

Dr. Luke Gartlan

October 12, 2017, 6:15 p.m.
University of Zurich
Public Lecture

Photography's History in Meiji Japan: New Approaches and Challenges



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In the book *A Career of Japan* (Brill, 2016), Luke Gartlan sought to present the first detailed account of one of the major photographers and personalities of nineteenth-century Japan—the Austrian aristocrat Baron Raimund von Stillfried (1839–1911). In this talk, Gartlan will reflect on the historiographical challenges that were encountered in the writing of this book and the potential avenues that it opened to further research and the challenges that remain. He will present a brief overview of von Stillfried's career, stepping back from the details of his activities to ask broader questions about the relevance of such close studies to Meiji-period visual culture as a whole. In what ways do the careers of such long-term foreign expatriates re-orient current understandings of nineteenth-century photography in Japan? What was their role in Meiji Japan and how are we to understand their contribution to photography in their adopted country? This talk will argue that the historiographical division between 'Japanese' and 'non-Japanese' photographers misrepresents the entangled nature of Meiji Japan's photographic industry. It calls for a much more inclusive approach to the writing of photography's history at the coalface of cultural exchange, which emphasizes current, ongoing efforts to write shared histories of overlooked photographs and photographers.

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University of St Andrews, UK

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Rämistrasse 59
8001 Zurich
Room: RAA-G-15

This lecture is free and open to the public. It is part of the workshop "Travelling Images: Circulating Photographs, Objects, Knowledge".

For more information, visit:

<http://www.travellingimageszurich.wordpress.com>

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Photo: Baron Raimund von Stillfried, *Two Officers*, 1875, hand-coloured albumen print. From *Views & Costumes of Japan*, Stillfried and Andersen, 1876. Courtesy of the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.