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The Undocumented Everyday: Migrant Lives and the Politics of Visibility by Rebecca M. Schreiber (review)

James David Nichols

The Americas, Volume 76, Number 2, April 2019, pp. 394-395 (Review)

Published by Cambridge University Press



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study of U.S.-Dominican relations, spanning multiple archives, offers vital insights into all these topics.

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IMMIGRATION AND MIGRATION

The Undocumented Everyday: Migrant Lives and the Politics of Visibility. By Rebecca M. Schreiber. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018. Pp. 370. \$30.00 paper. doi:10.1017/tam.2019.30

Rebecca M. Schreiber successfully fuses aesthetic and political analysis to illuminate the practices of self-representation among the undocumented. Through a skillful examination of the art authored by Mexican and Central American immigrants in the post 9/11 era, Schreiber documents an exceedingly interesting and fraught visual culture. Considering that this is a group whose very visibility is a troublesome prospect, Schreiber nevertheless chronicles a variety of subaltern aesthetic practices pursued by immigrants to make themselves visible, sometimes on their own terms and sometimes through highly mediated interventions. She also very fluently handles the political context in which these representations were created. While primarily interested in the practices of self-representation pursued by the undocumented, Schreiber places these efforts within the history of deportation and exploitation that has characterized immigration policy in the early twenty-first century.

The book is divided into three parts, each of which contains two chapters. Part 1 deals with the documentary film practices of migrant laborers in Long Island and Poughkeepsie, New York. Analyzing the content of self-authored photographs produced by migrant communities, Schreiber describes the local context and content reflected by these amateur artists in their pictures. She also points out the many perils of mediation in the documentary film process and the importance of context and curatorship. All too often non-locals hijack the content of migrant-produced photographs, putting them to their own political purposes. Schreiber concludes that the people who help the migrants to achieve their goals of self-representation and to determine where their pieces are displayed are of paramount importance in conveying the content of artwork produced by undocumented migrants.

Part 2 explores issues of representation, documentation, and mediation in the US-Mexico borderlands. In Schreiber's discussion of collaborations between US filmmakers and undocumented migrants, it quickly becomes apparent just how difficult and fraught it is to document the undocumented. The Border Film Project and Tijuana Projects ultimately reproduced hierarchies of power and left non-citizens voiceless. On the other

hand, Schreiber heaps praise on the documentary film *Maquilápolis* for ably conveying the viewpoint and aesthetics of migrant maquila workers and their refusal to be transformed into disposable commodities. In all cases, Schreiber is sensitive to the hierarchies of power embedded in the art created by migrants.

Part 3 examines with what Schreiber refers to as “counter-optics.” Here Schreiber marries the performative and the political, demonstrating the ways that im/migrants have created texts that resist countervailing narratives about migrant aliens and criminality. Particularly interesting are her descriptions of political protests as a “counter-spectacle” to the raids carried out by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement. Schreiber is deft in her description of how the creative appropriation of public space and social media allows the undocumented to reconfigure their absence as a presence. In doing so, they also manage to disrupt hierarchies among undocumented immigrants themselves.

Intellectually, the book contributes to a conversation about visual culture—particularly the many perils of intercession that accompany the documentary process. Schreiber insists that all documentary forms are mediated, and she devises the term “counter-documentation” to refer to ways that im/migrants represent themselves and politicize their visibility. This book is novel in its approach, and it can be easily recommended to all scholars of borders and immigration.

I would be very interested to see what Dr. Schreiber might have to say about Trump-era immigration restrictions and counter-documentation, but that is a subject that goes beyond the scope of the book. And while it is true that the author relies on many quotations from intellectuals like herself—sometimes interrupting the flow of the prose—this is not an unusual practice in cultural studies. These are exceedingly minor quibbles. There is great value in this book, and hopefully it will inspire others who analyze self-authored works produced by creators working at the margins.

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MEXICO

A History of Boxing in Mexico: Masculinity, Modernity, and Nationalism. By Stephen D. Allen. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017. Pp. 296. Cloth \$65.00. doi:10.1017/tam.2019.31

Stephen Allen offers an engaging take on the importance of boxing in twentieth-century Mexico. As boxing became a commercialized international spectacle, Mexican boxers established a presence among the sport’s global elite while becoming an intrinsic part of their nation’s popular culture.