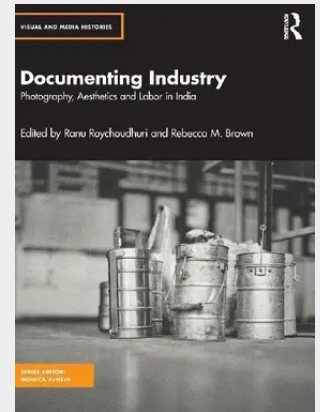


Documenting Industry

Photography, Aesthetics and Labor in India

Whether a smoky portrait of a coal mine or a sweeping shot of workers building an immense dam, photographs of established and emerging industries fundamentally shaped the visual culture and politics of South Asia in the decades after independence. This volume engages with the image of the laboring body against monumental machines, dams, and infrastructure and the ways in which photography engages with strands of modernist aesthetics to support new modes of seeing the changing industrial landscape and the human body. The multidisciplinary essays in the book embrace the porosity of "documentary" and "journalistic" photography and draw out questions of aesthetics in relation to both modernizing calls to industry and modernist framings of the visual in India. The book looks back at photographs from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and critically considers post-World War II industry—with its imagery of factories belching pollutants into the air and the reality of massive displacements of workers due to epidemics, floods, and drought. It analyzes these images in relation to contemporaneous understandings of aesthetics and in dialogue with recent understandings of the global climate crisis. The volume probes the co-constitution of industry and photography in postcolonial India by looking at selected sites of industrial and artistic practices and their interwoven histories. Part of the Visual Media and Histories Series, this book will be of interest to students and researchers of the history of photography, visual media studies, Indian history, art history, cultural studies, and South Asian studies.

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219,40 €

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Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9781032487816

Medium: Buch

ISBN: 978-1-032-48781-6

Verlag: Routledge India

Erscheinungstermin: 19.03.2025

Sprache(n): Englisch

Auflage: 1. Auflage 2025

Serie: Visual and Media Histories

Produktform: Gebunden

Gewicht: 564 g

Seiten: 182

Format (B x H): 194 x 252 mm

