What do images in public space do? (Geneva, 18-20 Jan 17)

Geneva, Jan 18–20, 2017

Allison Huetz, Paris

What do images in public space do?
Public Conference
University of Geneva, Uni Bastions, room b111 rue De-Candolle 5, Geneva

In the field of visual studies, important recently-published or translated works address the agency of images. In parallel, the concepts of performance and performativity have been more and more invoked in the social sciences, and now especially in geography.

This conference, organized by the School of social sciences of the University of Geneva, stands at the intersection of these scientific agendas, is about the work of images in public space. Advertisements and political posters, statues, portraits; giant screens, or projections; artistic installations, and street art; photographic exhibitions, etc.: indeed, images of all kinds, exercising very diverse functions, proliferate in public spaces.

To what extent do these images affect, create, or transform the places, actors and practices with which they are associated? How are images created with, and in, public space? What symbolic, social and political stakes does their presence hold? The conference will revolve around these questions, which have hardly been explored, yet are important for both visual and urban studies.

These interrogations seek to take up two challenges. Visual studies, on the one hand, often place more emphasis on images than on the apparatuses of their visualization, their spatial context, or the social networks within which they are inscribed. Thus, works on the agency of images often focus on specific images deemed particularly powerful or performative, for instance works of art, while giving little attention to more banal or vernacular images, the conditions proper to their agency, or the spectators themselves. On the other hand, for the social sciences, and geography in particular, visual culture has hardly been an object of investigation, particularly as tied to urban life. Some studies have certainly addressed the image of the city, or art (especially artistic performances) in public space, but rarely visual culture in its popular sense and its place in the city.

By reflecting on the role of images—all images—in public space, we hope to advance on both these fronts.

We will have the pleasure to welcome W. J. T. Mitchell, professor of visual studies, University of Chicago. He will give a lecture at the symposium as well as a public lecture on Wednesday 18.01 from 7 pm (UniDufour, room U600), American Psychosis: Trump and the Nightmare of History.

PROGRAM

Wednesday, January 18

3 pm Opening of the conference
Jean-François Staszak

3:15 pm Session 1 - Images in public space: the issue of reception
Olivier Gaudin, Marianna Liosi, Collectif FACT

4:30 pm Session 2 - Visualising images in marginal spaces
Clémence Lehec, Xenia Vytuleva, Zara Fournier

7 pm Uni Dufour U600
Public conference – American Psychose: Trump and the nightmare of history
William John Thomas Mitchell

Thursday, January 19

8:30 am Session 3 - Battle of images? The issue of historical narratives
Dorothée Chouitem & Michèle Guillemont, Nausikaä El-Mecky

9:30 am Session 4 - The role of images in post-conflict contexts
Ralf Sander, Brenda Schmahmann, Roy Jreijiry

11 am Session 5 - Images and the contemporary city
Harald R. Stühlinger, Vivien Philizot, Michèle Freiburghaus

2 pm Keynote speach - Method, Madness and Montage
William John Thomas Mitchell

3 pm Session 6 - The visual grammar of public space
Elsje van Kessel, Narciss M. Sohrabi

4:15 pm Session 7 - Rebellious images
Dominique Crozat & Emanuele Giordano, Damien Darcis, Enrique Klaus

5:30 pm Visite of the public art project Neon Parallax
City of Geneva Contemporary Art Fund

Friday, January 20

8:30 am Session 8 - Images and their political use, toward a commandeering?
Jean-Charles Giroud, Léo Kloeckner, Jens Peter Munk

9:35 am Session 9 - Writing memory : public spaces / symbolical spaces
Peter Muir, Tanja Schult & Diana I. Popescu

11 am Session 10 - Embodying the city, bodies in the city
Christian-Nils Robert, Lukas Wilde, Sylvie Joublot Ferré & Jean-François Thémines

2:30 pm Session 11 - Public statuary: from the political to the psychological
Laurent Viala, Salvarpatti Manuvelraj Ponnudurai, Krzysztof Krzysztof

4 pm Session 12 - Society in showcase, bodies on display
Edith Lázar, Serge Margel

4:40 pm Session 13 - Communicating the city, selling new urban spaces
Youssouf-Laplage Moumbagna, Bert de Muynck

5:40 pm Closing statement

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Reference:
CONF: What do images in public space do? (Geneva, 18-20 Jan 17). In: ArtHist.net, Dec 18, 2016 (accessed Nov 26, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/14415>.