ALIEN IMAGES:
UFOs, Photography and Belief

March 8 through August 15, 2007

CLASSROOM PRE- AND POST VISIT MATERIALS

Developed for the ASU Museum of Anthropology by Christopher Richards
GUIDED GROUP VISIT INFORMATION

1. If you would like to schedule a visit to ASUMA, please contact Catherine Nichols at anthro.museum@asu.edu

2. Please arrive at least 10 minutes prior to your scheduled time.

3. The museum can accommodate up to 30 students, but 10-15 students are ideal. Please include the number of students that plan on attending so arrangements can be made to have sufficient staff for your visitation.

4. One chaperone must be present at all times for each group of 20 children. Two chaperones are preferred.

5. Please schedule your visit one week prior to the date you want to visit the museum.

6. Discuss museum behavior before your scheduled visit. Students should have an understanding of museum etiquette. They will not be able to touch the photographs in the gallery.

7. The museum is ALWAYS free; there are no fees for students, teachers, or volunteers. Museum hours are Monday through Friday, 11 AM to 3 PM. Other times can be arranged by appointment.

Please share this material with other educators. This packet is available for download at www.asu.edu/clas/shesc/asuma.
ALIEN IMAGES: UFOS, PHOTOGRAPHY AND BELIEF

Overview of the exhibit

The current exhibit presents a range of photographs from around the world made over the past 137 years that depict UFOs. During this time period, a variety of interpretations have arisen to explain what is seen in the images. These have included:

- Misidentifications of aircraft
- Misidentifications of natural phenomena
- Fraud
- Camera, film or print problems
- Extra-terrestrial spacecraft
- Secret government technology
- Enemy weapons
- Airships
- Reclusive inventors’ creations
- Angels or demons
- Inter-dimensional beings
- Time-travelers
- Earth spirits or gods
- I don’t know

Certainly, the photographs are extraordinary, but the interpretation selected by the viewer has more to do with one’s personal beliefs and assumptions about UFOs than with any other factor. The question we each have to ask is this:

What are these images evidence of?

Gallery Activity

Oh My! What’s that in the Sky?

Many different shapes have been seen in the sky and labeled UFOs. Create your own UFO using several drawings as inspiration.
Preparation for your visit: Background Information for Teachers

The following is only a small sampling of the variety of images on display in “Alien Images” at ASUMA.

Teacher Background Information

A Brief History of Photography

The term “photography” is derived from the Greek words “photo” (meaning light) and “graphein” (meaning to draw). Although the process of photography was discovered in 1827, the term “photography” was not used until 1839, when these methods became public. Joseph Nicephore Niepce took the first photograph in 1827, requiring an exposure period of over eight hours. By 1829, Joseph Niepce had formed a partnership with Louis Daguerre, who continued Niepce’s experiments with photography after Niepce’s death in 1833. Daguerre made further advances, developing photographic plates that reduced exposure time from 8 hours to thirty minutes. He also discovered that immersing an image in salt would make it permanent. Daguerre, a professional scene painter for the opera, decided to name this newly discovered process after himself, calling
it the daguerreotype. In 1839, he sold the rights for the daguerreotype to the French government, and subsequently, a booklet was published describing the process. After this was made public, “daguerreomania” began. By 1850, there were more than seventy daguerreotype studios in New York City. Unfortunately, the process of creating these images was expensive and the photographs could not be copied. Many artists felt threatened by the photograph’s popularity, some even suggesting that painting would be driven to extinction by the photograph.

In 1839, William Henry Fox Talbot found a method to remedy the daguerreotype’s inability to be reproduced. Talbot introduced his calotype, his method for producing a photograph on paper, which ultimately meant, he created one of the first methods for producing photographic negatives. Although Talbot’s photographs were less detailed than the daguerreotype, the advantage was that unlimited number of prints could be made (a principle which we still operate under today).

Frederick Scott Archer introduced the Collodion photographic process in 1851. That further reduced expose time to only two or three seconds. This revolutionized photography, allowing for images to be produced cheaply and thereby, became available to a wider segment of society. The first Kodak camera was produced in 1888, which contained a twenty foot roll of paper, and in 1907 the first color film was introduced; following with the first instant color film being developed by Polaroid in the early 1960s.

Currently, photography is undergoing another revolutionary change. With the introduction of digital cameras to the consumer market in 1994, the process of photography changed forever. In 2001, Polaroid filed for bankruptcy, and in 2004 Kodak ceased production of their film cameras. Although one cannot predict how the digital camera will ultimately affect the world of photography, it is clear the ways in which we view pictorial evidence are shifting once again.
Photographing Strange Phenomenon and the Paranormal

The above photographs are two examples of paranormal photography. The image on the left is one of several images taken by Elise Wright and her cousin, Frances Griffiths, supposedly proving the existence of fairies. The images were taken in 1917, when the girls were 16 and 10-years-old. The girls’ claimed to have taken these images while playing in Cottingley Glen, and many people believe that their photographs were in fact evidence of fairies. Experts were consulted regarding their authenticity, and even the author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle believed the photographs to be real. It wasn’t until sixty years after the hoax that Wright and Griffiths finally admitted to the prank, explaining the fairies were only paper drawings. The desire to believe in photography as empirical evidence, however, has remained.

The photograph on the right, known as “The Brown Lady of Raynham Hall” is one of the most well known paranormal photographs. Two professional photographers captured the image in 1936 at Raynham Hall (located on Long Island, New York) for an upcoming issue of Country Life magazine. Experts examined the photograph and evidence of tampering or manipulating the image could not be found. In fact, the authenticity of this image remains a mystery to this day.

These are only a small example of the variety of photographs that are considered paranormal photography. Photography and parapsychology began at similar times (photography in 1839, parapsychology first occurring in 1848,), but the two disciplines were not combined until the early 1860s. During this time period, a variety of paranormal photographic activities became popular, ranging from thought photography to life-emanating photography. One of the most prolific areas is ghost being photography, which began in earnest in 1861 with William H. Mumler, who opened a studio devoted to taking images of people with “spirits”. As photographic methods improved and became easier, paranormal photography flourished. By the late 1880s, photography was being used in conjunction with the fashionable activity of holding séances, with the hopes of providing pictorial evidence of ghosts and contact with the spirit world.
It is important to remember that photographs were originally seen as a method to provide irrefutable proof of the existence of various phenomenon, and only recently have the use of photographs as scientific proof been questioned.

*UFOS: Their Origin and History*

Photographs played a strong role in the modern UFO era and their renditions of these shiny silver discs, helped to provide evidence for this new interpretation. However, over the next 60 years a wide variety of different types of UFOs would be captured on film, which not only supported the extra-terrestrial hypothesis but a range of other interpretations that would be created during this time.

On June 24, 1947 while flying near Mt. Rainer in Washington state, pilot Kenneth Arnold witnessed a series of nine objects moving at great speed. He described their movement as similar to saucers skipping across water. From this description, the “flying saucer” was born. Nearly two weeks later in Phoenix, Arizona, William Rhodes captured two images of an unusual object in the sky, which was similar to the description provided by Arnold. At about the same time, in early July, the Air Force released a story to the press that a crashed saucer had been found in Roswell, New Mexico. This claim was retracted the following day, with the report that the debris found was actually from a weather balloon.

These three events signaled the beginning of the modern Unidentified Flying Object (UFO) era. Prior to this time, there had been sightings and a few images. The first image was taken in 1870, showing a fuzzy cylinder in front of a mountain. Early sightings in the 1890s suggested that an unusual cylindrical object seen repeatedly in the sky was an “airship”. And during World War Two, pilots reported seeing strange luminous amber orbs following their aircraft, which were nicknamed “foo fighters” and thought to be enemy weapons.

After 1947, sightings and photographs increased exponentially, with “crazes” occurring every few years. A new interpretation was also born and would become one of the most popular for UFOs, the extra-terrestrial spacecraft. This idea emerged from sightings of UFOs that described them as metal, apparently intelligently controlled objects. If these objects were not created by humans, the logic goes, then they must have been made by someone else from somewhere else.
Suggested Pre-Visit Classroom Activities

1. Discussion Activity: thinking about museums and UFOs

This activity is valuable for students ranging from elementary to middle school to prepare them for a visit to the museum and “Alien Images”. Start by having a general discussion about museums, and ask the students what kind of previous experiences they have had visiting museums. To relate this discussion to this exhibition, ask the students if they would expect to see photographs of UFOs in a museum. The discussion could be set-up as follows:

1. Ask the students to define the term museum, and to discuss a museum’s purpose.

2. Ask the students what types of museums they have visited, with who, and what they’ve seen. Ask them what they liked the most about museums, and what they liked the least.

3. To further prepare the students for this exhibition, ask the students to define what UFOs are. Have them define the term, and discuss UFOs in general.

4. Ask the students if they have ever seen or heard of UFOs, or if they have seen evidence of UFOs (such as photographs). Do they believe what they’ve seen is real? Do they think UFOs really exist?

5. Do the students believe other life forms exist? Discuss why or why not. Have the seen evidence of life forms’ existence? How does this factor into their opinions?

6. To link the two ideas, pose the following question: Do you think UFO photography is something you would see in most museums? Why or why not?

7. Conclude by discussing the Alien Images show, and ask them to begin thinking about what they would consider to be “proof” of the existence of UFOs.

For high school/college students:

Many of the above questions can still be asked of older students, but they should be confronted with the issues of the real vs. the unreal. What makes one image real, and another image fake? Other issues that could be discussed would be the manipulation of images in the media. One could ask the question, how do we know what is real when we are confronted daily with hundreds of manipulated images? How does this change a persons’ viewpoint on the world? Does it make us, as a population, more skeptical of what we see in the media? After discussing these issues, pose the main question our exhibition is asking, “What are photographs evidence of,” and tell them to think about this question as they go through the exhibition.
Suggested Post-Visit Classroom Activities

The following activity, in its complete form, consists of three parts. It is up to the teacher’s discretion how involved the project is. A teacher can easily do Part I, and not complete either Part II or III. This project is designed for the teacher to make the project as simple or as involved as they might choose.

1. Art Activity: Flying Saucers! (Part I)
   *Suitable for elementary to middle school students*

![Image of a flying saucer made from paper plates and pipe cleaners.](http://www.mycraftbook.com)

Supplies:
- 2 Paper plates
- 1 white pipe cleaner
- 1 two-hole button
- Silver (or other assorted colors) acrylic paint
- White craft glue
- Black (or other assorted colors) marker

Basic Instructions:
1. Poke hole in the middle of one of the plates with hole puncher or scissor
2. Bend pipe cleaner in half and insert both ends through hole.
3. Hold a button to the hole on the side of the plate that will be on the inside of the UFO. Insert one end of the pipe cleaner into each hole of the button. Twist the ends together and fold the ends flat against the paper plate.
4. Squeeze glue around the edge of one of the plates. Line up the edges of the two paper plates and squeeze together.
5. Paint the top part of the UFO silver. Let dry. Turn the UFO over and paint this side silver. Let dry.
6. Turn UFO right side up (with the pipe cleaner on top) and glue beads on surface to mimic lights. Alternate colors to make the appearance of “flashing lights”.
7. Use a marker and draw windows on the UFO.
8. Allow all parts to dry, and then hang in various locations in classroom.
2. Art Activity: Flying Saucers! (Part II)

Supplies:
Disposable Camera(s)
(or student’s personal cameras)

Once the students have completed their UFOs, they should be allowed to create their own “evidence” of the existence of UFOs. Take the children around their school or ask them to take pictures in their own neighborhood incorporating their “UFO” they created. Encourage them to manipulate the photograph, i.e. taking a picture of the UFO in bright light, or from a distance. Have students submit their best photograph and allow the class to judge which photograph is most convincing of UFO existence and discuss why the selected images are so convincing.

3. Art Activity: Flying Saucers! (Part III)

After the students have chosen the best photographs, create an in-class exhibition of their photographs. Use a bulletin board or the walls of your classroom as the “gallery space”. Have the students write short wall labels describing their photographs as evidence of UFOs.

4. Art Activity: The Invasion of the Dioramas

Suitable for elementary to middle school students (preferably older students)

Courtesy of http://www.tellmewhereonearth.com/
Supplies:
A standard size cardboard box, used as the setting for the diorama
A variety of craft supplies, depending upon what the student wishes to construct

Give the students the assignment to re-construct, either from a “real” event (like Roswell), or from their imagination, a UFO landing/sighting. This can be done inside a cardboard box with a variety of materials. For example, the one above, depicting a UFO crash landing, was constructed with paint, rocks, faux grass, model vehicles, and a paper plate UFO. Have the students write a short story about their diorama and what they were depicting. After the students have constructed their diorama, have them present their creations to the class. Following the presentations, lead the students in a class discussion. Ask questions such as: Could any of these dioramas be used as “evidence” for a UFO sighting? If photographs were taken of these dioramas, would they convince others that UFOs exist (could the students make “fake” UFO photographs using their dioramas)? This activity can be expanded on like previous activity, if class time allows.

5. Discussion and Writing Activity: Alien Abduction!
Suitable for elementary to middle school students

This activity is designed to encourage imaginative thinking and self-expression. There are many directions this activity could take. To begin with, ask the students if they think other life forms exist in our universe, and why or why not. Then, ask them to think about what these other life forms would look like, what they would wear, eat, what their life might be like, etc. After discussing the possibilities of other life forms, have students write a short story or essay about visiting these people on their home planet. Have the students discuss what they did with these people, whether they liked their interplanetary trip, etc. Allowing the students to draw pictures from their visit to another planet could be added to this activity.
6. Discussion and Art Activity: The Un-reality of Photography

Suitable for high school and college students

Our world is full of manipulated and altered images. Often people don’t recognize the prevalence of these “unreal” images. For this activity, begin with a discussion of the exhibition, and whether or not the students thought the photographs were real or not real. Were the photographs convincing? Do they think other images, besides photographs of UFOs and other paranormal phenomena, are manipulated and altered? Ask the students to give examples of other altered images, and where these images might be seen. For homework, assign the students to research magazines and the Internet to find altered/manipulated images of celebrities (http://www.fluideffect.com), political figures and other subjects. They can take these images and construct a collage. Instruct the students to write a short paper describing how these images, in their opinion, have been altered and have changed our society’s definition of reality. The students should present their findings in class. End the activity with a discussion about how the students feel concerning the prevalence of manipulated images in our society. Is it reassuring for young people to realize the people they idolize have just as many blemishes and wrinkles as they do?

For reference, the teacher and students should visit the above site, not only to witness the prevalence of altered images of celebrities in our society, but to see examples of the type of photographs students could use in their projects.
Glossary

**Diorama:** A scene, usually in miniature, reproduced in three dimensions by placing objects, figures, etc, in front of a painted background.

**Extraterrestrial:** Originating, located, or occurring outside Earth or its atmosphere; a being or life form whose origin is not the Earth.

**Paranormal:** Beyond the range of normal experience and scientific explanation.

**Phenomena:** Facts, occurrences, or circumstances observed or observable.

**U.F.O.:** An Unidentified Flying Object. Any unexplained moving object observed in the sky, especially one assumed by observers to be of extraterrestrial origin.

**Daguerreotype:** An early photographic process with the image made on a light-sensitive silver-coated metallic plate.

**Calotype:** An early negative-positive photographic process, patented by William Henry Talbot in 1841, in which a paper negative is produced and then used to make a positive contact print in sunlight.

**Parapsychology:** The branch of psychology that deals with the investigation of purportedly psychic phenomena, as clairvoyance, extrasensory perception, telepathy, and the like.

**Photograph:** An image, especially a positive print, recorded by a camera and reproduced on a photosensitive surface.

**Silver Gelatin Print:** The most widely used black-and-white printing process, introduced in the late 1880s, employs papers coated with gelatin emulsion of light-sensitive silver halide. Exposing a negative onto the paper, either by contact printing or through an enlarger, produces the print. The print is then chemically processed, fixed, and dried. Gelatin silver prints may be toned using a variety of compounds or minerals to create a range of subtle hues.

**Digital Image:** An image that is available in electronic form; readable and manipulable by computer.
The Words are Out There

ABDUCTION
ALIENS
ARIZONA
CONSPIRACY
CRASH
EVIDENCE
FLYING
LANDING
LIGHTS
MARTIANS
PHOENIX
PHOTOGRAPHS
PLANETS
REALITY
ROSWELL
SAUCERS
SIGHTING
SKEPTIC
SKY
SPACE
SPACESHIP
STARS
TRUTH
UFO
UNIVERSE
What did the alien say to the garden?

N E I L A F T A S K E M M
E X T O L Y O P U R W A E
O E I Y D A A E R B K R U
F P I N W C U T X C E T C
U N V Z E C P S T H G I L
G H N S H O B E U L U A O
Y P H S I G H T I N G N U
Y I E G F Y M P Y L U T D
P A R I Z O N A Q K H R S
P H O T O G R A P H S U Z
R H E N A L P R I A A T F
K G L A N D I N G C L H C
U N K N O W N R R H F Q Z

AIRPLANE
ALIEN
ARIZONA
CLOUDS
FLASH
FLYING
LANDING
LIGHTS
MARTIAN
PHOENIX
PHOTOGRAPHS
SIGHTING
SKY
SPACESHIP
TRUTH
UFO
UNKNOWN
UNUSUAL

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