

Membrana Journal : Placial

Sep 24, 2024–Mar 31, 2025

Deadline: Nov 11, 2024

Ali Shobeiri

Call for Papers:

“Placial” signals our connection, as well as our preoccupation, with places. It draws attention to how we relate to places in order to position ourselves in the world. Like “spatial”, which encapsulates the characteristics of space, “placial” unfolds place-bound qualities and place-based experiences. It is as much about our rootedness and embeddedness in places as it is about their deterritorialization and dematerialization. In other words, “placial” underscores how we make places and how places, in turn, shape us; it marks our individual relationality and collective positionality in a placeworld.

Since its conception, photography has been continually occupied with places, ranging from micro-places (microscopy/endoscopy), macro-places (cityscape/landscape/seascape), to mega-places (astrophotography). Traditionally, photography documented existing places (as in topography), but it can also perform places (through staged photography), visualize them (in geo-photography), or even synthesize (through AI-generated images) and virtualize them (through extended reality platforms). Whether materialized or immaterialized, ideologized or aestheticized, racialized or sexualized, places have been both the subject matter of photographs and subjected to photography. By situating “placial” at its theoretical center, this issue aims to explore the (in)visible, (non)representational, (im)material, (ir)real, (in)existent links between place and photography.

This issue therefore raises several questions: How can photography and visual culture reflect on the “placiality” of human relationships, social networks, political environments, economic conditions, and aesthetic contexts in contemporary society? In times of geopolitical conflicts and oppressive ideologies, how can photography shape and reshape, or dilute and distort, our conception of place and perception of placemaking? What are the ramifications of digitization, virtualization and AI generations of photography for the representation of place? How can we envision the complexities of the contemporary photographic image as a place wherein visual information is enclosed and disclosed? In which ways photographic technologies shape and influence real and imaginary places across different cultures? In short, Placial asks: how can photography make us think through, across, and within places in our emotional, social, and political lives?

Membrana Vol 10, no 1, guest edited by Ali Shobeiri (Leiden University), aims to explore the historical, theoretical, and conceptual crossovers between photography and place.

We invite submissions from scholars and researchers in the fields of photography theory/history, media studies, human/cultural geography, and philosophy, as well as from visual artists, curators,

and photographers whose work sheds light on the conjunction of place and photography. We call for abstracts that include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Theoretical reflections on place and photography: the genres of landscape, seascape, cityscape, or the topographic and the new-topographic.
- Placial image-making: the role of place in the practice of image making and the function of the image in the construction, reconstruction, deconstruction of places.
- Placial sciences: the influence of geosciences—e.g., hydrology, geology, ecology, and geography—in defining and representing places.
- Placial movement: the itinerancy of the photograph; locating/tagging photos in cybernetic spaces; geospatial mapping of the photograph.
- Placial representations: oppositions/overlaps between site and sight, location and locale, region and territory.
- Placial orientations/navigations: aerial reconnaissance; drone imagery; satellite imagery; artillery spotting.
- Reterritorialization/deterritorialization: reconstruction/disruption of relations between the social and geographic territories; identifying sociopolitical or cultural enclaves/exclaves.
- Replacement/displacement/emplacement: the function of place in photographs of exile, migrant, expatriate, and refugee communities; photography of domiciliation/inhabitation.
- Localized and non-localized places: nomadic photography; vagabondism and image making; portable photography; immovable photographs.
- Phenomenology of place: corporeality and placemaking; entanglement/vibrancy of place.
- Memories of place: place memories and memories of place; mnemotechnics in/at/of place.
- Cacotopias and utopias: imaginary/virtualized places; idealized/demonized locations.
- Genius loci: The sense of place; the ghost of place; interpersonal and subjective aspects of places.
- Digitized and AI-generated places: The impact of AI, virtual reality, and digital imaging technologies on placiality and the representation of places in photography.

Format of contributions

Articles, interviews – including notes, references, abstract, and biography: 21,000–49,000 characters / 3,000–7,000 words

Reviews, experiments: 10,500–21,000 characters / 1,500–3,000 words

Photographic projects and artwork: proposals for non-commissioned work or samples of work: TBD

Proposals and deadlines

Authors are encouraged to present innovative approaches, case studies, and critical discussions that shed light on the complex interplay of these elements.

The deadline for contribution proposals (150-word abstracts and/or visuals) is November 11, 2024. The deadline for final contributions from accepted proposals and other submissions is March 31, 2025.

Please submit proposals (articles, interviews, projects and experiments) via the online form at <https://www.membrana.org/proposal> or contact us directly at [editors\(at\)membrana.org](mailto:editors(at)membrana.org).

For article final submissions (excluding interviews, projects and experiments), please use the online form at <https://www.journals.membrana.org/index.php/membrana/about/submissions> or contact us directly at [editors\(at\)membrana.org](mailto:editors(at)membrana.org).

Reference:

CFP: Membrana Journal : Placial. In: ArtHist.net, Sep 24, 2024 (accessed Oct 21, 2025),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/42751>>.