

There is no reason to assume that a Thai, when looking at a photograph of the Eiffel Tower, should see a different Eiffel Tower than, say, a Swiss does. What Thai eyes and Swiss eyes register is the same, how they interpret it might however be another story.

Our interpretations of pictures depend not least on our cultural upbringing. The famous picture of the lonely man facing the tanks on Tiananmen Square in 1989, for instance, has been read, by the Western media, as a symbol of exceptional bravery in the face of a massive threat, whereas the official Chinese reading saw it as an expression of extraordinary restraint by the tank commander.

Looking at Pictures in East and West

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