

## Metamorphosis – Ecstases of Matter and Image (Copenhagen/online, 30–31 May 24)

Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, Copenhagen University/online, May 30–31, 2024

Deadline: May 1, 2024

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METAMORPHOSIS – ECSTASES OF MATTER AND IMAGE .

Bodies of Splendor: Between Fluidity And Petrification.

Organizer: Nicoletta Isar - IMAGINARY LAB 4: SENSATIONS – INEFFABLE ARCHAEOLOGIES - Art History and Visual Culture Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, Copenhagen University

Metamorphosis, since Heraclitus, has been perceived as a fleeting state in constant transformation of matter. Or, as Empedocles put it, as a cosmic cycle of eternal change, growth and decay of the elementals where love and strife confront each other. Philosophers and phenomenologists, and lately new materialism thinkers projected this sense of the world, condensed in the iconic image of Schelling's primordial vortex of creation as a wave-wound, whirling sea, following dark, traversed by the brilliance of light. To this beginning – 'the mother of all beginnings' – Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Luc Nancy have often returned in their writings – to "the radiant constitution of being" by which the formless abject was molded into a multitude of brilliant splinters.

This conference aims to take the term "metamorphosis" to task – asking what it means, across nature and art, art and technology, to perform traces and ecstasies of matter and body in metamorphic state. How images associated with the elemental states – the earthly, the aquatic, or the unearthly incorporea and the airy ineffabilia – engaged themselves throughout time, creating chiasmic intersections, and poetic fields of morphic resonance? Attentive to their shifting from fluidity to petrification, fossilization into the grain of dust, we invite papers to reflect on the wonders of nature and art in their phenomenal manifest splendor. We call for an investigation assumed to examine the magic of nature in art and technology, as well as to unearth the occult nature of nature's own artistry revealed in the "miracle of being" – "the quasi mineral radiance of the being." With this conference, we conjure the return to the delicate interface of image, to what contemporary philosopher John Sallis called "the delicacy of image" by which image manifests its own imaginability. This has been grasped in Warburg's nimpha, "the elemental spirit, and in Deleuze-Guattari's emblematic vision of becoming – "the glowing fog, a dark yellow mist" full of affects and motions, fundamentally metamorphic in its nature and ecstatic manifestation. This appears as a unified "sympathetic body" of Stoic extraction, a kind of new materialism beyond itself, for as Elisabeth Grosz argues, here the division between materialism and idealism seems to collapse. How could we understand Grosz's suchlike term of "materialist imaginary" as a "third form of matter," and how art in its metamorphic expressions could reflect a comparable "unified body" – both, its *sôma* and its rhythmic breath (psyche).

The call is open to art historians, art practitioners, musicologists, musicians, choreographers, cultural theorists, and literary scholars, and it is open to all historical, philosophical, aesthetic, affective, and descriptive interrogations.

Keywords: metamorphosis; material imagination; ecstasis of matter and image; the elemental; the incorporeal; water; earth; rock crystals; fossils; the miracle of nature; the occult of the digital; sympathy; morphic resonance; Aby Warburg; Maurice Merleau-Ponty; Jean-Luc Nancy; Jane Bennet.

Submissions of proposals for papers: We encourage both senior researchers as well as young researchers to send a proposal for paper. The conference will take place both live and online, and the deadline for submitting a proposal for paper presentations of 30 minutes duration is Wednesday the 1st of May 2024. The abstract should be no longer than 350-400, and the submission should also include a brief CV send as one pdf-file to [isar@hum.ku.dk](mailto:isar@hum.ku.dk)

Reference:

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