

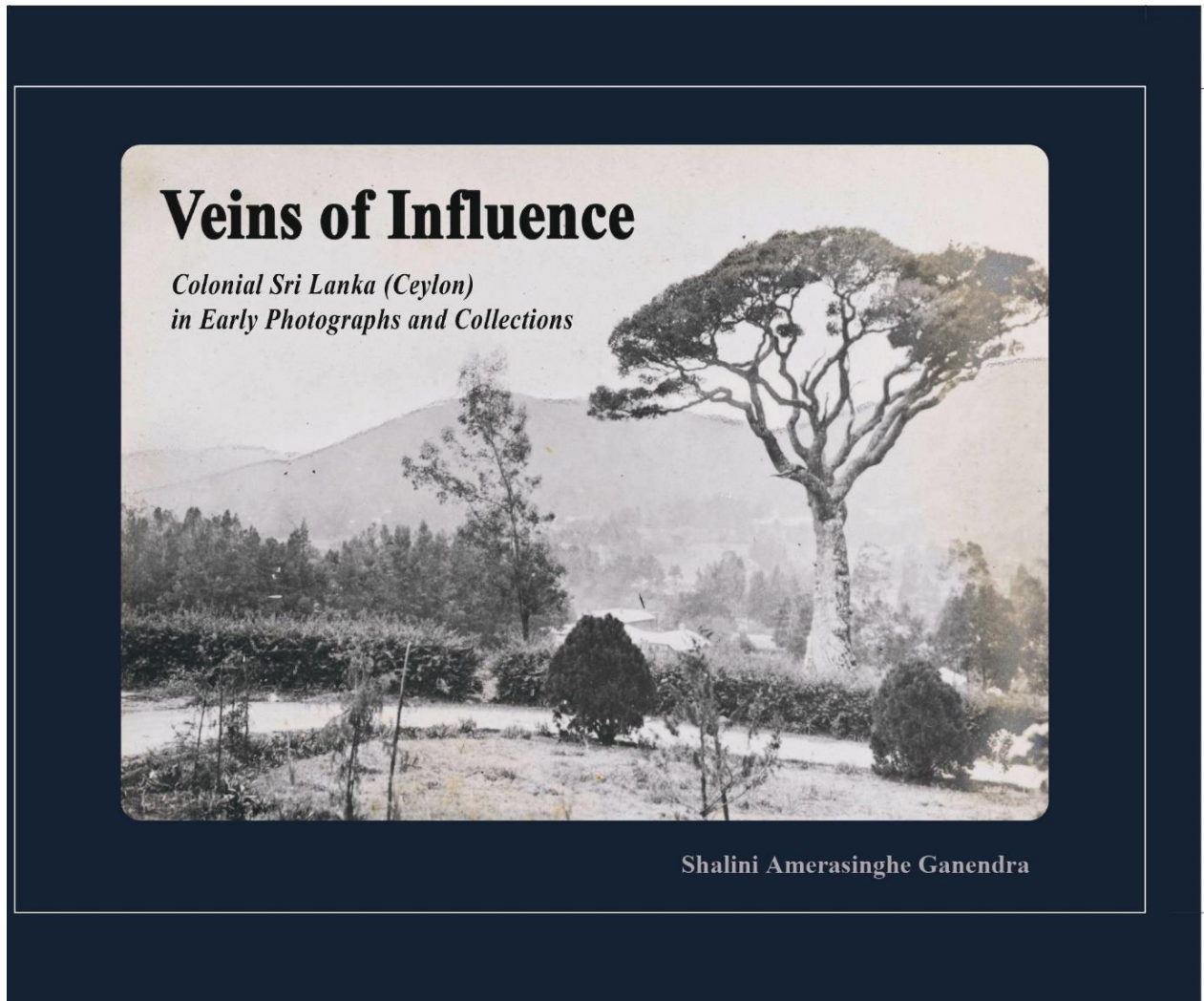
Veins of Influence

Colonial Sri Lanka (Ceylon) in Early Photographs and Collections

By Shalini Amerasinghe Ganendra

PUBLICATION RELEASE NOTICE

An impactful and far reaching contribution to the field of photography and visual impression.



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PUBLICATION OVERVIEW

Veins of Influence, Colonial Sri Lanka (Ceylon) in Early Photographs and Collections is a pioneering monograph that brings a rich array of early images of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) into the global discourse of photography, pairing a striking lens of visual appreciation with distinctly humanizing perspectives.

1

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Topics: **Art History; Photography; Colonial Studies; History; Visual Theory**

In these pages, Ganendra surveys more than 450 early photographs of colonial Sri Lanka, from important collections, most of which have never been published or otherwise come into the public view, until now. Her focus on the collecting dynamic provides novel perspectives that humanize the image through the nature of their collectors and their related journeys.

Images featured are from the: Royal Collection Trust; Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford; Royal Commonwealth Society, Cambridge University Library; Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; Trustees of the Rothschild Archives. In addition to these UK collections, the publication includes early photographs from important local family collections and period publications and works by Julia Margaret Cameron. The collections are mainly those of 'influencers' and the writing considers images by both studio photographers and hobbyists, for commercial and non-commercial purposes.

"The images explored in 'Veins of Influence' testify to the giddy intensity of the British vision of Sri Lanka as a land of extraordinary beauty, inexhaustible natural resources, and unbounded commercial opportunity.

The originality of Ganendra's approach is to emphasize the role played by these "influencers" as intermediary shapers and distributors of the emerging imperial vision of the new colony. By telling this fascinating story in a language that will be accessible to general and specialist audiences, 'Veins of Influence' promises to open an important new chapter in our understanding of 19th century photography in South Asia and globally."

Christopher Phillips

Former Senior Curator, International Center of Photography, New York City

This seminal publication is for specialists (including scholars, collectors, curators) and general audiences. Ganendra's unusual analysis of these collections adds another layer of understanding of the viewing and imaging of Ceylon specifically, but also offers a general approach to colonial image. This publication promises a visual journey that not only informs through the beauty of black and white imaging, but also through the dynamics of impression, considering personal influences that operate on and through these images, including through our own engagement.

"Shalini Ganendra has meticulously scoured extant public and private archives in the UK and Sri Lanka to uncover the various manners that Sri Lanka, or colonial Ceylon, was represented through the earliest photographic records in the 19th c. until the mid-20th c. advent of political independence. As such, she has created a visual documentation of great value for understanding how the country and its evolving cultures were rendered. It is, thereby, a very constructive historical contribution of lasting significance that enriches our awareness not only of indigenous subjects, but the manners chosen by Westerners to represent the country-at-large."

Prof. John Clifford Holt

William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Humanities in Religion and Asian Studies Emeritus

Bowdoin College (USA)

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“Dr Anil Seal, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge and historian of modern India, who has a layman’s interest in the early photographic archives of the Indian Empire, welcomes this valuable monograph on collections of photographs of colonial Ceylon. It will be of compelling interest to all those who study the history of Sri Lanka, or have the opportunity to visit that Emerald Isle.”

Dr Anil Seal

Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge and Historian of Modern India

ABOUT the AUTHOR, Select Bio

Shalini Amerasinghe Ganendra’s impact on cultural development has been defined by nearly three decades of cultural programming including exhibition and scholarship, with notable focus on Sri Lanka. Through specific multi-disciplinary projects, including founding the cultural marquee the Gallery Weekend Kuala Lumpur, the Vision Culture Artist Residency Programme and the UNESCO Observatory endorsed Vision Culture Lectures, she has worked to bring into the global creative discourse, the creative practises and histories of understudied regions. She has pioneered exhibitions of Sri Lankan art in Malaysia, the USA and UK, most recently ‘*Image & Identity, (Early colonial photography)*’ at the Museum of Oxford, Oxford, UK.

Ganendra is Sri Lankan born and lives in Malaysia. She read law at Cambridge University (1987) and qualified as a Barrister and New York Attorney. She was the first Sri Lankan specialist to be appointed to the Tate Gallery (UK) Acquisitions Committee (SAAC) and has served on numerous judging panels including for the Commonwealth Arts Award and as a nominator for the Sovereign Art Prize and Aga Khan Architecture Awards. She was most recently a Chevening Fellow at Oxford and has held numerous visiting positions at the University of Oxford, including at: the History of Art Department, St. Catherine’s College and the Pitt Rivers Museum. She will be an Academic Visitor at University of Cambridge this term.



Shalini Ganendra

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