ArtHist.net

Visual Culture and Ecological Thinking (Florianopolis, 7–9 Aug 24)

Florianópolis (Brazil), Aug 7–09, 2024
Deadline: Mar 18, 2024

Filippo De Tomasi

International Conference Counter-Image 2024 - Visual Culture and Ecological Thinking: reimagining relationships in the world.
Centro de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas , Federal University of Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, Brazil.

There is an extractivist monoculture of the way of producing images that performs imagery itself as a mere representation of a given world and which has the effect of homogenising pictures and, therefore, the possibility of performing worlds. How can we address these issues?

What visualities or counter-visualities make reimagining and implementing new non-extractivist relational forms possible, and what relations would they be? How does visual culture contribute to ecological thinking, and vice versa? Should we examine how images portray the connections between humans and non-humans and how these depictions influence our identities and perspectives?

The concept of landscape exemplifies this. In the Western Eurocentric model made canonical in/by the global North, the landscape genre codified the modern separation between culture and nature, between the viewer on the one hand and the image on the other, subjects and objects inside and outside. It corresponds to the famous model of the "Albertine window", which describes the symbolic device of artificial perspective as corresponding to an image one would see when looking at the world outside through a window. This "symbolic form" (Panofsky), which accompanies the growth of cities (Lefebvre), regulates the relationship between spectator and image. It is based on the centrality of the human being and the spectator's eye ("man at the centre of all things"). The landscape genre symbolises the distant place attributed to nature in European and Western cultures. Nature, perceived as landscape, is a 'backdrop', even when it is the main subject, aesthetically appreciable and economically appropriable. Photographic and film cameras automate this model and have contributed to transforming the conception of the world into a succession of "world images" (Heidegger), becoming a form of epistemology. On the other hand, the search for immersive forms of communication that simulate merging into the whole landscape has also become a constant desire.

Building on Latour's questioning about production, we can ask: What kind of production? What type of image production should we promote?

In the Western Eurocentric model made canonical in/by the global North, the landscape genre codified the modern separation between Culture and Nature, subject and object. The concept of the "Albertine window" model is well-known. It explains how the artificial perspective creates an image that resembles the view of the outside world through a window. This "symbolic form" (as described by Panofsky) is linked to the development of cities (as per Lefebvre) and controls how the viewer interacts with the image. Photographic and film cameras automate this model and have contributed to transforming the conception of the world into a succession of "world images" (Heidegger), becoming a form of epistemology. On the other hand, the search for immersive forms of communication that simulate merging into the whole landscape has also become a constant desire.

W.J.T. Mitchell states that the landscape genre is typical of imperialism and "like money, [landscape] is a natural scene mediated by culture. It is both a represented and presented space, both a signifier and a signified, both a frame and what a frame contains, both a real place and its simulacrum, both a package and the commodity inside the package' (Landscape and Power, 2002: 5). Nature and landscape, as Anne Cauquelin says in L'invention du Paysage (2004), are concepts that tend to be confused, which increases the difficulties of their critique.

However, there are other ways of producing images. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (Cannibal Metaphysics, 2018), while mapping Amerindian cosmologies, proposes that, in conceiving the diversity of ways of life, it is not a question of multiculturalism (one Nature, several points of view about it). Instead, it is a multinaturalism: the perspective creates not different representations of the same world but multiple worlds, multinatures. Adding to this, Isabelle Stengers ("Gaia, The Urgency to Think (and Feel)", 2014) proposes that we confront the intrusion of Gaia: if the monocultural-extractivist mode of production subtracts reality (there is only one world-nature-landscape to be represented), we must instead add realities: "We must learn to tell other stories, neither apocalyptic nor messianic, stories that instead entail what Donna Haraway calls responsibility: accepting that what we add makes a difference in the world and becoming able to answer for the way that difference occurs, for the way that, in so doing, we give our lot to some ways of living and dying and not to others" (Stengers, "Gaia, The Urgency Think (and Feel)", 2014). Hence the importance Stengers gives to fictional practice as "missing thought experiments". In this line, counter-image artistic practices have emerged, such as those that recover obsolete and artisanal technologies in image production, promote archival and collection processes that challenge the capitalist process, and even denounce the nefarious neoliberal ideals for cultures and the environment.

In short, the third edition of Counter-Image aims to reflect on the challenges of expanding reality by creating new images. These images should invent alternative cognitive and imaginative approaches that promote diversity in Nature and its many forms — in a plurality of worlds.

The International Conference on the Counter Image is organised by EVAM - Observatory of Visual Studies and Media Archaeology and the research group on Culture, Mediation and Arts of the NOVA Institute of Communication (ICNOVA), Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of NOVA University Lisbon.

The conference aims to bring together researchers and artists in visual culture, media arts, and humanities, along with various other fields such as photography, filmmaking, curating, and journalism. Their goal is to converse about counter-cultural visual narratives and practices and their

impact on creating fair and sustainable socio-cultural environments.

The conference had two previous editions, in 2019 and 2022, held in Lisbon. The idea for the first edition emerged and was developed by a group of doctoral and post-doctoral students researching in the areas of visual culture and arts and communication, gathered in the collective EVAM - Estudos Visuais e Arqueologia dos Media (Visual Studies and Media Archaeology). The initiative was expanded and became an international discussion forum.

In this Counter-Image, we want to discuss the intersections between Visual Culture and Ecological Thinking. We accept proposals for oral presentations, artistic research workshops, performance presentations, and other forms of expression not exceeding 20 minutes on the following themes, among others:
- Visualities and Counter-visualities of ecological thought.
- Genealogies and archaeologies of ecological thinking and capitalism.
- Ecological perspectives and practices of repair: knowledge production, care and narrative.
- Eco-criticism and eco-feminism.
- Colonial and postcolonial visualities of ecology and capitalism.
- Social sustainability and image practices.
- Counter-hegemonic narratives.
- Epistemologic diversities of counter visualities and counter narratives.
- Archival dynamics.
- Artistic practices as a strategy of resistance.
- Uses of vernacular images and processes in artistic production.
- Obsolete and artisanal technologies as ecological practices.
- Indigenous and Black Studies.

Abstracts must be submitted by Monday, 18th March 2024. Portuguese, English and Spanish languages are accepted. We encourage proposals of an ACADEMIC, ARTISTIC or HYBRID nature. Proposals for papers of 20 minutes duration should be submitted via our Easy Chair account: https://easychair.org/account/signin

After creating a login, write a proposal with a maximum of 500 words, five keywords, and five bibliographic references. Artistic/hybrid presentations should have a maximum duration of 20 minutes and include audiovisual, sound or performative actions. These proposals must be accompanied by a 3-4min short excerpt or an illustrated description, together with the abstract, keywords and bibliographical references mentioned above. In all cases, a separate biographical note should be sent.

Please ensure that your name is not mentioned anywhere in the abstract. Proposals will be selected through a blind peer review system. Sessions will be organised on the basis of thematic affinities, regardless of their nature (academic/artistic/hybrid); all papers will be considered equally valid academic outputs. Successful applicants will be contacted by Friday, 30 April 2024.

Visual works or essays may be submitted to a special issue of an academic journal (to be announced).

https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/cfp/2024/01/31/international-conference-counter-image-2

024-visual-culture-and-ecological-thinking

Reference:

CFP: Visual Culture and Ecological Thinking (Florianopolis, 7-9 Aug 24). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 2, 2024
(accessed Jun 30, 2025), <https://arthist.net/archive/41126>.