

Visual Contagions through the Lens of New Media (Geneva, 13–15 Sep 21)

Université de Genève, Switzerland, Sep 13–15, 2021

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Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, Université de Genève, CH

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Visual Contagions through the Lens of New Media Call for Propositions

What is the form assumed by the circulation of images, and the diffusion of some more than other, in digital and visual culture? Video games, Internet culture or digital art among other, are all a testament to a high-speed circulation of images on a global scale. The forms this circulation can assume, such as intermediality hybridation or remixability, become part of a “globalization through images” – a topic understudied as of yet. The phenomena of visual contagions from a medium to another and from a field to another, are also prime examples of how new media infect contemporary culture.

Video-game apparatuses in particular are the vector of an inherently globalized culture of image, thanks to a technological paradigm which enabled its diffusion and “contagion” phenomena. This type of phenomenon is far-ranging, from the propagation of video-game images on various interfaces, to their adaptation by contemporary artists or Internet users (“memers,” streamers, content creators, ...) so-called “prosumers.” In the same vein, Internet culture comprises a great deal of practices related to culture jamming or “remix culture.” Such practices interact with earlier mediums (painting, cinema, video games, television), in a way which leads us to reevaluate the usual understanding of computers as “meta-medium.” Digital art – mainly game art or net art – is a further example of this interaction, if not in a more theoretical and critical perspective.

This symposium will look at the various dynamics at play in the circulation of images, the phenomena of transmission of visual content and diffusion of epidemic nature, following three axes: video-game apparatuses, Internet culture, and digital arts. We welcome problematics with an interdisciplinary approach, utilizing the tools from art history, cultural and visual studies, media studies, and aesthetics. Geographical and socio-political aspects of visual contagions in the era of new media will be appreciated topics also. These problematics include, without being restricted to, the following questions:

- How do the images circulate between different digital mediums? How does the passage from one medium to another affect an image? What are the effects of such contagions – on an individual, collective, cultural, or aesthetical level? How does the so-called “artification” of images from

the cultural industry work in the various creations of contemporary art? How do creative dynamics, aided by the new media, force us to reevaluate some notions – such as creator, spectator, authorship, original, etc. – firmly established in the academic world?

- In what way does the circulation of images, intensified by the Internet, alter the production and reception of such images? How does the individual appropriation of images on the Internet transform our connection to them? And how does this interactive/relational dimension inform our connection to images within the paradigm of new media?

- What exactly is being circulated in memes? A psychosocial profile? A pathos formula? How can we correlate these visual contagions to their individual or collective effects? Which heuristic models should be employed to this end? What is the relationship between the global diffusion of video-game apparatuses and their progressive integration into contemporary art? How can we compare and/or differentiate media-technological determinisms and the semantic dimension of visual contagions?

These issues may be treated using various approaches: case studies, empirical, historical, computational, mediological methods, speculative conceptualizations of visual contagion phenomena, etc. Creative interventions are also welcome, as long as they can be streamed - in the case we were to still be under the yoke of a more serious pandemic.

DEADLINES & GUIDELINES

This symposium is part of the VISUAL CONTAGIONS project, affiliated with the chair for Digital Humanities at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, and kindly funded by the National Swiss Fund for Research (Fonds national suisse pour la recherche, aka FNS).

Keynotes: Patrick Jagoda (University of Chicago), Knut Ebeling (Kunsthochschule Berlin)

Invited artists: Mélanie Courtinat, Brice Roy

Please send your abstracts to the following e-mail address by May 10, 2021: thibaut.vaillancourt@gmail.com.

Be aware that your e-mail should include [CFP21] as its header ; a PDF file with your family name and a short title following the format: CFP21_Familyname_shorttitle.pdf ; a 300-word abstract and an English resume within the same document.

Feedback on propositions is expected for the first of June, 2021.

The conferences will be mainly given in English and French, on the 13th, 14th and 15th of September 2021.

Organising committee: Thibaut Vaillancourt (University of Konstanz / Paris Nanterre), Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (University of Geneva / ENS Paris), Anthony Békirov (University of Geneva), Rui-Long Monico (University of Geneva).

Scientific committee : Thibaut Vaillancourt (University of Konstanz / Paris Nanterre), Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (University of Geneva / ENS Paris), Anthony Bekirov (University of Geneva), Rui-

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Reference:

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