

Thinking (in) Motion – Comics and Film (Berlin, 5–7 Sep 24)

Freie Universität Berlin, Sep 5–07, 2024

Deadline: Dec 1, 2023

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Call for Papers: International conference

Thinking (in) Motion – Comics und Film

The conference “Thinking (in) Motion – Comics and Film” invites film and comics scholars to an interdisciplinary exchange of methods and theories regarding the concept of movement. Instead of viewing movement as a marker of media ontology and differentiating between static images in comics and moving images in film and other audiovisual media, the conference assumes that both film and comics equally operate, shape, and contemplate representations, experiences, and concepts of movement. The goal of the conference is to challenge and disrupt media binaries by considering both film and comics together in motion and motion through film and comics.

The advent of cinema has given rise to a broad contemplation on the possibility of recording and reproducing movement: from early perceptual-psychological studies by Hugo Münsterberg (1916) and Béla Balázs’ reflections on cinematic facial expressions (1924) to the notions of active film comprehension in cognitive and narratological film theory (e.g. Thompson 1988), as well as Gilles Deleuze’s philosophy of cinema (1983–1985), rooted in Henri Bergson’s concept of movement to recent theories on affective dynamics of film and audiovisual moving images (i. e. Sobchack 2004, Barker 2009, Kappelhoff 2019).

Comics research has often considered movement and motion in relation to film. In the spirit of an academic “freebooting” (Alexius 2022), concepts and ideas have been adopted and adapted, including terms like ‘shot’ and ‘cut’ (e.g. Harvey 1996), the image taxonomies of Gilles Deleuze and Sergei Eisenstein’s montage theories (Schüwer 2008) or the analytical concept of *mise en scène* (D’Arcy 2020). Comics theory has also developed its own concepts of movement: Ian Hague described comic reading as multisensory movement (2014), Nick Sousanis explored embodied perception and metaphorical relations in understanding comics as movement (2015), and Nina Eckhoff-Heindl incorporated embodied perception concepts into the visual-tactile handling of comics (2023). Recently, there have been direct intersections between comics research and film studies. For instance, in the mutual production of comics, film, and gender, according to Véronique Sina (2016), or the movements of viewing and reading in encounters with film and comic characters by Björn Hochschild (2023).

In line with these approaches, the conference aims to promote an exchange between film studies

and comics research that transgresses beyond differentiating media technologies and ontologies. It seeks to challenge the assumptions of moving images on one side and static sequences on the other. Aiming to bring together ideas, concepts and phenomena of movement, contributions to this conference should operate at the nexus of a productive discourse about, between, and with comics and/or film.

That opens the possibility to work with a wide array of examples. These may include phenomena that challenge our understanding of stasis and movement (such as flipbooks, animations, web-comics). They may concern movements and filmic images in comics (such as Marc-Antoine Mathieu's '3 Secondes' (2011), Edward Ross' 'Filmish' (2015) or Sheree Domingo's and Patrick Spät's 'Mme Choi & die Monster' (2022)). Just the same, they could include comic-styles, sequentialities or tableaux in films and other audiovisual media (such as 'La Jetée' (1962), 'The Hulk' (2003), 'The Diary of a Teenage Girl' (2015) or 'Spider-Man: Into the Spideverse' (2018)). Furthermore, the conference is interested in the interdisciplinary discourse through (artistic) research practice, such as video essays that animate comics images or present film images in sequential arrangements (YouTube channels like 'Every Frame a Painting' and 'Strip Panel Naked,' as well as journals such as '[in]Transition: Journal of Videographic Film & Moving Image Scholarship').

Submissions for the conference "Thinking (in) Motion – Comics and Film" should offer new perspectives on film and comics along the lines of thinking (in) motion. Contributions may focus on an exchange between comics research and film studies or stem from the perspective of one discipline while remaining open to an interdisciplinary discourse. The conference program aims to initiate and foster the dialogue between film and comics studies. Possible topics for contributions include, but are not limited to:

- Movement as / through perception and reception (e.g., film viewing and comics reading as (inter)active and productive acts; embodiment; gaze guidance; affecting and being affected)
- Movement in thinking with comics and film (e.g., artistic practices of theoretical, historical, and analytical research and thinking: comics-thinking comics, videographic criticism / video essays)
- Movement as representation (e.g., motion, rhythm, stillness, spatio-temporality)
- Movement and materiality (e.g., physical interactions with films and comics: going to the cinema or comics store, flipping pages, fast-forwarding, editing)
- Movement as a 'figure of thought' and metaphorical concept (e.g., theories and philosophies of movement)
- Movement as discourse / discourses in motion (e.g., freebooting as productive relations between comics research and film studies, historical differences and terminologies, visualizations of discourses as graphic/visual recordings)
- Movements from comics to film / from film to comics (e.g., adaptations, re-mediations, film comics / motion comics)

We welcome abstracts in English (max. 300 words, excluding references) with a short biography (max. 150 words) until December 1, 2023 at the email address kontakt@agcomic.net. If you have

any questions, please feel free to contact us.

The conference is convened by an interdisciplinary group of researchers, consisting of Christian Alexius (Philipps-Universität Marburg | Goethe-Universität Frankfurt), Helene Bongers (Freie Universität Berlin | Universität Potsdam), Tim Glaser (AG Comicforschung, GfM), and Björn Hochschild (Freie Universität Berlin) in cooperation with the AG Comicforschung of the Gesellschaft für Medienwissenschaft (German Society of Media Studies).

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