Atelier introductif de l’exposition « L’armée tibétaine en vues : photographies historiques (1895-1959) »

Jeudi 15 décembre 2022 de 16h00 à 17h45
A l’Auditorium de l’Humathèque

Emma Martin (University of Manchester)
Methods and approach to colonial photographs: a curator's perspective

16h30-17h00

In this paper, I will consider methods and approaches to colonial-era photographs of Tibet through Judith Butler’s ideas on materiality and resistance. The discussion will centre on the ways resistance and counter-narratives might be recovered from the imperial archive by drawing on my own curatorial practice and archival research. The paper will focus on two examples: firstly, the curation of ‘Capturing Tibet: Colonialism and the Camera during the Mission to Lhasa’ an exhibition held at the Tibet Museum, Dharamshala in 2017. This exhibition featured 200 images from two leather-bound ‘Tibet Albums’ - compilations of photographs taken by colonial officers and military personnel during the British invasion of Tibet in 1903-1904. The second will focus on a small number of images pertaining to the Panchen Lama’s visit to India in 1905. In both cases, using materiality and resistance as a framework allows one to look beyond the lens of the colonial photographer and their intention, revealing instead the traces of Tibetan action on the ground. The aim is to offer an insight into how colonial photographs become powerful historical sources for Tibetan resistance in the present moment.