

View, issue 34: The Economy of Images

Deadline: Dec 10, 2021

Agata Zborowska

View. Theories and Practices of Visual Culture, issue 34

THE ECONOMY OF IMAGES

Managing editors: Paweł Mościcki, Agata Zborowska

In the late 1960s Guy Debord wrote in *The Society of the Spectacle*, his most influential book, that “[t]he spectacle is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image.” This observation created an interesting space for reflection on the relationship between visibility and the capitalist economy. Debord described this relationship as assuming a rather curious form, in which it is not the image that becomes capital, but the other way around. Could it be that these are simply two sides of the same coin? That is exactly what appears to be the implication of a comment in *Cinema*, where Gilles Deleuze writes that “money is the reverse of all the images that the cinema shows and edits on the front.” Thus two possible paths emerge for analyzing the connection between the economy and visibility. The first is by demonstrating how behind every image there is a game of interdependence and equivalence typical of the exchange of goods. The second relates to how that very exchange (and its attendant social relations) finds its expression in images when it becomes visible. These are the fundamental—though not the only, and not mutually exclusive—principles of what Peter Szendy, in his book *The Supermarket of the Visible*, calls an “iconomy,” or an economy of the visible.

In issue #34 of *Widok*, we will explore the theme of the iconomy, understood as the complex and multifaceted relationships shared by the economy and images. We invite authors to submit articles examining these ties from a number of perspectives. The first is the internal, in which the relationship between images hinges on the equivalence and exchange of value (as in cinema). Then there is the external, in which the production, distribution, and reception of images are all driven by economic relationships and interests. Finally, there is the transversal, in which these two perspectives (the relationship between images and between images and social practices) combine to reveal the myriad connections between form and the economic system, narrative and interest, and between the symbol and exchange value. The scope of our topic is not limited to a single medium or era. We therefore encourage submissions that explore historical transformations in the relationship between the economy and image, in the vein of the work of such authors as Marie-José Mondzain, Jean-Joseph Goux, and Giorgio Agamben.

In 1979 Joseph Beuys created a picture that equated art and capital, *Kunst = Kapital*. Today, in an era of constant and continuous overproduction and overconsumption of images, this simple mathematical formula seems more true than ever before. In the next issue of *Widok*, we will dis-

cuss the possibility of replacing that equals sign with other symbols, and consider whether art (Kunst) can be substituted by the image (Bild), thus generalizing Beuys' formula. Our intention is to unpack this succinct equation and reveal the secrets, concepts, and narratives lurking within it.

Below is a list of themes that authors may explore in their submissions (other proposals are certainly welcome):

- The depiction of money and finance in cinema. The relationship between form and narrative and the subject of money.
- Product placement: when images become currency.
- Visual arts vis-à-vis Capital: from Joseph Beuys to Damien Hirst and beyond (in both directions).
- One or many image economies? Do non-capitalist visual economies exist?
- The viewer as capital: contemporary attention economies and the monetization of image exchange (internet, social media, algorithm economy).
- Visual forms of money. Historical and contemporary analyses.
- Visual depictions of economic processes (graphs, charts, numbers), their symbolism and dramatic effect.
- Contemporary images of the invisible and their circulation.
- Image formats and their connection to the economy.

We look forward to working together!

Abstracts (max. one A4 page) must be submitted by December 10, 2021. We will notify you of acceptance by December 20, 2021. The deadline for the submission of first drafts is March 4, 2022. Please include in your submission: an author bio (in Polish and English) with ORCID number, an abstract (in Polish and English), and a bibliography (Chicago style).

Please send your proposal at redakcja@pismowidok.org.

For editorial and technical requirements, go to <http://www.pismowidok.org/en/about/submissions>

Reference:

CFP: View, issue 34: The Economy of Images. In: ArtHist.net, Nov 4, 2021 (accessed Jun 18, 2026),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/35252>>.