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From Iconology to Digital Visual Studies (online, 20 Sep 21–13 Jun 22)

online / Artl@s Research Seminar, Sep 20, 2021–Jun 13, 2022
Deadline: May 30, 2021

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[EXTENDED DEADLINE: May 30, 2021]

Styles Revisited: From Iconology to Digital Visual Studies

The 2021-2022 Artl@s research seminar will be devoted to the ubiquitous yet elusive and challenging notion of "style". The seminar forms part of two research projects: IMAGO at École normale supérieure, Paris, France (European Jean Monnet Excellence Center, 2019-2022), on the European circulation of images, and a new project launched in January 2021 at the university of Geneva, Switzerland, VISUAL CONTAGIONS (SNSF 2021-2025), on the globalization of images. We are seeking contributions from scholars at all stages of their careers whose research may help to shed new light on the long-standing question of style, in the hope of promoting a more global outlook that spans different cultures and methodologies, from iconology to digital visual studies. We are equally interested in more traditional art historical approaches such as case studies, and in more recent digital and computational approaches. Indeed, it is hoped that the seminar will offer an opportunity to bring these different approaches together in a productive dialogue.

Questions we aim to address and explore include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Is style a transhistorical and transcultural concept? How have different periods, traditions, cultures, etc. used this notion – if they have used it at all? Are there alternative, understudied historiographies of the notion of style? How might such alternative approaches of style help us think globally in order to revisit, enrich and renew our existing concepts?

- What constitutes a style? When talking about style, are we making a de re or de dicto statement? Are there tangible qualities that we use to recognize a specific style and distinguish it from other styles? Could these qualities be formalized, and perhaps even analyzed using computational methods?

- What is a style for an algorithm? Which are the best existing algorithms that could help us to classify images according to styles? which dimensions and features do they take into account? Could the results obtained from one style be reproduced for others?

- How does circulation affect style? For example, does a style become recognized as such only through circulation? How do cultural transfers affect styles? Do they strengthen styles, or rather dilute them? How can the study of stylistic circulations escape the center/periphery model and its implicit hierarchies?

- Is it possible to detect, from large corpora of images, the factors surrounding the emergence of a style, its circulations, and its disappearance? Could these phenomena be detected and illustrated using numerous corpora of images? Are quantitative methods enough? Can we utilize databases of historical knowledge (e.g. EventKG, Wikidata) to determine trends and refine initial results?

- Could computer vision and machine learning techniques help us come up with completely a new way of thinking about the history of art through styles?

Interested contributors are invited to send a one-page proposal for a 40 min presentation, along with a short CV in the same document. Proposals should be sent to Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (Beatrice.Joyeux-Prunel@unige.ch), Catherine Dossin (cdossin@purdue.edu), and Nicola Carboni (Nicola.Carboni@unige.ch) by May 30, 2021.
Artl@s's annual research seminar is hosted by the IMAGO Center at the Ecole normale supérieure, 45 rue d'Ulm in Paris (France), in collaboration with the project VISUAL CONTAGIONS at the ùniversity of Geneva (Switzerland) and with Purdue University (USA).

The seminar will take place online every other Mondays at 2pm (GMT+1). The dates a priori considered are: September 20, October 18, November 15, December 13, 2021 and January 24, February 7, March 7, April 11, May 16, June 13, 2022.

Organizers: Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (Université de Genève - UNIGE, Switzerland), Catherine Dossin (Purdue University), and Nicola Carboni (UNIGE)

Reference:

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