

Inquiries into the Image (Athens, 14 Nov 26)

Athens, Greece, Nov 14, 2026

Deadline: May 11, 2026

Angeliki Pollali, Deree-The American College of Greece

Inquiries into the Image: Art History, Visual Studies, Bildwissenschaft.

International Conference.

Deree–The American College of Greece in collaboration with the University of Thessaly and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Keynote Speaker: Emmanuel Alloa, Professor, University of Fribourg

Recent debates in image theory and the historiography of art history point to a growing awareness of the disciplinary, epistemological, and institutional forces that shape the study of the visual. Art History, considered the founding discipline of image study, is thought to have been challenged and expanded by Visual Studies in the Anglophone cultural sphere and by Bildwissenschaft in the German-speaking world. Theoretical discussion has focused on the nature of these new directions, and more specifically their departure from art history. Anglophone Visual Studies are thought to constitute a decisive break from traditional Art History, while German Bildwissenschaft is thought to represent an autonomous or competing response. As hierarchies and narratives of disciplinary supersession or canonicity are being created, all three discourses continue to co-exist, however, as an integral part of the image theory continuum.

This one-day international conference proposes a reevaluation of the above dominant narrative, through the acknowledgement of the current synchronicity of these discourses. Rather than focusing on rupture, replacement, or competition, it identifies a need to explore their conceptual entanglements, methodological affinities, and shared inter- and transdisciplinary horizons. It seeks to situate these fields within broader histories of institutional formation, new research practices, academic knowledge production, and the evolving status of the image.

We invite contributions that investigate the historical continuities, theoretical intersections, and institutional convergences across Art History, Visual Studies, and Bildwissenschaft. We welcome theoretical, historiographic, or case-based studies, as well as papers that combine visual analysis with philosophical or methodological reflection. Historical scope is deliberately open, with an emphasis on the ongoing evolution and present conditions of the fields in question.

Indicative topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Iconic, pictorial, and sensory turns: methodological reconsiderations and historiographic critiques

- Histories of interdisciplinarity in Art History: transdisciplinary knowledge formations; relationships to anthropology, philosophy, psychology, classics, media studies, or science studies
- Visual Studies and Bildwissenschaft as institutional narratives: dialogue, conflict, and syncretism; disciplinary self-fashioning; the authority of academic canons
- Synergies or commoning: between sponsored mega-projects and collective creation in Art History
- The globalization of visual theory: Anglophone dominance, German traditions, and emerging perspectives outside Euro-American frameworks
- Rethinking the autonomy of disciplines: hybrid methodologies, institutional crossovers, translation, and shared epistemic tools
- Re-evaluation of the legacy of key thinkers, including Warburg, Panofsky, Riegl, Wickhoff, Wölfflin, Mitchell, Boehm, Belting, and others to examine how their approaches continue to inform contemporary scholarship

Selected papers will be published in an edited volume which aims to illuminate how the study of the image—far from being fragmented or superseded—remains anchored in a dynamic and enduring inter- and transdisciplinarity. Through comparative, critical, and synthetic perspectives, it seeks to question the assumption of discontinuity between Art History, Visual Studies, and Bildwissenschaft, and to offer new insights into the institutional tenacity and adaptive coherence of image-oriented scholarship today.

Please submit an abstract of 300 words and a 2-page CV to vcclab@uth.gr by May 11, 2026.

Conference language: English.

For further information:

<https://vcclab.cult.uth.gr/en/inquiries-into-the-image-art-history-visual-studies-bildwissenschaft/>

Scientific and Organizing Committee

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Semiotics Laboratory-SemioLab, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Reference:

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<<https://arthist.net/archive/52074>>.