Special Issue Media + Environment: "Machinic Visions of the Planetary"

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Special Theme Issue: Machinic Visions of the Planetary
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Recent events such as the recorded landing of the Mars Rover by NASA and the first photograph of a Black Hole have shown how the development of advanced visual technologies have expanded an understanding of how far and what can be seen. But what is it that we are really looking at through these remote views and how are the technologies that make these visions possible altering the ways we relate to the earthly environment and beyond? There is an increasing dependency on forms of machine vision and remote sensing technologies such as drone systems and satellite image processing, 3D LIDAR scanning, algorithmic programs of spatial design and simulative technologies, that have been developed to monitor and model physical environments at planetary scales and as such, contribute to a production of machinic visions of the planetary. These visualising technologies constitute an ecology of imaging systems, described as a "geocinematic apparatus," generative of new aesthetic forms through distributed and disembodied forms of visual perception, as well as envelop historical logics.
This issue aims to interrogate the role of images that result from these technologies as well as their corresponding imaging systems, highlighting an inquiry into the aesthetics of their modes of perception and forms of representation. Attention is placed on the technical affordances and potentialities of these visual technologies and how their modes of perception contribute to emerging notions of the planetary, negotiating the Anthropocene, imaginaries of post–carbon futures and the figuring of diverse subjectivities as enmeshed and entangled with regard to both technical as well as environmental processes. This inquiry is based on an understanding that our knowledge of the physical environment– both in the threats that are posed to it and its expansion beyond earthly borders – is increasingly negotiated through a technological and automated engagement and that the visuality of these technical systems is a central aspect to consider through a historical, critical as well as speculative lens.
We invite contributions that explore the cultural and political implications of these visualising technologies that address the shifting contexts of their deployment from military surveillance to monitoring climate change, to exploring unforeseen planetary environments. The editors of this issue invite inquiries with a thematic focus on the forms of representation and the modes of perception that occur through these visualising technologies and their generative capability in posing new

knowledge and approaches towards our relationship to the physical environment. We also invite submissions which situate contemporary visual technologies and their image outputs within historical contexts. The tracing of historical antecedents for example, spacecraft photography is also encouraged. We encourage contributions that explore artistic engagements which provide critical as well as speculative perspectives concerning the output of these advanced visual technologies and a future imaginary. This, we find is especially important to consider regarding present challenges and possible alternatives concerning the environment and the ethical implications of climate change; its relationship to race and gender, the geopolitics of extraction of natural resources and expansion of neo-colonial extractive practices towards other planets.

This special issue encourages an interdisciplinary approach and invites contributions from but not limited to the fields of Media Aesthetics, Art History and Visual Culture Studies, Environmental Humanities, Media and Communications Studies, Film and Media Studies and Landscape Architecture. We invite analyses that connect an inquiry to wider discourses concerning the aesthetics of the Anthropocene, digital infrastructures, Critical Posthumanities, Postcolonial studies, Queer and Feminist studies, Critical Race Theory and a politics of care. We especially invite contributions which address underrepresented regions and voices, adhering to the journal's philosophy of diversity and inclusiveness of all kinds: racial, geographical as well as knowledge traditions.

Questions that organise this issue include:
How are these images and imaging systems changing an understanding of and relationship to the environment? What kinds of new perspectives are made possible –both from above and below– that are generative of alternative notions of the environment?
How do images and imaging systems intervene in the important challenges of our time concerning care and vulnerability in face of the challenges of the climate crisis and governance?
Can the disembodied sensing of advanced visual technologies such as satellite imagery, drone systems and algorithmic processes be productive in bringing forth an embodied and empathic vision towards the planet?

What kinds of different narratives are brought forth through the mediated landscapes of machine vision about the human in relation to impact and importance in history?

Possible directions may include but are not limited to:
- visual exploration of Mars by the Perseverance Rover. (Ex: Recent selfie posted by NASA of Perseverance rover with "Rochette," a rock it drilled.)

- challenges of representation of the environment regarding scale, entanglement, latency, duration, and spatial relationships.

- techno-aesthetics of racism and climate change.

- cultural and political issues concerning planetary scale surveillance

- historicity/genealogy of satellite imaging technology and remote sensing technologies.

- the repurposing and recontextualizing of satellite image archives; i.e., military, climate monitoring.

- monitoring of national and geopolitical borders and predictive policing via satellites/drones, etc.

- cultural and political encoding of remote sensing technologies; i.e., geopolitical engineering, colonializing environments, land grabbing.

- cultural analyses of perspectives via remote sensing; i.e., perspectives of the 'other,' as disembodied, as providing ethico–political viewpoints.

- a de-centering of the human gaze in the age of the Anthropocene.

- gendered perspectives afforded through techno-imaging and drone use in the environment.

- artistic explorations of empathetic engagements and affective states of machine imaging production concerning the environment and/or the planetary

- co-affective and co-creative perspectives emerging from vision imaging systems as a politics of care

Submission guidelines
To submit your proposal please send a 500–word abstract (including references) and a short bio for each author (up to 70 words each) by the 31st of January 2022. Please send submissions to Lila Lee-Morrison: lile@sdu.dk

Selected authors will be notified by the 15th of February 2022. Final drafts will be due in June 20, 2022. Articles will undergo double-blind peer-review. Length should range between 5,000-7,500 words in length. Please note that acceptance of an abstract does not guarantee publication.

Abstract deadline: January 31, 2022
Manuscript deadline: June 20, 2022
Publication date: Spring 2023

For any queries:
Please contact our editors at lile@sdu.dk

About Media+Environment
Media+Environment is an open access, online, peer-reviewed journal of transnational and interdisciplinary ecomedia research. The journal seeks to foster dialogue within a fast-growing global community of researchers and creators working to understand and address the myriad ways that media and environments affect, inhabit, and constitute one another. Founded on the premise that media and environment is a crucial conjunction for our time, the journal thus encourages both traditional and multimodal forms of scholarship.

Reference:

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