Visual Resources, issue: What is an Image, Now?

Deadline: Feb 21, 2021

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What is an Image, Now?

The study of images is a vast and complicated field of enquiry that looks to understand how changing modes of production, dissemination and consumption, (including changes to the aesthetics and materiality of images) transforms the value of images, their very definition and ontology.

New modes of production and dissemination in the digital age sprouted new ways of defining images, new categories of images, renewed understanding of the image's changing roles through various context. The increasing visualization of everything, revolutionizes our understanding of images, and in a way, the permanent and proliferate presence of images and their discursive role completes, or rather complicates, the process of the secularization of representation and its politization.

We pose that this moment in time, at the threshold of a pandemic, and the imaginaries perpetuated by its politics, we are again in a moment of transition, one that anticipating a 'post-digital' image. One that refuses newness and enthusiasm, and moves fully to a mode of cycling and recycling.

More than 10 years ago, in a moment of transition between web 1.0 to web 2.0 and the rise of social networks, Hito Steyerl identifies 'the poor image' as an agent, a virtual embodiment of a working class. In her 2009 essay ' In defense of the poor image', she writes:

"The poor image is an illicit fifth-generation bastard of an original image. Its genealogy is dubious. Its filenames are deliberately misspelled. It often defies patrimony, national culture, or indeed copyright. It is passed on as a lure, a decoy, an index, or as a reminder of its former visual self. It mocks the promises of digital technology. Not only is it often degraded to the point of being just a hurried blur, one even doubts whether it could be called an image at all. Only digital technology could produce such a dilapidated image in the first place."

Suggesting that the image itself, has a potential of defying the promises of digital technologies. In the age of machine seeing, deep dream and deep fake, one may ask, what is the relationship formed between new and old images? And what kind of political power images hold in our post-digital almost post-covid times?

Steyerl 's description of the image is one of an exhausted entity, an image that in its erratic movement, outside mechanisms of value that leans on authenticity, loses its essence.

If that is true, is the poor image and essence-less entity? And if so, where is the power of the image held? What are the new relationships formed between images and authenticity? And between images and meaning?

How do we read an image that had lost the information it carries? And what can an image be outside of the compilation of bytes, data and information?
What new categories of images seem to emerge as new technologies evolve, and in what way image and memory shape one another in this new relationship?

Images encapsulates memory and meaning in a visual form: photographs, mental images, hieroglyphs, word as image, image a word etc. The mode of reading images as such is one that suggests a wholeness, or a Gestalt. What is the quality of the image, that enables this form of visual remembrance and recognition? How does an image function as a fraction? How does it function as a whole? And how to think about and map the relationship between networks of images?

For this special issue of Visual Resources, we are interested in new perspective, new theoretical considerations of images, their ontology, their meaning, value and social role. We are interested in offering a multilayered understanding of the image, relevant to current conditions of relation and communication. We are interested in understanding images outside of the scope of their disciplinary use. We are interested in images as they function across different aspects of epistemology. We are interested in the phenomenology of the image as a connecting vertebra between disciplines.

We are also specifically interested in articles that were written in collaboration, out of an inter-disciplinary consideration of the ontology of images and imaging media. Works submitted by individuals will be considered by virtue of their excellence and ability to propose a multi-disciplinary and layered response to this set of questions. Individuals may also send abstracts, if they are interested to be matched with other individuals to form a partnership or a collaboration. We will facilitate those when possible and appropriate.

We welcome papers that critically examine and/or correspond with either of the following topics:
- Iconology / Iconography
- Images between art, design and science
- The aesthetics of digital images
- Interdisciplinary image history
- Images of / in VR/ AR/ XR
- Images created by AI
- Images created by machines
- Media archaeology and images
- Image materiality / virtuality
- Images and politics of dissemination
- Images and politics of production
- Visual language

Abstract of 300-400 words to be sent to:
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Submission Deadline for abstracts EXTENDED: 21st February, 2021, 23.55 GMT
If your proposal is received after the above deadline, it may be considered for future issues.

Abstracts accepted will be notified, and authors will be required to submit their full article (4500-6000 words) and this will go through a double blinded peer review process before accepted for final publication.

Full paper submissions should be submitted through Editorial Manager as per the Instructions for Authors:
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?show=instructions&journalCode=gvir20

Papers should adhere to the IFAs.

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Visual Resources Journal

Visual Resources is dedicated to the study of images and their use, within art, material culture, architectural history and cultural studies. Its aim is to provide readers with a critical theoretical framework for understanding images and visual information in contemporary society. The journal is published 4 times a year, and includes both a rolling publishing scheme online and a printed version.

Main themes include: visual aesthetics; visual language; art history; digital art; iconography and oncology; museum and archive studies and curating.

For more information on Visual Resources, please visit:
https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/gvir20/current

Reference:
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