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A scholar of religious studies and social anthropology, Dr. Brigitte Luchesi is an experienced documentary photographer. For Luchesi, the photograph is a form of participant observation, used in particular during Hindu rituals. It contains aspects of both production and representation that include the agency of photograph-taking, the social interaction between photographer and person(s) depicted, the photographer's place and perspective; personal interests, and scholarly and emotional reactions.

Participation in religious rituals and other acts of faith is most often a multi-sensual experience. Sharing this experience with those not present could involve long and detailed verbal descriptions, but a photograph can transmit impressions and informative details compactly and directly, providing sensual access too. The traits of documentary photographs prove useful when the images are deployed in public contexts. The relationship between text and photograph should be acknowledged, with the information the picture transports recognized as a medium in its own right.

The cover image shows Tamil worshippers of the Hindu goddess Sri Kamadchi in front of her temple in Hamm Uentrop, Germany, during the annual temple festival held on 25 June 2017. They are waiting for the mobile cult image of the goddess to be brought out of its normal location and progressed through the neighbourhood. The two well-dressed women have taken a vow to walk in front of the chariot all the way, carrying on their heads pots with sanctified water.

For further information visit <https://aestor.net/?staff=dr-brigitte-luchesi>

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