

Session at CAA 2016 (Washington DC, 3-6 Feb 16)

Washington, DC, Feb 05, 2016

Deadline: May 29, 2015

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IAS sponsored session at CAA 2016

Rethinking the Rhetoric and Force of Images

The relation of the visual arts to linguistic artifice – poetry or rhetoric – has long been an issue of fundamental art-theoretical and art-historical concern, with roots in antiquity. Filtered through varied conceptual vocabularies and disciplines through the centuries, it has been framed and re-framed in terms of "figure" and "discourse," "image" and "word," and "iconicity" and "narrativity" or "discursivity." Closely related are more recent attempts to redefine the study of art history around the distinctive "power" or "force" of visual images, drawing upon fields such as anthropology and phenomenology. A new phase of engagement with the issue was inaugurated with the near simultaneous publication of David Freedberg's *Power of Images* (1989) and Hans Belting's *Bild und Kult* (1990). The intervening quarter-century has seen a proliferation of efforts to engage this issue and the emergence of formally constituted "methods," exemplified, for example, by Belting's *Bild-Anthropologie* and Horst Bredekamp's formulation of *Bildwissenschaft*. There has also been critical pushback against these moves, even from those sympathetic in principle to the possibility of a phenomenological art history.

Italian art – whether ancient, medieval, renaissance, baroque or modern – has been one of the principal grounds on which this issue has been debated. This session aims to assess the ways in which recent developments have shaped our understanding of it and perhaps offer promising new avenues of approach, not only to the art of Italy, but also to art history more generally. In what ways does the emphasis on the force of images ally our discipline more strongly with fields such as media studies, literature, philosophy and/or the sciences? How has it usefully moved the discipline beyond the social histories of art that once dominated the field or worked in conjunction with these? What are the stakes of this issue in an era increasingly mediated by virtual images?

Co-Chairs

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Please submit proposals with paper title and abstracts of no more than 450 words to session chairs by May 29, 2015.

Reference:

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2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/10381>>.