

Algomedia. The Image at the Time of AI

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Contemporary media ecosystems are deeply entangled with algorithms, which play an increasingly pervasive role in shaping our environment and mediating our perception of reality. This book aims to provide a critical map of a rapidly evolving mediascape in which humans, machines, and data negotiate forms of agency, cultural imaginaries, and scopic regimes.

In particular, the volume addresses the multiple challenges posed by algorithmic media within the domain of visual culture, and identifies a paradigmatic shift: in the age of artificial intelligence, images are no longer merely captured or represented—they are synthesized, inferred, and predicted by probabilistic models. As active agents shaping creativity and meaning-making, AI systems carry far-reaching epistemological, aesthetic, and political implications. They open new possibilities for content accessibility and participatory engagement, yet they also encode existing asymmetries. Trained on massive datasets, machine learning models often reproduce structural biases, amplify cultural and social exclusions, and perpetuate inequalities. At the same time, algorithmic systems are being subverted and reappropriated by artists and curators, transforming them into sites of resistance and experimentation for imagining alternative futures.

Bringing together perspectives from computer science, semiotics, philosophy, critical theory, aesthetics, art theory, visual culture, and film and media studies, this book sets out an interdisciplinary exploration to make key concepts—such as algorithm, latent space, neural networks, generative models, and NFTs—accessible to a humanities audience, while providing a set of critical tools to interrogate both the ruptures and continuities that define this ongoing transformation.

The contributions span a wide array of topics: from machine vision and facial recognition to social robots; from computational art analysis to generative AI, distributed authorship, and curatorial practices; from biometric surveillance and predictive modeling to the politics of datasets and decolonial critique; from virtual and augmented reality to posthuman imagery, digital afterlives, and AI-mediated memory.

Compelling us to revisit foundational categories in media studies, this book offers an analytical framework to open a debate that is not merely about “technology’s impact” but about how algorithms have become the media themselves: veritable algomedia.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Pietro Conte, Anna Caterina Dalmaso, Maria Giulia Dondero, and Andrea Pinotti

Part I. The Black Box of Computational Imaging

AI and Algorithms: What Digital Technology Can Teach Us About Content

Bruno Bachimont

How Machines See and Generate Images

Sergio Picascia and Alfio Ferrara

From Representation to Prediction: Theorising the AI Image

Lev Manovich

Part II. Algorithmic Mediascapes

Artificial Intelligence, VR, and the Virtual

Andrea Pinotti

Spellbound by Technology: Augmented Reality, Artificial Intelligence, and Automagic

Sofia Pirandello

Algorithmic Economies of Light. The SARS-Cov-2 Micrographs as Algo-Images

Ruggero Eugeni

From Windows to Databases: The Visual Politics of Facial Recognition

Samuel Solé

Prophetic Machines. Algorithmic Media as Late-Capitalism Divination

Anna Caterina Dalmaso

Part III. Algorithms and the Arts

Ebrah K'dabri. Agency and Authorship in AI-Enabled Artistic Creation

Domenico Quaranta

Crypto Art and NFTs: A Semiotic Inquiry

Marion Colas-Blaise

Exhibiting Contemporary Artworks Co-produced with Artificial Intelligence

Aluminé Rosso

The Semiotic and Computational Analysis of Represented Poses in Painting and Photography

Maria Giulia Dondero and Adrien Delière

Part IV. Cultural Critique of Algorithmic Media

Techno-Anaesthetics: The Politics of AI Imagery from Stock Images to Generative Models

Alberto Romele

My Cat is an AI. Computational Enunciation and Identity in Video Games

Enzo D'Armenio

Enunciative Practices and Dataset Curation: Toward a Decolonial Semiotics of AI-Generated Imagery

Cristina Voto

Authorship in Algorithmic Images

Andrea Valle

Part V. Posthuman/Non-human Imagery

On Filters and Philters

Massimo Leone

Faces that Do not Exist. Limits and Possibilities of AI-Generated Images

Remo Gramigna

What Does the Robot See? A Cognitive Semiotic Perspective on Robotic Learning Algorithms

Martina Bacaro

Posthumous AI: The Afterlife of Data

Pietro Conte and Maria Serafini

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