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Thru 19:25 Russell Roberts

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Seeing things differently

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TOPIC SECTION:
Forget me not?

In Marcel Proust's (1871-1922) autobiographical novel *Remembrance of Things Past*, just one bite of a madeleine is enough to transport the narrator into an extended reverie where he vividly experiences the past as a simultaneous part of the present. The taste of the biscuit is a trigger for 'involuntary memory' - an immediate, all-embracing, almost physical sensation. Occasionally, we have all experienced such involuntary memories. Usually stimulated by smell, touch or taste rather than by sight, they can stir up extremely powerful emotions. Compared with these, photography, with its frozen, static and unchanging representations of the past, is a very poor memory trigger.

Does a photograph really enable us to remember a person as he really was or an event as it actually happened? Does the sight of someone bring back the sound of her voice, her smell, the way she walked? Can a photograph of a childhood holiday ever bring back the sensation of warm sand slipping between our toes? Images can stimulate memories but memories are not images. They are sensations. As such, they cannot be encompassed within the boundaries of visual representation - photographic or not.

Some have argued that for photography truly to serve the cause of memory, it has to transcend the merely visual and engage the other senses. It has to become something that you can feel as well as see. Since photography's invention people have responded to this challenge in many different ways in an attempt to overcome time and space and create an emotional bond between subject and viewer. The results are photographs whose memory potential has been enhanced by adding words.

Locket with daguerreotype and lock of hair, c1855
Credit: National Museum of Photography, Film & Television/Science & Society Picture Library

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SUBJECT:
Seeing

Representations of the world can seem more realistic than the real thing. By developing an image which can enhance memories, challenge ideas, or reinforce stereotypes, we can also change 'real' life. The camera has proved a remarkably powerful technology for recording interesting and sometimes disturbing images. From railways to war and foreign parts, the world has become familar through photography. The remarkable photographic collections of the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television include the archive of the Daily Herald newspaper which began in 1912 and ran until the mid-1960s. The National Railway Museum and the Science Museum also have powerful photographic collections, interesting both for their subjects and treatments. Whether through travel in the picture album or through the railway poster, we can all enjoy a sort of virtual travel across space and time.

> Image manipulation
Many of the images we see in the media have been altered in some way. Sometimes it is done to deceive the viewer and sometimes simply to improve the image. Why do we accept image manipulation? > more

> Travelling in the mind's eye
Is your journey really necessary? Why not travel in the realms of memory and imagination? Can we experience foreign lands without leaving home? Technology enables us to travel without a passport. > more

> Representing war
Warfare, responsible for great suffering, has also inspired some of the greatest creativity. It has been the subject of the most profound art. Television has brought

> Forget Me Not? Photography and Remembrance
Photography and memory are intricately entwined. For most of us our photographs are the physical embodiment of times gone

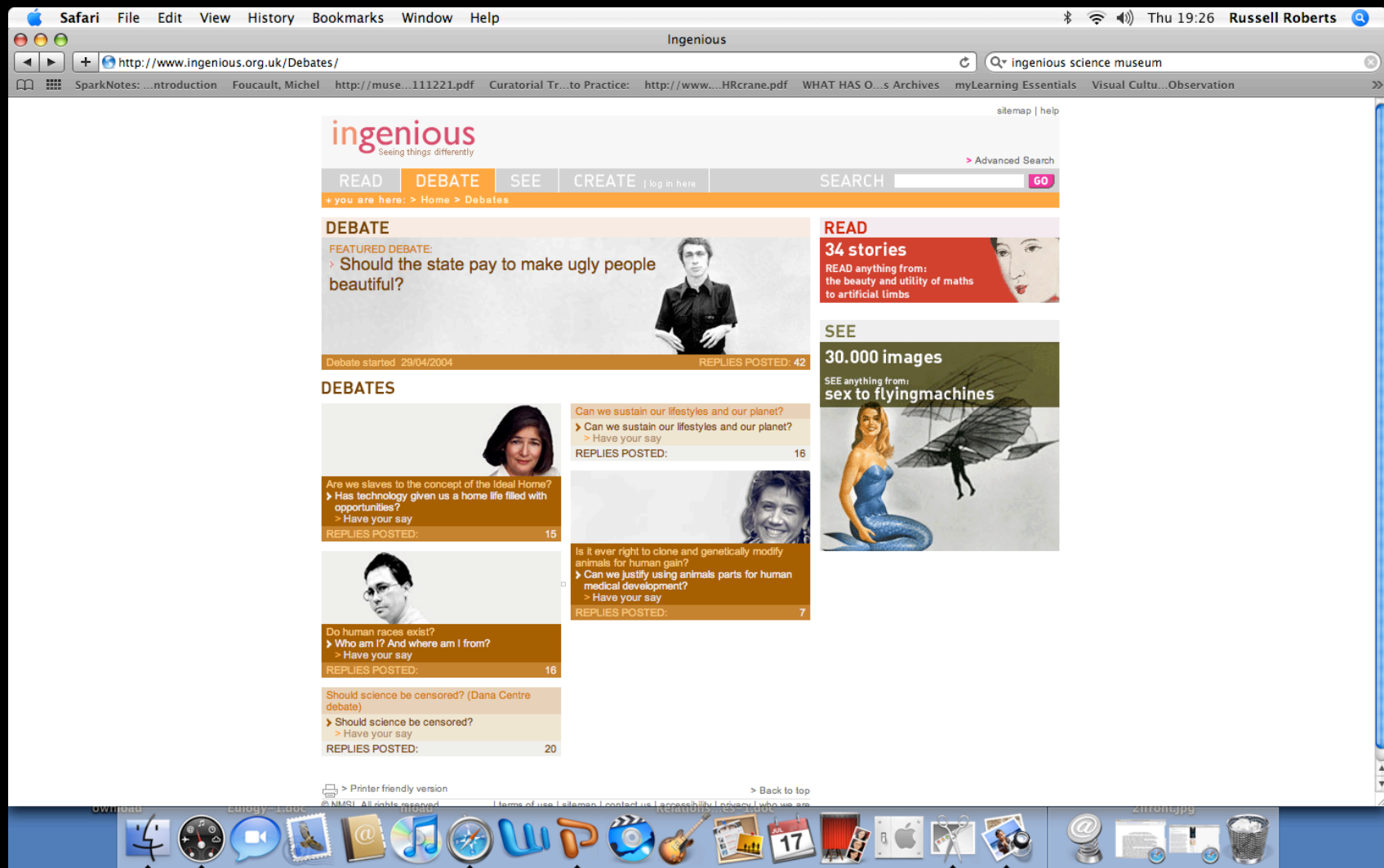
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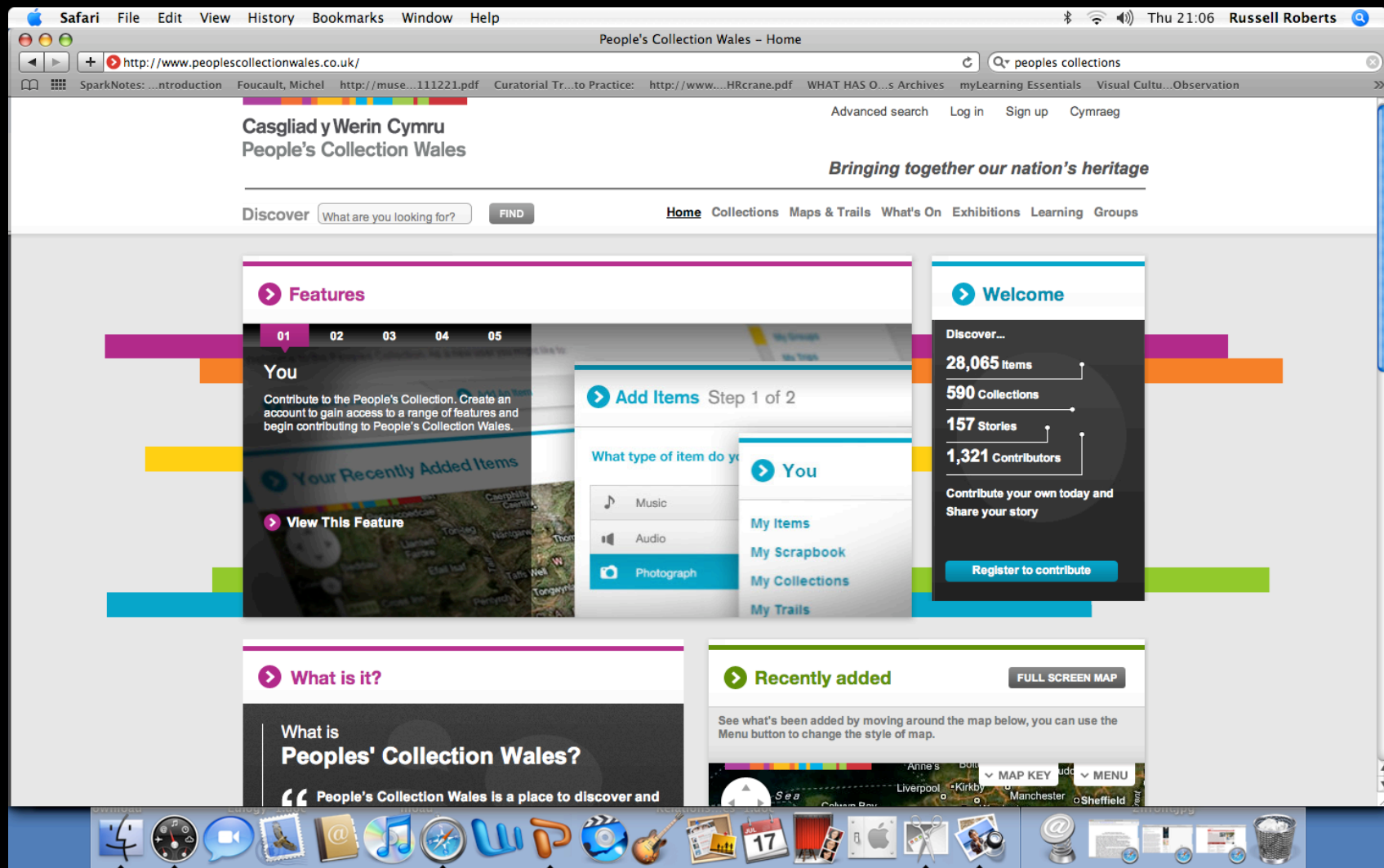
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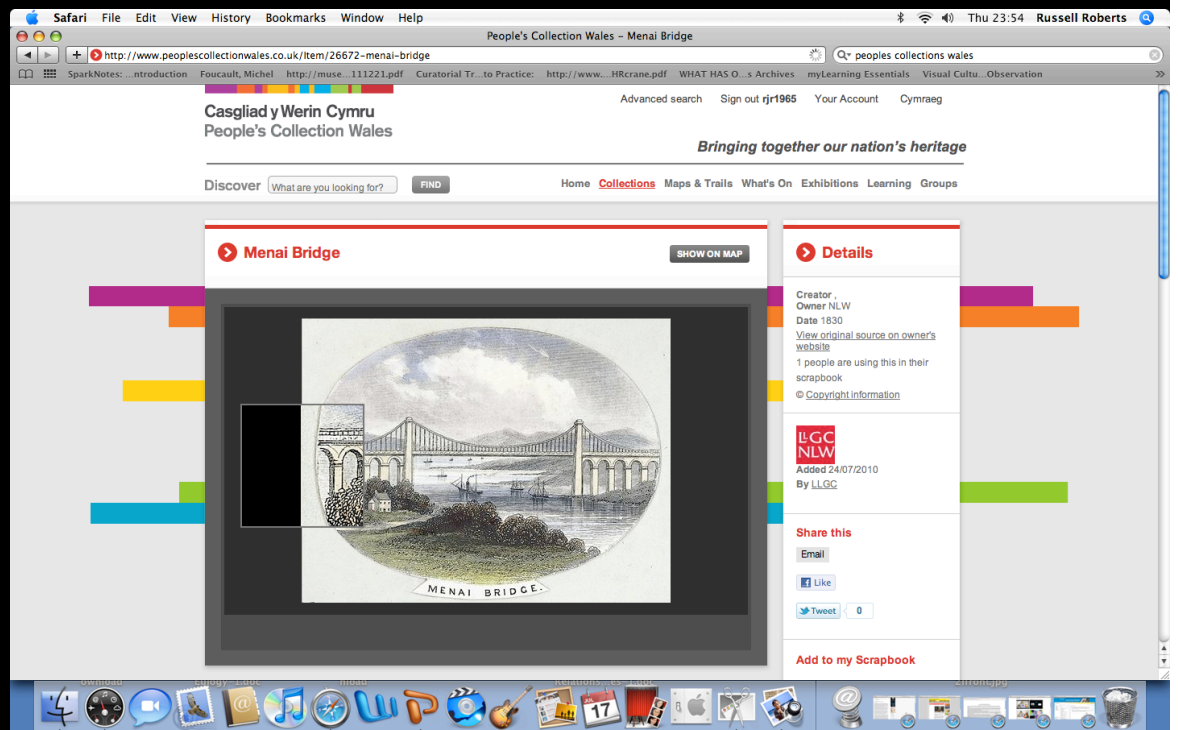
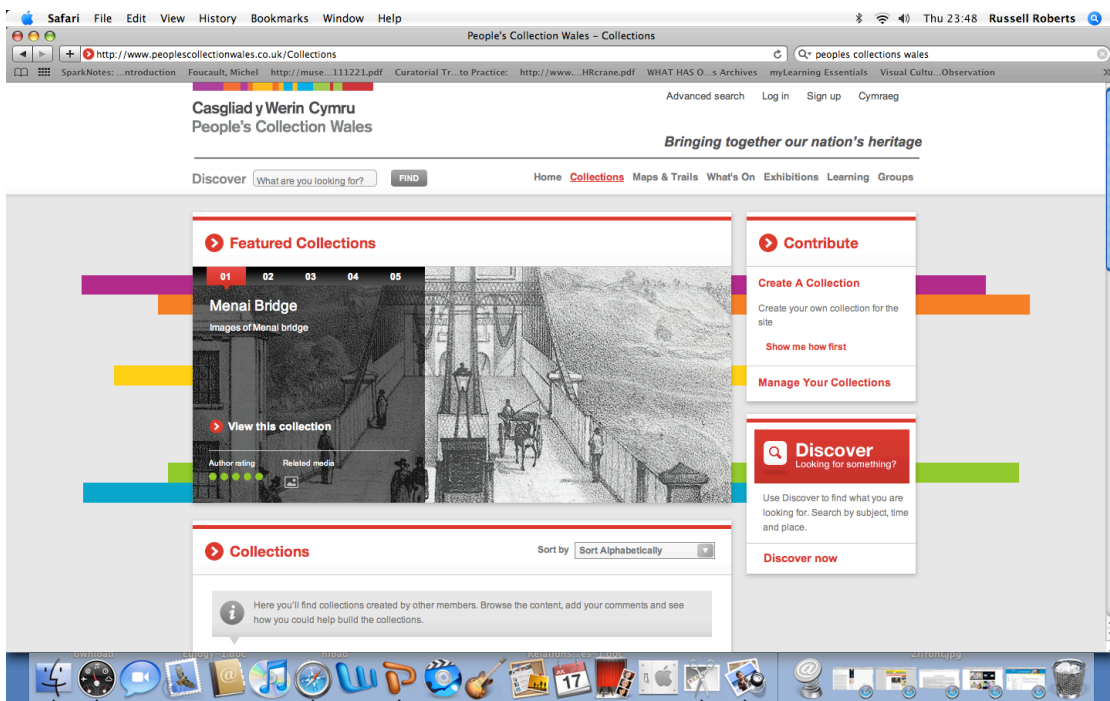
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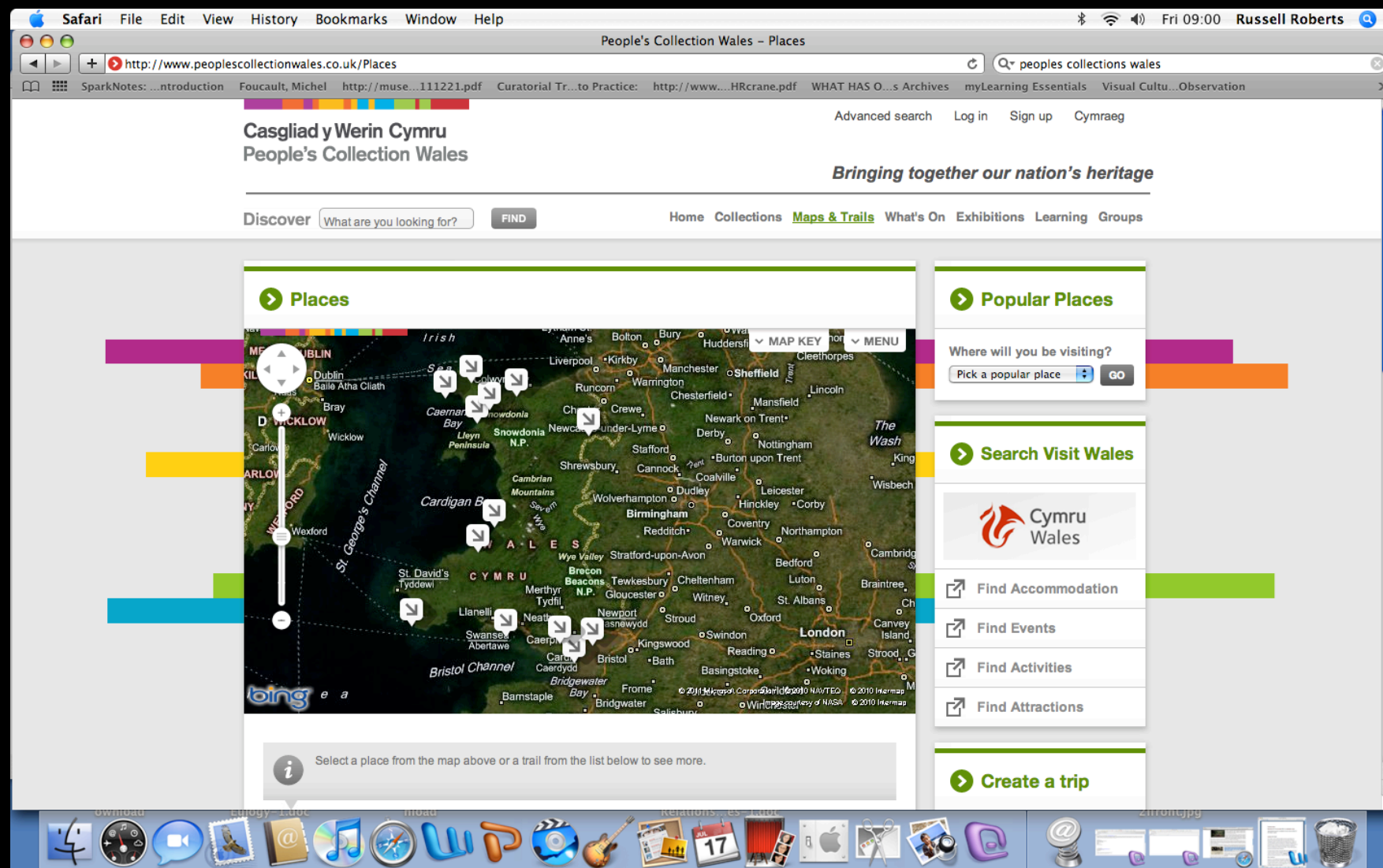
> Conflict
Wars bring devastation, forcing whole communities and individuals to rebuild their lives. Better lives can be forged from the technologies of death.

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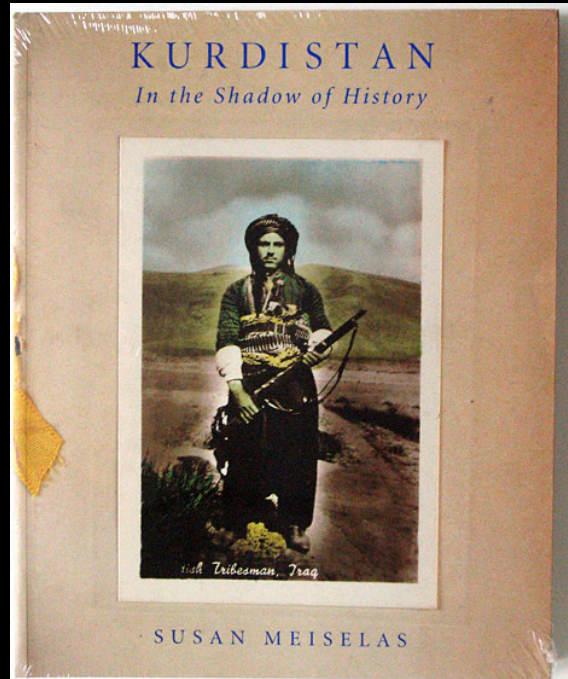












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STORY MAPIDENTIFY IMAGESADD A STORYTHE BOOKTHE SITECOMMENTS

KURDISTAN

In the Shadow of History

This exhibition was gathered by photographer Susan Meiselas and revealed the story of the Kurdish people and their struggle for independence and survival over the past century.



The exhibition created a living archive from scattered fragments—pulling together never-before exhibited photographs from private collectors, family collections, and national archives. Juxtaposing these images with text from diaries, newspaper stories, memoirs, and telegrams, *Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History* let history speak for itself through the words of freedom fighters and farmers, missionaries and spies, diplomats and princes.

In bringing together these dispersed pieces, Susan Meiselas gave form to a collective memory, while showing how history itself is created from differing perspectives.

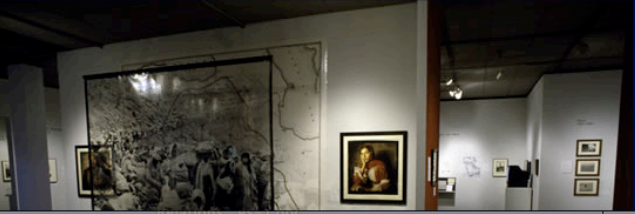
THE EXHIBIT












PREVIOUS VENUES

ICP, New York City, NY
September 2008 (excerpt)

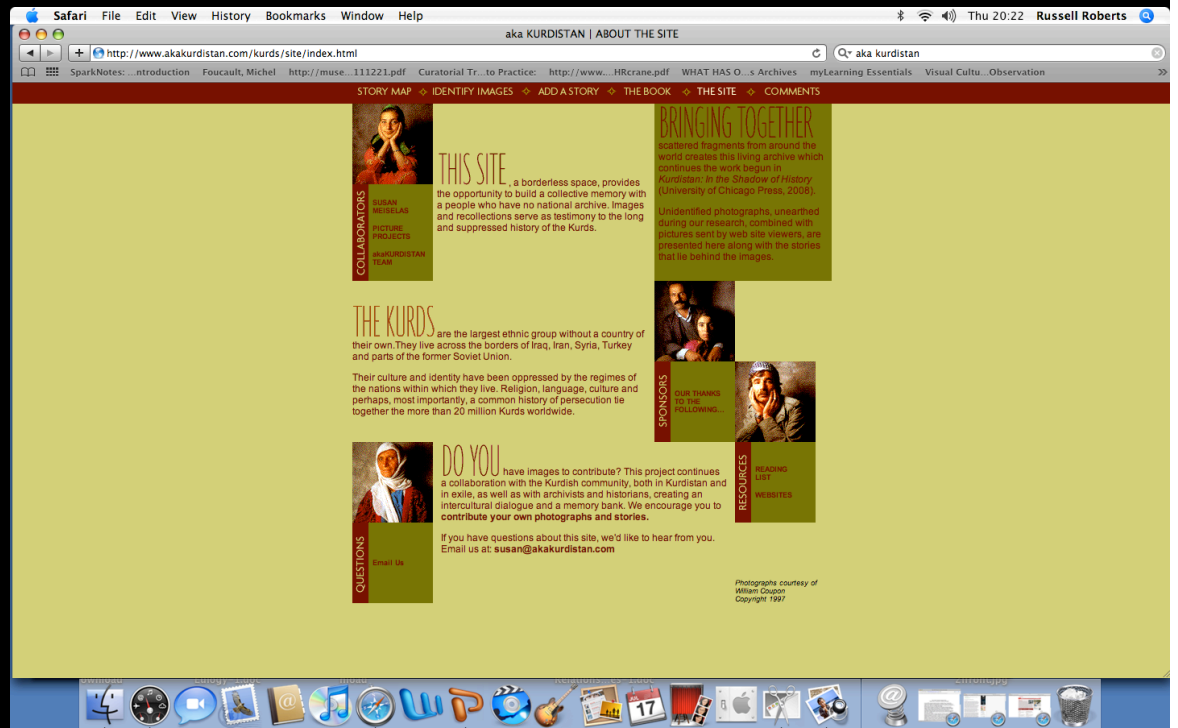
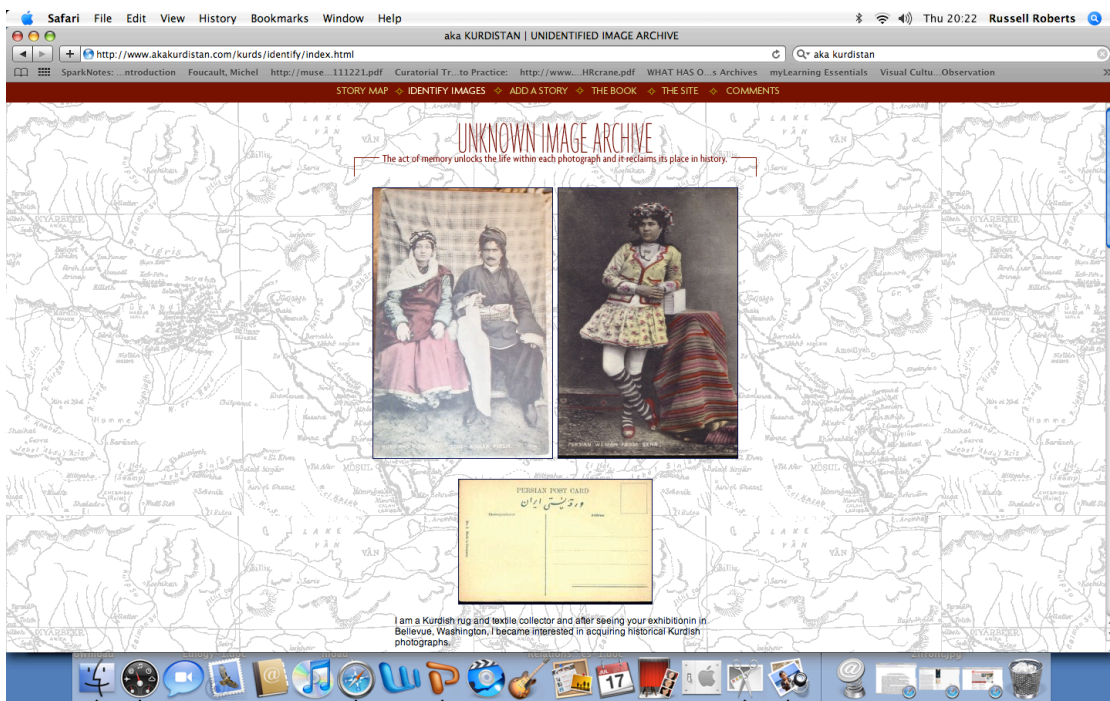
Zilkha Gallery,
Wesleyan University
Fall 2008 (excerpt)

Gwangju Biennial, South Korea





Thu 20:20Russell Roberts





Joan Fontcuberta, *Googlegramme #5*, 2005

