

eikones summer school (Basel, 4–6 Sep 24)

University of Basel, eikones – Center for the Theory and History of the Image, Sep 4–06, 2024

Deadline: Apr 15, 2024

Friederike Zenker, Universität Basel

summer school: Attention in Animal Ethics and Aesthetics.

Speakers:

Anat Pick (Queen Mary University of London)

Jessica Ullrich (University of Fine Arts Münster)

Maude Ouellette-Dubé (Haut École Pédagogique Vaud & University of Fribourg)

Silvia Caprioglio Panizza (University of Pardubice & University College Dublin)

Susan McHugh (University of New England)

Curated film program:

Michał Matuszewski (University of Warsaw)

Organizing committee:

Friederike Zenker (University of Basel)

Sune Borkfelt (Independent researcher)

We invite M.A. students and doctoral candidates from a wide range of disciplines (art history, philosophy, literary studies, media studies, film studies, among others) to participate in the eikones summer school program, taking place from September 4 to 6, 2024, at the University of Basel.

In this edition of the eikones summer school, we will focus on attention as a pivotal concept in rethinking human relations to other animals (e. g. Aaltola 2019, Gruen & Crary 2022, Donovan 2016, Panizza 2022, Pick 2018). The case for attention's critical potential across species has been made particularly strongly in ethics (especially in moral realism, care ethics and feminist ethics more broadly), as well as in social epistemology, political philosophy, and aesthetics. By anchoring our inquiry in attention, we propose it as a starting point for exploring the intersections of ethics and aesthetics, and for revisiting the study of animal representations. Our discussions, rooted in philosophical and ethical frameworks – especially in the works of Iris Murdoch and Simone Weil – will scrutinize the role of attention in moral life and aesthetic experience. This summer school aims to cultivate a platform for participants to engage with materials pertinent to their M.A. or doctoral projects, whether these are images, films and other artworks, or texts, which can be fruitfully understood through the lens of attention within human-animal relations (as well as its obstacles and failures).

Structure and topics

The summer school is structured into three themed days (Animal Ethics – Aesthetics – Animals in Context). Each day will contain a keynote lecture, a workshop session in which the participants share and present materials and discuss their own research with the invited guests, as well as one session in which reading material will be discussed. A curated film program is also part of the summer school. Throughout the week, we will collectively investigate a broad spectrum of interrelated topics, depending on the selected participants and their research interests and projects, which may include but are not limited to:

Care ethics theories and attention: What role does attention play in creating and maintaining good caring relations with other animals? Attention, interpersonal relations, and political networks.

Ethics of sight and attention: Structural obstacles to attention regarding other animals in society, e.g., physical, legal, and linguistic practices in industrial animal agriculture.

Attention, empathy, and sympathy: Attention and the sympathetic imagination, empathetic attentiveness, etc.

Failures and difficulties of attention: Moral ignorance and moral shock, compassion fatigue (in animal activism), empathy and suffering.

Mediated encounters and attention: attention to animals in films, literature, and other works of art.

Aesthetic experience and attention: Environmental aesthetics, attention in literary animal studies, zoopoetics and attentiveness.

Attention through dietary and other animal-friendly practice: Vegan studies and attention, attention in pro-animal activism, etc.

Attention and absence: How do we pay attention to what is lost or absent? Attention and extinction, attention beyond the present.

Education, (interspecies) learning, and attention: How do we learn attention to animals? Can attention be taught? Attention as a precondition for knowledge.

Prerequisites

Participants must be

enrolled students in an M.A. program or doctoral candidates at the time of the program in September.

committed to preparing by reading material in an asynchronous learning phase before the summer school (May-August).

committed to suggesting one piece of material (image, film sequence, literary text) relevant to their doctoral program or general research interest and present it during the summer school program.

Application / Contact

Please submit your application in English as a single pdf via email to eikones@unibas.ch, by April 15, 2024. Selected candidates will receive accommodation as well as light lunches on the three days of the summer school. Travel costs and all other costs must be covered by the participants.

The application should include:

1. Letter of motivation (max. 2 pages)

Please state your interest in the topic and your motivation to participate in the program. Please include a passage on the topic of your PhD project or your research interests as a M.A. student.

2. Short CV (max. 1 page)

You will receive a reply from us no later than April 30, 2024. Selected applicants will be asked to choose one piece of research material (image, film sequence, literary text etc.) that they are interested in working on during the summer school. This may be material from a PhD project, M.A. thesis or any other project currently relevant to the applicant.

Reference:

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