

The Architecture of Vision (Rijeka, 10–12 Sep 20)

University of Rijeka, Croatia, Sep 10–12, 2020

Deadline: Apr 1, 2020

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The Architecture of Vision

International Association for Visual Culture's 6th biennial conference in cooperation with the Department of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka

"[T]he important thing is neither what was said (a content), nor the saying itself (an act), but rather the transformation, and the invention of still unsuspected mechanisms that will allow us to multiply the transformations." Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*

Architecture etymologically belongs to the order of power. Stemming from Greek and Latin, it means "master builder", derived from archon, chief. Historically, it is understood as building with the vision of the upward, the improved, that is to say an ideal of progress. For its 2020 conference, the International Association for Visual Culture proposes, however, a different formulation of architecture – one of layering, of consciously building from something rather than of scripted building that seeks to level or eliminate the past. What can it mean when we think of architecture as a horizontal network – even a strategy – of different, converging and simultaneous processes?

Our 2020 theme – The Architecture of Vision – unites this lateral, at times instinctive, at times impromptu idea of architecture with a central topic of visual culture—namely vision and visibility. Vision is a central topic of visual culture, a discipline that for a couple of decades now has been trying to (re)imagine the world around us by taking into account the interplay between logos and imago, order and imagination.

Key terms for topics:

- palimpsestic knowledge
- propaganda in visual culture (historical and contemporary)
- origins of change
- monuments and architecture interventions in public space
- revolution and counter-revolution: from local case studies to global critical thought
- subject formation (online/virtual and offline/IRL)
- building vision: from the visibility of the "subaltern" to surveillance vision
- visibility in cultural studies and ethnography
- visual culture, power and control
- local case studies from Southeast Europe to the Global South: problems and opportunities
- the subject of decentralized vision: participatory culture, emancipation and the digital

- archivization / archive as architecture

The topic of this year's conference seeks to better understand the processes of vision that remake our world as a kind of architectural layering. We seek historical and contemporary topics that respond to these three different strands:

First, architecture can be appropriated for the uses of literally "building a vision", or creating a vision. Here, we are thinking of both the "countervisual" that is imagined and then acted upon – that is to say, made material in an architecture that has both an order and flexibility, which may be applied, reapplied, and grow. We are also thinking of the populist practices of the alt-right and other movements that oppose social or climate justice, whose philosophy and action are built on the production of a worldview based on "alternative facts" and feeling. In other words, how do movements rely on vision as much as infrastructure, i.e. "master building"? In what ways does contemporary visual culture help enable these counter-revolutionary practices, and in what ways can it be used as a weapon of critical thought against them?

Therefore, we seek to inspect vision also on a temporal level: as clairvoyance, the process of seeing the future. What is the future of visual culture? How are we to deal with new concepts in the field of cultural studies (from climate crisis to migration or redefinitions of gender, citizenship, and subjectivity on a global scale, to local important struggles specific to a region)? How do we re-articulate those concepts within the frameworks of Visual Culture Studies, including its counter-hegemonic and anti-colonial approach?

Finally, we wish to inspect vision as one of the central themes of visual culture. Vision as a way of seeing, placing the one who looks in the forefront. How is a subject placed in the position of looking? Who is a subject? What is the position of looking today, in a world without a stable vantage point? Can we still insist on the notion of a subject, if the Renaissance position of the stable agent of the look and its object is no longer useful in the digital realm of intersubjective exchange, deep fakes, bots, and algorithms? In other words, how can we reimagine vision as a process of political and cultural emancipation as the world exists today?

We seek proposals for short (20 minute) papers and creative presentations. The IAVC's conferences work to achieve a balance between thoughtful and attentive listening and animated discussion. Speakers will be prepared for both.

Please submit your 300 to 400 word proposal, a 100 to 200 word biography in a single running Word document or PDF to: greetingsIAVC@gmail.com by April 1, 2020.

Please title your document in the form of "your surname_abstract_IAVC2020".

We will announce our conference program in late Spring 2020.

Confirmed guests include: David Ayala-Alfonso (Independent Curators International, USA/Colombia); Manca Bajec (Biennial Foundation, London/New York); Brooke Belisle (Stony Brook University, USA); Irene Chien (Muhlenberg College, USA); Jae Emerling (The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA); Joanne Morra (Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London, UK); Rahul Mukherjee (University of Pennsylvania, USA); Krešimir Purgar (Academy of Arts and Culture, J. J. Strossmayer University, Croatia); Irit Rogoff (Goldsmiths, University of

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London, UK); Marquard Smith (University College London, UK / Vilnius Academy of Arts, Lithuania); Nina Trivedi (Royal College of Art, UK); and Øyvind Vågnes (University of Bergen, Norway).

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Reference:

CFP: The Architecture of Vision (Rijeka, 10-12 Sep 20). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 6, 2020 (accessed Apr 7, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/22566>>.