

Sessions at IAWIS/AIERTI (Lausanne, 10–14 Jul 17)

Lausanne, IAWIS/AIERTI

Deadline: Aug 31, 2016

H-ArtHist Redaktion

11th International IAWIS/AIERTI (International Association of Word and Image Studies / Association Internationale pour l'Etude des Rapports entre Texte et Image) Conference

[\[1\]](#) Performing Texts: Pictures Replicated in Texts, Texts Reproduced in Pictures

[\[2\]](#) The Photograph and Its Narrative Shadow

[\[1\]](#)

Performing Texts: Pictures Replicated in Texts, Texts Reproduced in Pictures

Deadline: Aug 31, 2016

This panel investigates the visual, literary, conceptual and aesthetical horizons linked to modern and contemporary photographic mises en scène of textual dimensions. Through an interdisciplinary approach the panel seeks to encourage a discussion on the interactions between word and image: from staged photography to tableaux vivants, from photo-romans to photographic reproductions of historical and fictional narratives. Such an interplay has produced a vast and complex net of works, both in the artistic and literary realm; showing from time to time limits, margins, short-circuits, frictions, encounters or open dialogues between images and words.

Roland Barthes' announcement in the opening of his *L'empire des signes* (1970): "Le texte ne 'commente' pas les images. Les images n'illustrent pas le texte", orientates the fruition of his text; at the same time preserving the dialogue between word and image and dissolving the predominance of one on the other. A statement that in any case does not solve the complex yet prolific coexistence of the two expressive levels.

In more recent times W. G. Sebald relaunched the reflection on the reproduction of images in literary oeuvres, enriching the debate on the role of textual and visual materials, on authorship, the task of the reader, the reliability of sources and expanding the range of textual performativity. On the other hand, the panel will also consider the disappearance of text in forms of staged photography, where the textual source is performed in absentia (see Jeff Wall's *After "Invisible Man"* by Ralph Ellison, the Prologue, 1999-2000).

Considering all these specific and interconnected issues, the session therefore addresses different questions: to which extent the reproduction or the non-reproduction of a textual source in a picture influences fruition and interpretation? Which are the theoretical premises and methodological consequences of literature contaminations in photography? What happens when words are reproduced within a photographic frame?

Proposals can be submitted, in English or in French, using this on-line form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1vote850Mssh1r1oLZe3fiKnrpPdSt_WSTBNQNNQ_eC14/viewform?c=0&w=1

More information: <http://www.unil.ch/reproduction2017>

Responsible

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[2]

The Photograph and Its Narrative Shadow

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While modern painting took up the crisis of representation by shattering the perspectival construction of the image, modern theater deconstructed the conventions that inform plot and character. Throughout this period, however, photography served as a mirror of nature and society, and thereby playing an oddly conservative role in relation to modernism's increasingly abstract and anti-realist impulses. By a Benjaminian account, the photograph does not battle against tradition, as do modern painting and theater, because it is a reproducible slice of the world and a tributary to its unconscious rather than a representation of it.

This session complicates this story of photography's role within modernism by demonstrating its complex relationship to narrative, revealing the photograph to be infinitely more embroiled in culture than previously imagined. In thus doing this session contributes to current debates on the photographic image, reproduction, and modernism. Geoffrey Batchen, for example, argues that photography was not invented ex nihilo but, rather, anticipated within a rich philosophical discourse on light and truth. More recently, Kaja Silverman argues that photography introduced its own "liquid logic" and "disclosive power" (a threat that was rationalized by the industrialization of photography) and thus challenges scholarship on the reproductive nature of the photograph. Both scholars suggest that photography holds a unique relationship to narrative.

The scholars featured in this session present new insights on this topic by analyzing photographs, cinema, pre-cinematic spectacles, and photographically informed artworks in relation to the narratives that inform them—for example, scripts, letters, novels, librettos, or political tracts. In so doing, the scholars in this session reveal the various ways in which the photograph is tied to narratives both explicit and implicit.

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