VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Session 1: Introduction
Preamble: Interest in Visual Anthropology

- cultural difference, exoticism, negative reinforcements

What Is Visual Anthropology? What Has It Been?

(1) visuality of anthropology
(2) late 1960s—1970s, “visual anthropology”
(3) problems of self-definition
(4) Modern/Western fixations with the visual
(5) Science & Fiction
What are the “Contents” of Visual Anthropology?
- dominance of ethnographic photography and film
- ethnographic photography since the 1890s, role in fieldwork
- ethnographic films—problem: which ones are the ethnographic ones?

Debates within Visual Anthropology
- Realism, Positivism
- Indigenous meanings
- Science or Art?
- Words versus Images
- Still versus Moving Images
- Visuality and its virtues
Colonialism and Exhibited Others

Difference as Spectacle and Science
Overview

- transition from bringing “natives” to exhibits to “bringing” viewers via photography
- anthropologist as intermediary

(a) colonialism and exhibitionism
(b) exoticism, scientific racism, social Darwinism
(c) exhibitionism, roots of early anthropology, emergence of ethnographic photography
Colonialism and Voyeurism

An 1884 exhibit of Australian Aboriginals in England
FIRST INTRODUCTION IN ENGLAND OF THE BAND OF SEVEN AUSTRALIAN BOOMERANG THROWERS.

CONSISTING OF MALE AND FEMALE QUEENSLAND BLACK TRACKERS AND RANTING MAN EATERS!

THE CELEBRATED BUSHMEN
From the Continent on the other side.

The only captive band of these ferocious, treacherous, uncivilized savages, with deep scars and seams in the red flesh, and bones and huge rings thrust through nose and ears as ornaments.

VERITABLE BLOOD-THIRSTY BEASTS IN DISTORTED HUMAN FORM.

WITH BUT A GLIMMERING OF REASON & GIFT OF SPEECH.

They will be introduced in their PEACE, WAR, KANGAROO, EMU, & COCKATOO DANCES;

THEIR MIDNIGHT CORROBERIES,
CASTING OF THE SPEAR,
AND WHIRLING OF THE BOOMERANG
Worth journeying a hundred miles to see these specimens of the LOWEST ORDER OF MAN.
Sara Baartman: Extreme Spectating of the Colonial Era