuss, "Somewhere for the Dust to Cling: Yoko Ono's Painting and Early Objects," in *Yes: Yoko Ono*, eds. Alexandra Munroe and Jon Hendricks (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000), 96.

family and implies an element of illusionism. This photograph was taken during her trip to Mexico (Fig. 3.85).[603]

Snead confuses her audience by highlighting echoes between the reflections and symmetrical structures of three different locations, blurring the distinction between disparate geographies. This creates a disorienting, even dizzying experience for the viewer. Such disruption affects the viewer's ability to extract information from perception, and confounds their apprehension of spatial relationships such as direction, position, distance, and the boundaries between spaces. The photo-collage creates an interface between man-made and natural spectacles, suggesting a two-way interaction, rather than a dichotomy, between East and West, or nature and the city.

Ono's work encourages contemplation of one's self-image, the word 'YES', and the notion of the self in general. In contrast, Snead's two *Ceiling Photo* works, and their installation, do not provoke conceptual reflection but rather engross her audience in their embodied experience of, and perceptual response to, her geographical illusions. Snead's exhibition allows her audience to shift between perspectives, geographical locations, and spatial relationships while viewing, walking, and looking up and down to consider the works' transgressive angles, gestures, and movements.

Excepting the two *Ceiling Photo* works, Snead's audience at the 1968 exhibition in Bombay would have been familiar with many of the visual elements of objects, buildings, religious figures, street signs, and tourist sites such as the Jantar Mantar and Kashmir that she captured during her travels in India. By collaging fragments from other countries with these Indian motifs, her exhibition offered its audience the chance to imagine the experience of cross-cultural travel.

As mentioned in the previous section, Snead's photographs of the model may refer to the magazine portraits of the Indian actress Sharmila Tagore, who wore a two-piece bikini in the 1967 Hindi film *An Evening in Paris*. Despite the controversy surrounding her bikini portraits, the film was commercially successful, ranking eighth at the box office in 1967.

An Evening in Paris (1967) was not the only Bollywood film made abroad at the time—*Love in Tokyo* (1966), *Night in London* (1967), *Around the World* (1967), and *Spy in Rome*

[603] Snead's photographs of Mexico also served as inspirations for her photo-collages, and she visited Mexico many times in her life. On her trip to Mexico in 1967 she was accompanied by Sari Dienes, Charmion von Wiegand, and others.

(1968) were all filmed in famous cities around the world for the consumption of an Indian audience. Foreign locations were incorporated into the narratives of these films as tourist sites, as places of romantic possibility, and as the spaces of encounters with new forms of urbanism. Ranjani Mazumdar notes that, in the history of Bombay cinema, films of the 1960s were particularly marked by the negotiation of nationalist anxieties, the desire for mobility, encounters with new places, and the image and position of women.[604]

Images of famous tourist destinations were widely spread by the mass media at this time, shaping their iconic and romanticised imagery. For example, the region of Kashmir, with its lakes, ravines, boathouses, mountains, and people, was spectacularly highlighted in films. Cultural products lifted the mood of the middle class, stimulated their desire for mobility, and shaped their audience's attention and perception. The audience was invited to experience the encounter, and corporeality was reaffirmed through the sensuous force of cinematic travel.

Snead's exhibition did not simply celebrate this dissemination of images of tourist destinations and the increased desire for mobility that accompanied it. The development of transportation in the 1960s had a profound effect on tourism, and on the perception of space and time. It brought about a shift in the perception of the stability of places and cultural certainties. Elizabeth Grosz points out that the organisation of space regulates and manages the behaviour and habits of our bodies, and that individuals negotiate their understanding of and alignment with space on a daily basis.[605] Power relations operate within spaces through the manipulation of ambiance, feelings, and emotions.[606] Snead's work operates within the micro-bodily realm, drawing the viewer's attention to the nuanced operations of perception. Snead delves into the internal exploration of individual flow patterns within specific spaces, offering a way to experience the world beyond what the eyes and mind alone can perceive. Thus, she presented her Bombay audience with an alternative experience that contrasted with that offered by Bollywood cinema. By reshaping perception through the alteration of spatial dynamics, movement within space, and perspectives on urban landscapes, she afforded the viewer a space to think about their relation to these global destinations.

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[604] Ranjani Mazumdar, "Aviation, Tourism and Dreaming in 1960s Bombay Cinema," *Bioscope: South Asian Screen Studies* 2, no. 2 (2011): 129–155, https://doi.org/10.1177/097492761100200203.
[605] Elizabeth Grosz, S*pace, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995), 104, 108, 204–5.
[606] Anne Jensen, "Mobility, Space and Power: On the Multiplicities of Seeing Mobility," *Mobilities* 6, no. 2 (2011): 256, https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2011.552903.

Although Snead herself reported healthy sales from this exhibition, from a curatorial perspective, its title, *Exhibition of Photo-Collage by Stella Snead*, may be said to have lacked any thematic guidance for her audience. Despite this, the cover image of Snead's exhibition pamphlet visually demonstrates how her work challenges and satirises the human ego and human face as the centre of artistic creation, and how she moves away from many surrealists' exploration of the subconscious. The installation of the exhibition was also carefully considered to impact upon her audience's perception. Therefore, while the exhibition may not have had a specific theme, both the pamphlet and the installation contributed to the delivery of Snead's ambition to engage the audience's embodied experience during their visit.

Exhibiting Photo-Collages after 1971

Following the photo-collage exhibition in 1968, Snead did not have to chance to hold another solo exhibition of her photo-collages before her death.[607] However, her photo-collages were involved in several group exhibitions, such as *Surrealism Unlimited 1968–1978*, at Camden Arts Centre in 1978.

The photo-collage *For Going Up* featured in *Surrealism Unlimited 1968–1978*, curated by Conroy Maddox (Fig. 3.86). Maddox wished to shape the history of British surrealism and to demonstrate its persistence into the 1970s, following Breton's death in 1966. Snead was selected, alongside women artists including Penny Slinger, Eileen Agar, and Mimi Parent, as a British surrealist active between 1968 and 1978.[608] Snead kept a newspaper clipping of a review of this exhibition in her archive, suggesting that she was aware of a resurgence in attention to the surrealist legacy and to contemporary surrealist practices at this time.[609]

Produced around 1974, *For Going Up* features a female figure who appears to be stuck within the rungs of a ladder (Fig. 3.87). With arms outstretched and hair flowing, her posture evokes a kinaesthetic perception of the gathering of strength to climb upward. Behind her shoulders, two fishermen seem to be attempting to entangle her body with their net, while on the left-hand side, a large male figure stands in the sea with his right hand extended; it is unclear whether he is attempting to push her down or lift her up.[610]

The motif of the ladder in Snead's artworks has its roots in a personal anecdote. She once carried a ladder to the Indian border and encountered a border control officer who questioned why a woman was carrying this item.[611] In a quick and witty response, she replied, 'for going up'. This became an amusing anecdote that was frequently revisited by Snead and her friends.

Confronted with the officer's question , which she perceived to carry undertones of gender discrimination, Snead did not try to explain her purpose or justify herself. Instead, she astutely responded by invoking a common-sense understanding of bodily movement on a

[607] After Snead's death, Pavel Zoubok organised a show of her photo-collages entitled *Stella Snead: With an Eye to Horizons*, at Pavel Zoubok Fine Art in 2014.
[608] Conroy Maddox and Camden Arts Centre, *Surrealism Unlimited 1968–1978*, exhibition catalogue, Camden Arts Centre, London, 1978, National Art Library, V&A.
[609] Snead, folder containing newspaper and magazine clippings.
[610] The photograph of this male figure wearing a swimming costume can be found on the contact sheet illustrated in figure 63. In this instance, Snead's inspiration likely came from her repeated reviewing of this contact sheet, and her noticing that the hand of the male seems to be directing Pat van Ingen's yoga posture.
[611] As told by Pavel Zoubok in my conversation with him, in March 2020.

ladder. It is reasonable, then, to assume that she made this photo-collage in 1974 to reflect on her experience of gender discrimination during her travels in the 1960s.

The photograph of the ladder stemmed from her photographic collaboration with Chris Barry on Juhu Beach (Fig. 3.88). Her contact sheets show that she not only captured photos of Barry climbing a ladder but also took several shots of the double extension ladder standing upright, without any support, against a backdrop of the blue sky, the sea, and the beach.

Grete Stern also made a photomontage featuring a woman and a ladder, titled *Perspectiva*, as part of her *Sueño* series of 1949 (Fig. 3.89). The female figure here appears trapped at the top of two ladders, hesitating to descend, whether due to a fear of heights or the difficulty of doing so. She wears high heels, and the two ladders seem to be extensions of her shoes, as if she is laboriously walking on stilts along a muddy path.

In Snead's photo-collage, by contrast, it is unclear what the ladder is for, or where it leads. The woman on the ladder seems to be striving upwards just for the sake of it, echoing Snead's response to the officer in her repeated anecdote.

For Going Up deliberately returns to a personal anecdote that Snead shared with friends, but it is not merely a reference to past event in memory. Her contact sheet reveals that the cutouts of model's head and arms come from different shots (Fig. 3.90 and Fig. 3.91). This suggests that the pose was not predetermined by Snead; rather, she selected the most satisfactory parts of each pose when reviewing the sheets.

The picture of the male figure, dressed in swim trunks and draped with a towel, was taken during a party Snead hosted at her home on Juhu Beach (Fig. 3.66). Her inspiration of the relationship between the male and female figure in *For Going Up* likely emerged from her review of the contact sheet, where it appears that the male figure is trying to catch or direct Pat van Ingen's yoga postures in adjacent pictures. Taking this into consideration, this photo-collage reflects Snead's emphasis on the kinaesthetic perception of her female characters and its power to challenge the potencial constraint and control imposed on them, as discussed in the earlier section.

The placement of the ladder standing alone on the beach evokes an embodied experience of interaction between individuals, ladders, and space, distancing itself from utilitarian purposes or social expectations regarding women's roles. Within this space, past memories and experiences are negotiated and deterritorialised. Subjects are attempting to break free

from the predefined rules or past facts, dismantling the patriarchal discourses of colonising, conquering, and controlling women's bodies in spatial territories.[612]

For Going Up was exhibited several times between the 1970s and 1990s, emerging as one of Snead's signature works. For example, it was included in a group show at Zelda Cheatle Gallery in London in 1991 (Fig. 3.92).[613] Given its importance, it is perplexing that Snead did not ensure that the catalogue of *Surrealism Unlimited 1968–1978* accurately listed the work's title. Instead, the catalogue entry simply states 'Group of photographs', lacking any individual titles or additional information, in stark contrast to the detailed entries provided for all the other participating artists' works (Fig. 3.93).[614] Though the exact reason for this remains uncertain, it is highly probable that Snead's extensive international travels in 1978 resulted in communication gaps and missing information in the letter correspondence.

The absence here of any mention of the title, *For Going Up*, opens Snead's work to its interpretation in terms of the conventional treatment of the female body in surrealism, namely its fragmentation and dissection under the male gaze as a metaphor for death and the uncanny. Man Ray's photographs, for instance, also captured women with long hair and raised chins, depicting the female figure with her body inverted, her arms absent, her head drooping, and her hair lifeless (Fig. 3.94). Man Ray's recurring photographic strategy estranges the female body as a human body, thus evoking the uncanny by relegating it to an almost animalistic state.[615] This strategy stands in stark contrast to Snead's method of evoking embodied experience in order to empower the female figure and highlight a sense of vitality.

As an artist on the fringes of surrealism, Snead's work illustrates her perception and subversion of the dominant logic and strategies at the movement's heart. It is from this peripheral perspective that she is able to reveal the contradictions and tensions of surrealism. However, the absence of the title in this exhibition, and of any examination of Snead's

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[612] Derek Gregory, "Emperors of the Gaze: Photographic Practices and Productions of Space in Egypt, 1839-1914," in *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, eds. Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan (London: Tauris, 2003), 196

[613] It is unclear which artworks were included in the exhibition, besides *For Going Up*. Zelda Cheatle Gallery, *New Ground Group Exhibition*, exhibition card (London: Zelda Cheatle Gallery, 1991), the Stella Snead Archive.

[614] At first, I presumed that Snead had displayed multiple works, potentially including photographs, collectively labelled 'Group of photographs' by the curator. However, considering the numbering system in the catalogue, it seems that if there were indeed multiple pieces, they would have been listed with consecutive numbers, such as 152, 153, 154, and so on. The fact that only number 152 is assigned suggests that only this single piece was included in the exhibition.

[615] Rosalind Krauss, "Corpus Delicti," in *L'Amour Fou*, eds. Krauss, Livingston, and Ades, 60.

working method, obscures the significance of her work in overturning dominant surrealist strategies, and fails to define her specific approach to exploring gender issues.

Conclusion

This chapter has undertaken a detailed examination of several case studies to elucidate Snead's photo-collage method, characterised by a deliberate engagement with multiple perceptions, such as sensory, spatial and time perceptions, facilitated by collaging her own photographs. Meanwhile, I compared Snead's photo-collages with works by some of the surrealists. While Snead employs some similar techniques and visual elements in creating her photo-collages to those of many historical surrealists, her approach also diverges from theirs. Departing from surrealist mental topography, her work takes a step back to unveil and ridicule the mystical guise and artificiality of the equivalence between marvellous imagery and the subconscious often exploited by the surrealists.

Based on the above analysis, I was able to articulate her strategy of reinventing her personal photographic archive and the significance of her exclusive use of her own photographs. I argued that Snead's method transcends her personal photographic archive being merely a repository of memories. It explores how new perceptions can be generated and how memory undergoes constant accumulation and alteration. It celebrates the empowerment and transformative potential of her method of making photo-collages to challenge conventions and norms.

This chapter has also examined the exhibition history of Snead's photo-collages. At her first solo exhibition in Bombay in 1968, despite the absence of explicit thematic cues for the audience, both the cover image and installation sought to convey Snead's emphasis on the perception evoked in the photo-collages and their influence on the viewer's perception, as well as her response to the contemporary New York and London art scenes. However, subsequent group exhibitions featuring Snead's photo-collages, after the 1970s, failed to afford her the opportunity to adequately elucidate the significance of these works.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the importance of Snead's use of her own photographs in making photo-collages by considering her travel and photographic practice. The most crucial aspect of the transformative potential in Snead's photo-collages lies in her ongoing interaction with her travel photographs and her reflection on her travel experiences.

Garth Lean has explored how physical travel functions as an agent of transformation for travellers, as it is difficult for individuals to distance themselves from their ever-changing environment during physical movement; departure thus affords individuals the opportunity to remove themselves from standard social and cultural definitions, languages, roles,

relationships, and expectations, even if only for a short period.[616] Lean is aware of the argument that 'travel simply reinforces existing ways of seeing and acting in the world, supporting prejudices, [and] misguided/'false' representations.'[617] Thus it is worth exploring how the meaning of travel might be made to continue to have an impact on daily life after the event, since any such impact usually dissipates once people go back home and return to their usual routines and duties.[618]

Lean emphasises 'reflection' on previous travel experiences as an important part of meaning-making and as a way to extend the significance of travel into one's post-travel life, by way of such methods as repeating stories, note-taking, diary, letter writing, and the reuse of photographs.[619] After visitors return home, their attention is drawn back to everyday life and the impact of the trip is often left behind. However, with its the frequency and regularity, Snead's travel and photographic practice blurs the line between everyday life and travel. Being a lifestyle traveller, she did not need to return to ordinary middle-class family life after holidays. Making photo-collage has become her means of summarising and articulating her reflections on years of travel experiences, amplifying and prolonging the impact of travel on her.

Snead's method of making photo-collages also contributes to a revised self-definition and self-understanding.[620] The construction of selfhood is understood as a complex process of combined bodily and psychic experiences.[621] Making photo-collages by using her own photographs helps to reflect on how various perceptions form and change and how embodied experience shapes her understanding of self and the world. Sharing her photo-collages with friends and exhibiting them also enabled her to share her exploration of the transformative power of embodied experience with her audience.

The majority of photographic cutouts used to make Snead's photo-collages came from her travels and life in India during the 1960s, with only a few from her travels in the 1970s

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[616] Lean, "Transformative Travel: A Mobilities Perspective," 151–52,
[617] Ibid., 152.
[618] Ibid., 163.
[619] Ibid.
[620] Robyn Fivush, Tilmann Habermas, Theodore E. A. Waters, and Widaad Zaman, "The Making of Autobiographical Memory: Intersections of Culture, Narratives and Identity," *International Journal of Psychology* 46, no. 5 (2011): 321–45, https://doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2011.596541.
[621] For example, Michel Foucault remarks that 'The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces.' Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 74.

after she moved to New York. This use of Indian elements in her work is not about their ideological or symbolic departure from the Western culture and modernity, as many avant-garde collagists often juxtapose elements of the West and the non-West in a dualistic manner. Instead, her use of Indian elements suggests India's profound impact on her, shaping her approach to travel and photography, as well as her working method of focusing on embodied experience.

Furthermore, while the photographic elements were taken in India, Snead's photo-collages offer a broader perspective for reflection on the connections between individual experiences and cultural contexts, allowing for the exploration of issues such as gender, tourism, mobility, freedom and cross-cultural hybridity. Overall, Snead's method embodies a perspective of transcending geographical and cultural boundaries.

Sabine Kriebel and Andrés Zervigón raised the question of whether the medium of collage/photomontage still has the capability and power to challenge conventions and shock viewers in the digital age.[622] It seems the form of collage has integrated into our contemporary life, such as the photoshop software and mobile phone applications capable of swiftly creating collages with various effects. The disruptive power of collage, however, should not solely be examined by techniques or aesthetics. Though technological advancements have predominantly replaced scissors and paper, Snead's method of making photo-collage reminds us that it is still pertinent to inquire into the embodied experience of the interaction between body and images in the digital age. Exploring how human perception and memory are shaped by the process of making collages, and how the reflections on embodied experience can generate the power of challenging established conventions and norms, remains profoundly meaningful.

[622] Sabine T. Kriebel and Andrés Mario Zervigón, "Is Photomontage Over? A Special Issue of History of Photography," *History of Photography* 4, no. 2 (2019): 119, Https://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2019.1696043.

Conclusion

In 1985, Snead participated in the group exhibition *A Second Talent: Painters and Sculptors Who Are Also Photographers* at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art (Ridgefield, Connecticut) (Fig. 4.1).[623] The exhibition surveyed how artists navigate between painting and photography, featuring works by renowned figures such as Herbert Bayer, David Hockney, Gyorgy Kepes, Sol LeWitt, Robert Rauschenberg, Robert Smithson, etc. Snead was represented by three works: a painting *The Plaza* (1947), a photograph *Fetching Water – Jaiselmer, Rajasthan* (1963) and a photo-collage *Trap to Capture the Marvellous* (c. 1972) (Fig. 4.2 and Fig. 3.31).

The mid-1980s witnessed the intersection of three fields of studies—women, photography, and surrealism. This exhibition *A Second Talent* not only included male artists/photographers but also featured several women artists/photographers, including Alice Aycock, Nancy Holt, Barbara Morgan, Dorothea Rockburne, and Snead. However, despite her inclusion in this exhibition, Snead's works did not gain significant recognition. Even though she belonged to the categories of women artists, photographers, and surrealists, her presence in art history again faded into obscurity after the exhibition.

I think there are multiple reasons for this. First, although the exhibition's curation aimed to position photography as a parallel art form alongside painting and sculpture, some photographs risked being seen merely as tools for conceptualising and documenting paintings, sculptures, or land art. The exhibition catalogue simply juxtaposed images of works without providing textual explanations of the relationship between photography and other art forms. Art critic Philip Eliasoph, in his review of this exhibition in *The Advocate*, also noted that the title is misleading, seemingly suggesting that photography is considered a secondary medium.[624]

Second, the three works Snead submitted for this exhibition were relatively disjointed in theme, period, and subject matter. Her photograph *Fetching Water – Jaiselmer, Rajasthan* (1963) and the photo-collage *Trap to Capture the Marvellous* (c. 1972) are more closely

[623] Robert Metzger, *A Second Talent: Painters and Sculptors Who Are Also Photographers*, exhibition catalogue, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Connecticut, 1985, National Art Library, V&A.
The exhibition was later reprised in 1986 at Baruch College Gallery, albeit with a reduced number of participating artists, totaling fourteen, among whom Snead was included.
[624] Philip Eliasoph, "Developing Film into Art in Aldrich Museum Show," *The Advocate*, October 4, 1985, National Art Library, V&A.

related, both stemming from her photography in India. However, the painting *The Plaza*, made in 1947, stands apart. As previously mentioned, Snead ceased painting after experiencing severe depression in the early 1950s. *The Plaza* was an old painting she had kept for many years. It seems that she selected good examples of each of her practices to fit into the exhibition, rather than a unified selection demonstrating a singular artistic mission. The connection between these three works was not clearly conveyed to the audience.

In contrast, David Hockney's works received considerable attention. Eliasoph's review extensively analysed Hockney's 'photographic collage', *Brooklyn Bridge* (November 28, 1982) and used an image of this work as the illustration for his article (Fig. 4.3).[625] In the 1980s, Hockney explored the fusion of sequential photographs to construct a single composite image. He believed that this approach closely mirrored what photography could capture of the binocular visual experience.[626] He employed curved perspectives and distortions, departing from the conventional flatness of photographic representation.[627] This departure led to his re-evaluation of Renaissance perspective and the geometry of space, echoing the exploration of Cubism.[628] His photographic collage *Brooklyn Bridge* and his painting, juxtaposed together, are closely related thematically, and integrated with the art historical narrative of the evolution of perspective (Fig. 4.4).

Third, the exhibition focused heavily on modernist photography, abstract art, minimalist art, and land art. Snead's photograph *Fetching Water – Jaiselmer, Rajasthan* captured the rhythm between the scattered circles of the pots and the parallel horizontal lines of the stairs, presenting a visual abstraction encountered in everyday life. This is why this photograph was given prominence and featured on the inner page of the exhibition pamphlet (Fig. 4.5). However, through the analysis in this thesis, we understand that although Snead was

[625] Eliasoph used the term 'photographic collage' to describe Hockney's collage. Ibid.
[626] Anne Hoy, 'Hockney's Photocollages', in *David Hockney: A Retrospective*, eds. Maurice Tuchman, Stephanie Barron and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988), 56.
[627] While Hockney's approach garnered attention, similar practices were also observed among other artists and photographers. For instance, David McGlynn created a collage featuring the Brooklyn Bridge, claiming precedence over Hockney. Artists like Joyce Neimanas and Stefan De Jaeger experimented with Polaroid collages in the late 1970s and early 1980s, reflecting the popular use of this medium in artistic expression. David McGlynn, "Tearsheet Time Capsule: Brooklyn Bridge Postcard 1982," David McGlynn (website), accessed March 11, 2024, https://davidmcglynn.com/2023/04/27/tearsheet-time-capsule-brooklyn-bridge-postcard-1982/.
[628] Jane Kinsman, "The Prints of David Hockney: Their Cultural, Autobiographical and Artistic Contexts," (PhD diss., The Australian National University, 2011), 21; and Peter Webb, *Portrait of David Hockney* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1988), 204.

influenced by modernist photography and abstract art, these were not the primary interests and methods in her work.

In 1987, Snead began to rekindle her ability to paint. Perhaps it was during the exhibition *A Second Talent* that she observed the relationship between photography and painting in others' works, sparking the idea of adapting her photo-collages into paintings. The most representative example of this transition is between her photograph of the Samrat Yantra in the Jantar Mantar (c. 1960s), her photo-collage *With an Eye to Horizons* (c. 1972) and her painting *With an Eye to Horizons* (1987-93) (Fig. 4.6, Fig. 4.7 and Fig. 4.8).

During this period, she might be attempting to connect her entire body of work—from photography and photo-collage to painting—through the lens of surrealism. She hoped that returning to surrealist painting would help her gain recognition, similar to her peers, such as Leonora Carrington and Leonor Fini. This is why she proactively contacted Neil Zukerman at CFM Gallery to propose an exhibition. Eventually, in 1999, her exhibition '*Rediscovery': The Paintings of Stella Snead* was held at CFM Gallery.

As mentioned in the introduction, although this exhibition brought her some attention, she remained on the periphery of the mainstream narrative of surrealism and women surrealists after the exhibition. I believe a major reason is that the 'rediscovery' in the exhibition title was not a complete rediscovery. It merely combined the timeline of her paintings from the 1940s and the 1980s-1990s, leaving a huge gap in between and overlooking the larger part of her life dedicated to photography and related works. This 'rediscovery' failed to investigate her entire career and mentioned little about the close relationship between her photographs, photo-collages, and paintings. Portraying Snead as a surrealist painter, while it helped increase her recognition, limited the understanding of her as a lifestyle traveller, a photographer, a collagist, a book designer, and so on, and how her working method unified different mediums.

Additionally, although Snead might appear to be a woman surrealist worth 'rediscovering', the themes and methods of her work do not align with feminist re-evaluations of surrealism, photography, and gender. Snead did not use the female body to explore central surrealist topics such as sexuality, desire, and the unconscious. Nor did she leverage her connections with some surrealists to craft a narrative for public circulation. By contrast, Penny Slinger consciously inserted herself into the art historical lineage by repeatedly addressing her inspiration from Max Ernst to create her book *50% The Visible*

Woman and was able to articulate how she appropriated surrealist language, method and techniques to explore her desire and unconsciousness.[629] Slinger carefully kept the portrait of herself talking to Max Ernst, put her name first in the title of the picture in order to highlight her friendship with Ernst (Fig. 4.9 and Fig. 4.10). In Dawn Ades's book *Photomontage*, investigating the history of photomontage in the 20th century, first published in 1976 and revised and extended in 1986, Slinger's photomontage *The Abysmal* (1975) was included, but Snead's work was not.[630] This could be attributable to the fact that Slinger's work more obviously fits into the legacy of surrealism. One reason for this might be her use of images of the naked female body, which aligns more closely with surrealist and feminist narratives in that period.

In her later years, Snead acknowledged in her autobiography about her struggles in managing her career effectively, as she writes, 'Still, I failed to get even a toe in the door of the New York art world or among the surrealists. I simply did not know how to manage my career.'[631] Including the aforementioned 1985 exhibition, Snead attempted to participate in various group exhibitions in the latter half of the 20th century. However, none of the mainstream narratives of these mediums or movements seemed entirely applicable to her work. She found herself torn between her aspirations for artistic recognition and the challenges posed by these mainstream narratives, which ultimately led to her further marginalisation.

Therefore, I believe that the phenomenological approach to studying the embodied experience is well-suited for examining Snead's work. Supported by archival materials, this approach allows for a deeper understanding of her working methods. The oversight from curators or art dealers on Snead stemmed from the insufficient examination her working process. Merely attempting to identify depicted objects makes it challenging to encapsulate the true essence of her artistic output.

I hope to propose an exhibition for Snead, where embodied experience serves as a crucial thread, as it is the best way to naturally link her photographs, photobooks, exhibitions,

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[629] Penny Slinger, "50%–The Visible Woman: Work details," Penny Slinger (website), accessed March 12, 2024, https://pennyslinger.com/Works/50-the-visible-woman/; ZB and Slinger, "Art, Feminism, Magic."; The Debutant and Penny Slinger, "'I Am Using Myself as My Muse': Interview with Feminist Surrealist, Penny Slinger," *The Debutant* (Jan 12, 2019), accessed March 12, 2024, https://www.thedebutante.online/post/i-am-using-myself-as-my-muse-interview-with-feminist-surrealist-penny-slinger.
[630] Dawn Ades, *Photomontage*, revised and enlarged edition (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 142.
[631] Snead, "Chronology of a Painter."

photo-collages, and later paintings. The embodied experience evoked by one medium became the creative material for another.

Using the phenomenological approach to focus on the embodied experience, the distinction between Snead's work and others, along with the interconnections among different mediums of her works, immediately become apparent. For example, while both Snead and Hockney used their own photographs to create collages, their approaches diverged significantly. As Hockney recorded the exact date of November 28, 1982 at the back of his collage *Brooklyn Bridge*, he strives to recreate an authentic simulation of his optic perception at that particular moment, consciously laying the groundwork for his paintings (Fig. 4.4). This mirrors many artists' exploration of the concept of space in the twentieth century, demonstrating how the formal interpretation of optical sensation can be represented in a flat pictorial space.[632]

As I have discussed in the third chapter, Snead's work *Trap to Capture the Marvellous* evoked multiple perceptions and dynamic relationships to reflect and rewrite the pictorial trap constructed by both surrealism and tourism (Fig. 3.31). Her approach involves a prolonged interaction with physical photographs over the years. She is less concerned with the artist as the subject projecting their gaze onto objects, nor does she strive for the fidelity of representation or the authentic simulation of optic perception at a particular moment.

The development of the embodied experience is also clearly evident in her series of photograph of the Samrat Yantra in the Jantar Mantar (c. 1960s), photo-collage *With an Eye to Horizons* (c. 1972) and painting *With an Eye to Horizons* (1987-93) (Fig. 4.6, Fig. 4.7 and Fig. 4.8). As discussed in the first section of chapter three, her photographs of the Samrat Yantra initiate an invitation for her audience to perceive an upward motion. In her photo-collage *With an Eye to Horizons*, the view of the mountains and buildings at the bottom left corner of the photograph is replaced by an image of iron rods in water, while an image of a sailing boat on the right introduces another horizontal plane, adding to the viewer's disorientation. In the painting under the same title, the staircase undergoes a transformation into a third horizontal plane, flowing laterally on a slope, defying gravity. Additionally, the

[632] Christopher W. Tyler and Amy Ione, "Concept of space in 20th century art," *Proceedings of the SPIE, Human Vision and Electronic Imaging VI* 4299 (June 2001), 565-577, https://doi.org/10.1117/12.429529.

tall figure, appearing as a fusion of Medusa with its snake-covered head and Siren with its tail, further complicates the viewer's perception of scale.[633]

Titled 'With an Eye to Horizons', the position of the eye in the pavilion is the only spot in the picture where one can simultaneously observe three different horizons. The photograph of the Samrat Yantra features three birds on the platform of the left wall, guiding the audience's imagined direction of movement upward. This coincidental capture of the three birds in the photograph was preserved in later photo-collages and paintings. In the painting, the birds are depicted in greater detail, while the foot from the photo-collage is omitted. This omission likely results from the transformation of the steps into a pond, making the narrow platform of the wall on the left the only apparent path for the viewer. This series of works demonstrate Snead's ongoing process of revisiting her photograph of the Samrat Yantra. This process encourages the viewer to imaginatively ascend towards the pavilion, not only altering vision but also bringing about a transformation in embodied experience, replacing a singular horizon with a composite sense of horizontal planes.

Looking back to the main body of this thesis, it examined Snead's photographs, photobooks, and photo-collages, respectively, and revealed that the emphasis on multi-layered embodied experience is consistent across her different mediums. I want to reiterate that the most important feature of Snead's working method is considering photography as a growing process rather than viewing a photograph as a static, isolated image. Her approach challenges traditional concepts of archives and memory, continuously revisiting and reusing personal archival photos to demonstrate the dynamic interaction between archival materials and human experience. Her works are not only reflections on her own experiences but also engage viewers' perceptions and encourage them to explore their own phenomenological connections with the world around them.

The first chapter investigated Snead's approach to travel and photography in India. Through a close examination of her contact sheets, it argued that Snead's photographic approach embodies a perspective that views photography as a continuous process, one that does not cease with the production of prints as the final product. This perspective indicates her emphasis on the element of chance inherent in photography, which not only refers to the process of taking photographs and handling negatives, but more significantly refers to a

[633] This figure may allude to Sheila Legge's performance as a surrealist 'Phantom' at Trafalgar Square in 1936, whose appearance derived from Salvador Dalí's painting *Three Young Surrealist Women Holding in Their Arms the Skins of an Orchestra.*

continual process of reviewing the contact sheets and prints over the years. Snead's fascination with what she called the 'revelation' of photography lies in capacity to evoke embodied experience and expand vision. This led her to develop three main photographic themes: beach patterns, architectural patterns, and street patterns. Through a detailed examination of these three themes, I argue that patterns in Snead's photography do not refer to abstract forms but to an expansion of vision, imaginative association, dynamic bodily perception, and a sensitivity to cultural and political dynamics, all sparked by the sensitivity to embodied experience that photography evokes. Snead's interest in encounters while traveling in India and her sensitivity to India's cultural politics stem from her surrealist eye searching for unusual patterns in ordinary life. However, as a lifestyle traveller, her inclusive approach to travel and her intimate and prolonged connection with India contrasts with many historical surrealists' often sedentary or armchair travels.

Following the first chapter, the second chapter examined Snead's photobook *Shiva's Pigeons: An Experience of India* (1972) and her exhibition *People Figures–India* (1982). Collaborating with writers Jon Godden and Rumer Godden, *Shiva's Pigeons* aimed to evoke its audience's embodied experience and emotional response to contemporary Indian daily life through the interplay of images and text. This effort sought to avoid the stereotypes commonly found in the history of representing India and the official representation methods in the 1970s. This chapter also discussed Snead's and the Goddens' cross-cultural identities and their awareness of their roles as cultural mediators, aiming to bridge Eastern and Western perspectives and avoid controversy, influenced the content of the book. Nonetheless, Snead's photographs in the book played a crucial role in conveying an embodied experience of connecting with India, as they challenged the simplistic tourist gaze and called for a deeper, empathetic engagement with the subjects.

Snead's exhibition *People Figures–India* reflected the greater freedom she had in exploring the embodied experience in the representation of India than the publication of her photobook *Shiva's Pigeons*. Though this exhibition was part of the Festival of India in 1982, Snead's design strategy of the exhibition challenged traditional exhibition norms of displaying non-western objects and encouraging audience's personal and sensory involvement with the photographs of Indian folk figures. This strategy contrasts sharply with other exhibitions in the festival that focus on Indian craftsmanship and commercial potential. Emphasising the playful and absurd dimensions of experiencing folk objects, her approach was influenced by the surrealist idea that objects have a significant influence on the subject

during the encounter with unfamiliar cultures and objects. However, Snead's strategy stands in contrast to the often static and detached nature of using folk objects, whose 'primitivity' were celebrated by many historical surrealists. They usually focused on the artistic manipulation of found objects to evoke subconscious responses. By incorporating disorder and unpredictability in the exhibition design, Snead encourages her audience to pay attention to the embodied experience of encountering folk objects within a contemporary context in India.

The third chapter analysed Snead's unique approach to making photo-collages and handling a personal archive. By cutting and pasting fragments of her own photographs, Snead's working method challenged the fixed nature of photographic archives, transforming them into a medium to manipulate embodied experience, rewrite memory, and seek empowerment and transformation. This chapter used Snead's photo-collage *Trap to Capture the Marvellous* as an example to discuss her relationship with surrealism. This work provides a critique on surrealist methodologies by emphasising embodied experience over subconscious symbolism, highlighting the artificial construction of surreal spaces. Despite distancing herself from collective surrealist activities, she maintained a strong interest in surrealist ethos of challenging conventions and norms. This interest was not based in subconscious exploration but in manipulating the multiple perceptions in her works to rewrite her contemporary life and her concerns.

This chapter also discussed the influence of feminist movement reflected in her photo-collages, such as *Ceiling, Feather Centre Beach*, and *For Going UP*. It argued that Snead's method diverged from many of her contemporaries, while still exploring related gender issues. She considers how embodied experience and women's mobility interact with the struggle against gender discrimination and bodily autonomy. The exclusive use of her photographs, reflecting her travel experiences and life encounters not only discussed personal encounters but also demonstrate to her audience that valuing and shifting embodied experience can bring empowerment and transformation. She breaks through the confines and dualism between home and travel, showcasing the courage and determination exhibited in renegotiating female roles and redefining the female experience of traveling. Therefore, I believe Snead aligns with feminist aesthetics, even though her approach differs from that of her peers.[634]

[634] Claire Raymond reminds us that the feminist movements should not be understood as a singular form of woman or a singular form of feminist aesthetic. Raymond, *Women Photographers and Feminist Aesthetics*, 5.

Additionally, I hope this thesis can raise people's attention to a new dimension for the research in surrealist art: the phenomenological discussion of surrealist photography remains insufficient. I do not claim that my research alone can address this field comprehensively. This requires more than tracing the historical activities of the movement or conducting psychoanalytic descriptions of images. It involves examining the artists' archives and reflecting on the embodied experience between artists and their materials. This perspective prevents the pitfalls of notions that celebrate technical prowess and artistic intelligence, often centered on the historiography of canonical figures. It also mitigates risks of the binary opposition between the traditional and the modern or center and periphery, focusing instead on how individuals' bodies navigate, adapt, and resist in cross-cultural and cross-geographical experiences.

Finally, there is still much work to be done to ensure that Snead's entire body of work and her social relationships are fully considered. I would like to point out that although her work shows a certain level of independence, she had various friendships and connections with key figures in the fields of art, architecture, literature, and dance throughout the 20th century. Sending postcards, taking photographs of friends and making photo-collages by using friends' portraits were the main ways Snead used to maintain connections and share life experiences, compensating for the lack of a sense of community due to her lifestyle travels. The names include Ethel and William Baziotes, Leonora Carrington, Mura Dehn, Sari Dienes, Addie Herder, Didi Kinzinger, Beatrice Mandelman and Louis Ribak, Lucie Rie and Hans Coper, Lenore Tawney, Paul Wengraf, and more. Their diverse friendships with Snead require additional archival research for thorough understanding.

As I conclude this thesis, I recall the initial interest that drew me to Snead's life and work in 2018. I wanted to understand how we establish connections with worlds and people from cross-cultural contexts. In Snead's works, 'patterns' go beyond abstract forms; they encapsulate a comprehensive process of movement, encounter, perception, reflection, and so on. The more one becomes conscious of how we are formed and influenced, the more our internal structures and boundaries are reordered. Her working method allows her to travel light, leaving behind familiar constructs and myths to embrace encounters in diverse locales.

If there is a notion criticising Snead for never being able to understand Indian culture like a local, I believe this perspective of insider-outsider dualism itself is a myth. After all, everyone interprets their surroundings from their limited perspective, often overlooking many taken-for-granted aspects. Outsiders should also be allowed to approach in their own way,

bringing fresh perspectives and practices. Ultimately, it is these shared perceptions that become the common data of human experience, forming the basis of empathy and connection.

Overall, this thesis provides a fresh perspective on understanding Snead's relationship with surrealism and highlights the significance of her work. It enhances our understanding of women photographers/artists who worked on the margin of surrealism, contributing to the historiography of surrealism. Analysing Snead's approach clearly shows that she used surrealist ideas as guiding principles for her travels and photography, inheriting surrealism's use of absurdity, humor, and irrationality to disrupt conventions and norms. However, her method distinctly focuses on working with embodied experience in an ongoing photographic process, stripping away many surrealists' adherence to subconscious exploration or sexual symbolism. In this thesis, the discussion on Snead and surrealism served as a starting and returning point rather than the primary subject and methodology.

Secondly, it contributes to the understanding of the phenomenology of photography by exploring the ways Snead's photographs, photobooks and photo-collages mediated embodied experience. This method of studying photography is not related to photographic techniques, such as the sophisticated tonal balance or refined composition and extends beyond looking at a single picture as the final product. The expansion of vision and imagination grows with accumulated experience of continuous revisiting of photographs, involving the labour of the eyes, perceptions, imagination, memories, movements, among others.

Thirdly, it underscores the value of using archival materials in photographic research. By thoroughly examining Snead's extensive personal archive, I reveal how her creative process is deeply intertwined with her interaction with her archive materials. This challenges the traditional concept of static photographic archives, presenting them instead as dynamic, evolving entities.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Selected Exhibitions of Stella Snead (Photographs and Photo-Collages)

1. 1966. *Beach Abstracts*, Chemould Gallery, Bombay (solo; photographs).
2. 1967. *Beach Abstracts*, Panoras Gallery, New York (solo; photographs).
3. 1968. *Photo-collage by Stella Snead*, Chemould Gallery, Bombay (solo; photo-collages).
4. 1973. *Stately Homes of Bombay and Other Follies*, Institute of Contemporary Art, London (solo; photographs).
5. 1974. *Photography of Stella Snead*, Chemould Gallery, Bombay (solo; photographs).
6. 1975. *Beach Patterns*, Elaine Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, New York (solo; photographs).
7. 1977. *Two Organic Women: Buffie Johnson / Stella Snead*, The Stamford Museum & Nature Centre, Stamford, Connecticut (duo; photographs).
8. 1977. *Derry Moore, UK / Stella Snead, US*, The Australian Center for Photography, Sydney (duo; photographs and photo-collages).
9. 1977. *Sectional Images: An Exhibition of Photographs and Drawings*, The Women's Interart Center Gallery, New York (group; photographs).
10. 1978. *Three Views of India: Stella Snead, New York; Hirokazu Ishida, Tokyo; Joseph Czarnecki, Berkeley*, Focus Gallery, San Francisco, California (group; photographs).
11. 1978. *Surrealism Unlimited*, the Camden Arts Centre, London (group; photo-collage).
12. 1979. *Stella Snead: A View of India*, Women's Interart Center Gallery, New York (solo; photographs).
13. 1979. *Traditional Textiles from Kutch, Kathiawar and Rajasthan*, Frida Craft Stores, London (group; photographs).
14. 1982. *People Figures – India: Photographs by Stella Snead*, St. Pancras Library and the Shaw Theatre, Festival of India, London (solo; photographs).
15. 1985. *A Second Talent: Painters and Sculptors Who Are Also Photographers*, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Bridgefield, Connecticut (group; photograph, photo-collage, and painting).
16. 1985. *"Roads Not Taken, Places Rarely Seen: Photographs of India", An Exhibition of Photographs by E.B. Heston, Stephen Huyler, Christopher James, Stella Snead, Steven Trefonides and Jane Tuckerman*, Watson Gallery, Wheaton College, Norton Massachusetts (group; photographs).
17. 1986. *Two Views of India: Photographs by Stella Snead and Pablo Bartholomew*, International Center of Photography, New York (duo; photographs).
18. 1986. *A Second Talent: Painters and Sculptors Who Are Also Photographers*, Baruch Gallery, New York (group; photograph, photo-collage, and painting).

19. 1987. "*Can Drowning Be Fun?" a Nonsense Book and Other Photo-collage*, Il Photogramma Gallery, Rome (solo; photo-collages).
20. 1990-91. *Exits & Entrances: Fifty Photographers*, Center Gallery of Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania (group; photographs).
21. 1991. *New Ground Group Exhibition*, Zelda Cheatle Gallery, London (group; photo-collage).
22. 1993. *Beach Patterns*, Ramsay Galleries, Honolulu, Hawaii (solo; photographs).
23. 1997. *Group Exhibition*, Pavel Zoubok, New York, NY (group; photographs and photo-collages).
24. 1999. *Selections: Collage*, Anthony Giordano Gallery at Dowling College, Oakdale, New York (group; photo-collages).
25. 2001. *Rupture & Revision: Collage in America*, Pavel Zoubok, New York (group; photo-collage).
26. 2002. *Stella Snead: Paintings, Drawings, Photomontages*, Pavel Zoubok, New York, NY (solo; paintings, drawings, and photo-collages).
27. 2014. *Stella Snead: With an Eye to Horizons*, Pavel Zoubok Fine Art, New York (solo; photo-collages).
28. 2017. *ADAA: The Art Show.* Pavel Zoubok Gallery presented works by Sari Dienes, Addie Herder, and Stella Snead at booth D20 (group; paintings, drawings, and photo-collages).

Appendix 2: Travel Records of Stella Snead between 1956 and 1988

Given that Snead rarely wrote travelogues, her contact sheets serve as one of the sources for tracing her travel history. The destinations listed for each year are organised alphabetically, not in the order Snead visited them. This is because she only noted the years on her contact sheets without providing specific travel dates, and the contact sheets are not stored in chronological order. This list provides only a partial view of the destinations in each country Snead visited. For a more comprehensive understanding of her travel history, further examination of her negative strips would be helpful.

1956

- Afghanistan
- India
- Iran
- Iraq
- Jordan
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Sikkim
- Syria
- Turkey

1957

- Burma
- Cambodia
- Hong Kong
- Japan
- Thailand
- USA (New Mexico)

1958

- Afghanistan
- Madhya Pradesh state, Central India (Mandu)
- Uttarakhand state, North India (Almora, Jageshwar)

1959

- Burma
- Thailand
- Vietnam

1960

- Chandigarh, North India
- Karnataka state, South India (Aihole, Hampi)
- Maharashtra state, West India (Elephanta, Aurangabad, Ellora, Bhaja)
- Tamil Nadu state, South India (Makabalipuram, Dharsuram, Madras, Tanjore)
- Uttarakhand state, North India (Almora, Jageshwar)

1961

- Cambodia
- Gujarat state, West India (Khedbrahma, Patan, Siddhpur,)
- Karnataka state, South India (Badami, Bijapur)

- Madhya Pradesh state, Central India (Mandu)
- Maharashtra state, West India (Bassein, Bhaja)
- Odisha state, East India (Konark, Puri, Udayagiri)
- UK (London)

1962

- Karnataka state, South India (Badami, Belur, Bijapur, Hampi, Haveri, Lakkundi)
- Madhya Pradesh state, Central India (Deogarh)
- Maharashtra state, West India (Karla, Ter)
- Tamil Nadu state, South India (Kanchi, Mahabalipuram, Vellore)
- Uttar Pradesh state, North India (Gyaspur)

1963

- Ceylon
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Italy
- Mexico
- Sudan

1964

- Ceylon
- Egypt
- Greece
- Kashmir
- Maharashtra state, West India (Ajanta, Ellora, Mahabaleshwar)
- Odisha state, East India (Khandagiri, Khiching, Konark, Udayagiri)
- Rajasthan state, North India (Ajimer, Amber, Atru, Baroli, Bikaner, Jaipur, Jaiselmer, Pushkar, Udaipur)
- UK (London)

1965

- Goa state, West India (Goa)
- Himachal Pradesh state, North India (Chamba, Kangra, Kullu, Menali, Nagger)
- Kashmir
- Maharashtra state, West India (Nasik)
- Pakistan
- USA (New York)

1966

- Africa
- Greenland
- Kerala state, South India (Cochin)
- Tamil Nadu state, South India (Ooty)
- USA (New York)

1967

- Karnataka state, South India (Bangalore)
- Maharashtra state, West India (Nasik, Poona)
- Mexico
- Spain
- Tamil Nadu state, South India (Ooty)
- USA (New York)

1968

- France
- Kashmir

- Maharashtra state, West India (Elephanta)
- Mexico
- USA (New York, San Francisco, Taos)

1969

- Maharashtra state, West India (Ajanta, Aurangabad, Ellora)
- Mexico
- Tamil Nadu state, South India (Kanchi, Madras)
- Telangana state, South India (Hyderabad)

1970

- Assam state, Northeast India
- Maharashtra state, West India (Bassein, Nasik)
- Mexico
- West Bengal state, East India (Culcutta)

1971

- Mexico
- USA (New York, Taos)

1972

- Spain
- UK
- USA (Maine, New Haven, White Mountains)

1973

- Canada
- Italy
- UK
- USA (Arizona, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah)
- Uttar Pradesh state, North India (Ghaziabad)

1974

- Canada
- Delhi, North India
- Maharashtra state, West India (Bombay)
- Mexico
- Pakistan

1975

- Mexico
- USA (Colorado, New Mexico, San Francisco, Utah)

1976

- Delhi, North India
- Kashmir
- Ladakh
- Maharashtra state, West India (Bombay)
- Rajasthan state, North India (Jaiselmer, Pushkar)

1977

- France
- Kashmir
- Rajasthan state, North India
- UK
- USA (San Francisco)

1978

- USA (Colorado, New Mexico, Ossabaw Island, San Francisco, Utah)

1979

- Gujarat State, West India (Kutch)
- Maharashtra state, West India (Bombay)
- Rajasthan state, North India (Jaiselmer, Kiradu, Osian, Pushkar)
- Spain
- USA (Arizona, New Mexico, Utah)

1980

- Ecuador
- Italy
- Mexico
- Peru
- UK
- USA (Ossabaw Island)

1981

- Italy
- USA (New Mexico)

1982

- Ecuador
- Haiti
- Ireland
- Karnataka state, South India (Hampi)
- Mexico
- Turkey
- UK
- USA (Ossabaw Island)

1983

- Morocco
- Pakistan

1984

- Ladakh
- USA (New Mexico, Oregon)

1985

- Bolivia
- USA (New Mexico)

1986

- China
- Egypt
- Pakistan
- USA (New Mexico)

1988

- China

Appendix 3: Photo-Collages by Stella Snead

The items in this list were sourced from photographic prints of photo-collages and original photo-collages kept in the Stella Snead Archive, Weyauwega, Wisconsin and Pavel Zoubok Fine Art, New York. Some prints in the archives only have titles written on the back, lacking years or dimensions.

1. *Are You with It?*, c.1967-1968.
2. *Bombay Plan*, c.1967-1968, 20x30 in.
3. *Cafe de la Paix*, c.1967-1968, 20x24 in.
4. *Ceiling*, c.1967-1968, 20x30 in.
5. *Ceiling*, c.1967-1968, 20x30 in.
6. *Cool Garage*, c.1968, 14x19½ in.
7. *Develop a Plan and off You Go*, c.1967-1968.
8. *Double Eruption*, c.1967-1968.
9. *Family Portrait*, c.1967-1968, 15x19¾ in.
10. *Ice, Anybody*, c.1967-1968, 12x15 in.
11. *Iceberg Eaters*, c.1967-1968, 12x15 in.
12. *If You Think You Can, Then Do*, c.1967-1968, 10x15 in.
13. *Inside Out*, c.1967-1968, 17x24 in.
14. *I Wonder Which Wonder Witch*, c.1967-1968.
15. *Lucky Snuff Depot*, c.1967-1968, 20x44 in.
16. *New End Game*, c.1967-1968, 20x30 in.,
17. *Some Reflections*, c.1967-1968, 20x30 in.
18. *The Arms Question*, c.1967-1968, 12x15 in.
19. *The Giants Came*, c.1967-1968.
20. *The Powers that Be*, c.1967-1968, 11½x15 in.
21. *The Pyramid from Another Angle*, c. 1967-1968, 15x10 in.
22. *The Way of Maya*, c.1967-1968, 16x20 in.
23. *The Way of Ostrich*, c.1967-1968, 16x20 in.
24. *When the Cat Laughs*, c.1967-1968, 20x30 in.
25. *Whiskey Jump*, c.1967-1968.
26. *Zainy Textorium*, c.1967-1968, 20x30 in.
27. *Zebra Corral*, c.1967-1968, 11x14½ in.

28. *Catch 23*, c.1972, 12x15 in.
29. *Frog Pond or Eerie Echo*, c.1972, 12x15 in.
30. *Lope de Vega Street*, c.1972, 12x15 in.
31. *No Standing*, c.1972.
32. *Surrounded City*, c.1972, 10¾x13⅝ in.
33. *The Shell Company*, c.1972, 16x20 in.
34. *Trap to Capture the Marvellous*, c.1972, 16x20 in.
35. *With an Eye to Horizons*, c.1972, 16x20 in.
36. *Crabbed*, c.1974.
37. *Feeding time*, c.1974, 16x20 in.
38. *Flood Dance*, c.1974, 12x15½ in.
39. *For Going Up*, c.1974, 13½x10½ in.
40. *Jali*, c.1974, 14x11 in.
41. *Snake Vista*, c.1974, 8x10 in.
42. *Stupa Yell*, c.1974, 8x10 in.
43. *Time Transfixed (apologies to Magritte)*, c.1974, 16x20 in.
44. *The Director*, c.1974.
45. *Thunderstorms*, c.1974.
46. *A Handful of Legs*, c.1975-1976.
47. *Be Seated*, c.1975-1976, 10x12 in.
48. *Between India and China*, c.1975-1976, 7x10 in.
49. *Easy Rider*, c.1975-1976.
50. *Enveloped City*, c.1975-1976, 12 x 15 in.
51. *Feather Center Beach*, c.1975-1976, 16x20 in.
52. *Living Room*, c.1975-1976.
53. *Lullaby*, c.1975-1976.
54. *Pipe Dream*, c.1975-1976, 12x15 in.
55. *Star gazing Annex*, c.1975-1976.
56. *Storm*, c.1975-1976, 8x10 in.
57. *That Beach*, c.1975, 10¾x13⅝ in.
58. *The Fearful Look*, c.1975-1976, 8x10 in.
59. *The Swelling Lion* c.1975-1976, 12x15 in.
60. *The Third Eye*, c.1975-1976, 8x10 in.
61. *Tilting the Horizon*, c.1975-1976.

62. *Twister*, c.1975-1976, 8x10 in.
63. *Swimming Pool*, c.1975-1976.
64. untitled (a photo-collage of Sari Dienes), c. 1970s.
65. untitled (a photo-collage of Lenore Tawney), c. 1970s.
66. untitled (a photo-collage of Leonora Carrington, I), c. 1970s.
67. untitled (a photo-collage of Leonora Carrington, II), c. 1970s.
68. untitled (a photo-collage of Leonora Carrington, III), c. 1970s.
69. untitled (a photo-collage of a group of Snead's friends, II), c. 1970s.
70. untitled (a photo-collage of a group of Snead's friends, II), c. 1970s.

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