

Seeing in Tongues: Modern Languages and Visual Culture

Durham, UK

Deadline: Nov 19, 2021

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Call for Contributions

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Editors: Jonathan J. Long and Edward Welch

Publisher: Legenda

Anticipated publication date: 2023

As Visual Culture has emerged as a field of study over the past three decades or so, it has drawn extensively on theoretical paradigms located in French, German and other national contexts. At the same time, research in Modern Languages has played a decisive role in shaping the field, in particular by decentring and interrogating the critical assumptions of a domain that tends towards Anglophone, Anglo-centric and Euro-centric reflexes.

Marking the launch of Legenda's new Visual Culture series, this edited collection aims to take stock of the contribution made by Modern Languages research to defining and understanding visual culture. The volume locates the distinctiveness of Modern Languages research not simply in its understanding of how images work within different national contexts, or in its familiarity with key theoretical paradigms, but also in its sensitivity to the broader dynamics of intercultural contact and transnational movement. Just as work in Modern Languages is increasingly attentive to translanguaging as a means of grasping how languages inhabit, inflect, colonize and cross-pollinate each other, so too the volume sets out to explore what it might mean to think in terms of 'transvisual culture'. It seeks to map the contours of visual economies within and between cultures, and how work in Modern Languages enables us to grasp the nature of image flows and circulation.

Amongst the topics that could be explored are the following:

- Cultures, histories and theories of seeing within national contexts
- How cultures and theories of seeing travel, and what happens when they do so
- Figural ways of talking about images
- How images flow within and across borders

- How borders are manifested and transgressed by images
- Material cultures of image circulation through photographs and print media, and how those cultures have been mimicked and transformed in the digital age
- The space and time of image circulation
- Why linguistic and cultural competence matters when working with images

Contributors are encouraged to adopt a meta-critical perspective on their thinking about visual culture in Modern Languages, how their methodologies have developed, and how they have been shaped by working between Modern Languages and other disciplines. A preparatory workshop in April 2022 will refine these questions, identify others, explore how individual contributions address them, and establish cross-cutting themes and connections between chapters. We are looking for contributions that reflect the global span of Modern Languages research, including Latin America, the Middle East, East Asia and Africa as well as Europe, and open up a historical perspective by exploring the circulation and material culture of images in the pre-photographic age.

To be considered for inclusion in the volume, please submit an abstract of c. 250-300 words and an outline CV including relevant publications to j.j.long@dur.ac.uk and edward.welch@abdn.ac.uk. The deadline for submission is 19 November 2021 and we aim to communicate outcomes by 20 December 2021. The preparatory workshop is scheduled for 7-8 April 2022, with submission of chapters by the end of July 2022. Chapter proposals will be selected by a committee comprised of the volume editors and members of the Visual Studies editorial board. We anticipate around 18-20 contributions of c. 7-8,000 words each, with an introduction co-authored by the volume editors.

Jonathan Long (Durham, German Studies)

Edward Welch (Aberdeen, French & Francophone Studies)

Reference:

CFP: Seeing in Tongues: Modern Languages and Visual Culture. In: ArtHist.net, Oct 12, 2021 (accessed Jun 6, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/35057>>.