

*Steef Meyknecht*  
*Seminar Iconisation and Ethnography*

*Bio*

Steef Meyknecht is a documentary photographer/filmmaker and an anthropologist. He teaches at the Leiden University.

*Abstract*

In 1974 a Dutch novelist, Godfried Bomans, pointed out that our perception of a still picture of a wood strongly changed when we were informed that murders had taken place over there. With this knowledge, Bomans stated, the healthy dark green of the wood becomes threatening.

On whatever level, looking at still pictures, everybody has contextual knowledge. Knowledge which is different for every individual. This makes 'Iconisation' a meaningless concept, at least in science. The concept is only of value when qualifying a still picture morally good or bad.

Which part of the representation of field research could be dealt with making use of still pictures? Accordingly, in which way still pictures hide on the one hand concepts concerning the environment shown, and on the other hand up to which level the representation is directed by technical choices. In which way do individual concepts and technical choices could interact? These will be my questions. The black and white photography of Agnès Pataux, *Dogon People of the Cliffs* (2004), will be my starting point.