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VISUALITIES
AND INTERMEDIALITIES

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Preface

Visualities and Intermedialities

A global culture saturated with images demands visual literacy of its citizens in order to function as a labor force and cultural participants. Diverse methods of visual communication have been developed to fulfill these social demands. As visuality is more and increasingly involved in constructing a new reality, people do not just admire the power of 'seeing is believing' but now stop to rethink if the image is authentic. Now, the focus of visual cultural studies discerns the logics of how our vision is created and manipulated within and by social and cultural interests, so contemporary studies of visual culture heavily rely on critical perspectives in social theories.

This special Interin dossier on Visualities and Intermedialities was developed as an initiative of the IAMCR Visual Culture Working Group-VIC, to offer several perspectives on two themes. These essays critically examine and reframe visual phenomena constructed within larger cultural and sociopolitical economic contexts. Taken as a group, they demonstrate how issues of vision in contemporary media and communication technologies are constructed in a rather unconventional way and often not grounded in one media tradition, but rather in what we may call intermediality, a dialog between media. Intermediality can produce visual messages with or without a basis in physical reality.

These essays contribute to the field of visual culture by being a truly international work, dealing with the cutting edge of visual culture by discussing changes in media and technologies. Authors discuss VR, games, satellite media, and holograms as well as new visual techniques in conventional media. Yet, no one essay simply introduces the current state of media arts, but overall, the essays develop arguments of social implications and cultural meanings surrounding and constructing our visuality in these media. These discussions propose new alternatives and policy implications in addition to initiating future studies in the field of visual culture.

The researchers in this issue draw from influential scholarship like that of Henry Jenkins whose well known *Convergence Culture*: where old and new media

collide, states that audiences will go anywhere for content, a process rendered simple by the internet, and that “the flow of content” crosses media platform, produced by multiple media conglomerates. Jenkins’ concept of convergence dialogues with intermediality.

Gillian Rose’s book, *Visual Methodologies: an introduction to researching with visual methods* provides more theoretical underpinning for the discussions in this issue. She questions how meanings are connected and can deconstruct visual regimes of truth. In fact, visuality requires attention to approaches and viewpoints that can change meanings and, therefore, are never fixed.

Hans Belting, in his *Image, Media, Body: a new approach to iconology*, suggests that “the images live in a paradox of representing the presence of an absence or vice versa. This paradox, in turn, is based on the practice of relating the presence with visibility”. Belting builds a bridge between visuality and visibility, presence and absence, attempting to argue that concepts may be hybrid.

Jonathan Crary in *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, mentions not only subjectivity and visuality but also focalization, the relation between the vision and that which is ‘seen,’ and perceived. In relation to subjectivity, Crary states that “vision and its effects are always inseparable from the possibilities of an observing subject who is both the historical product and the site of certain practices, techniques, institutions, and procedures of subjectification”. Crary believes that each period of time creates its own procedures, such as the camera obscura and the stereoscope. For our era, the VR-HMD – Virtual Reality - Head Mounted Display creates the illusion that the observer is seeing a three-dimensional image, just like a stereoscope.

The authors in this special journal dossier adopt these and other theoretical positions to argue that the relevant point is not only representation or interpretation but the interaction of both, which provides another meaning for the themes of the e-book: visuality and intermediality. Even having the same picture to be analyzed, results differ in the dialectics between representation and interpretation.

This special dossier brings up theoretical and empirical aspects of visual culture in the context of changing technologies and media reception. Multiple essays discuss significance of technological changes that shape a new atmosphere of visual

culture. In *Remediating Tactility*, the author analyzes a new sensory method in internet micro-genre, the ‘satisfying video’ on YouTube. Similarly to virtual reality technology, satisfying videos also present multisensory integration. In his essay however, Werning defines this new form of experimental and immersive multi-sensory developing nine visual vocabularies unique to the genre of satisfying video, vocabularies that have implications for the wider field of digital video.

Also, *Tactile Photography* explores how unshared mobile photographs may escape regimes of visuality. Kim argues that instead of visuality wider practical contexts such as inscribing, personal archiving, carrying-with, and even being forgotten, might be more productive. To examine this less-articulated but pervasive phenomenon, this paper examines the sensitive aspect of mobile photography as an extension of debates regarding the tactile adoption of mobile media (Cooley 2004, Verhoeff 2012, Pink et al 2016, etc.). Based on ethnographic data with Japanese users, it explores how mobile media has affected photographic practices and a new visual culture, herein termed “tactile photography.”

Interactive, Transmedia Documentary, focuses on the ways that contemporary media technology construct realities. The author argues that a new media literacy is needed by technologies such as VR and immersive media, which develop different narrative strategies from conventional media. This chapter explains the disposition of the terms ‘author’ ‘subject’ and ‘audience’ in constructing actuality in immersive, participatory, user-driven, multi-platform interactive documentary.

Technological changes and new methods of representing visualities do not resolve pre-existing problems with intercultural communication and cultural stereotypes. *Urban Mexican Children and their Intermedia/Transmedia (lity) Cultural Habits* surveys Mexican children, finding that these children use media over the entire course of a day using several media simultaneously. The authors propose a new media literacy curriculum for children according to this emerging pattern of using intermedia/transmedia.

One Image, different views: A cognitive mapping of visual ethnic stereotypes brings up issues of ethnic stereotypes through visual representation of the people. This paper uses “resonance analysis” method to detect cognitive scheme of visual images constructed by intercultural frames.

Biopolitical Frames of Impoverished Women in Journalistic Photography about the Bolsa-Familia Program demonstrates how social welfare policy enforces political power over human bodies. This paper brings up a critical point regarding the Bolsa Familia program, which is a Brazilian policy to save poor families. While analyzing 120 images published between 2003 and 2015 in four newspapers, the author finds a biopolitical framework that define what recipients should look like. These biopolitical parameters also function as a technique of governmentality and as moral guidelines determining “normal” ways of life.

Environmental issue is one of the themes derived from visibility and intermediality. Persuasion Through Visual Metaphors looks at documentary films dealing with environmental problems in the United States, Brazil and France. This study examines how constructing reality occurs through non-visual documentary practice. The author sees these non-photographic signs as a method of discursively forming reality through cognitive metaphors and frames that construct viewers’ responses to the images and sounds in the documentary.

David Foster, the invited researcher of this dossier, brings up a new perspective on visual representation of landscapes by analyzing photography of Antarctica taken by a feminist photographer, Adriana Lestido. These photos not only demonstrate the whole range of Antarctica landscape, but also change the conventional view on this region.

Visibility and intermediality in this new era reshape daily lives in education, arts and even funerals. Tietzman and Kalil’s essay opens the issue with a discussion of the nature of intermediality They examine how current media attempt to cross the boundaries between life and death by utilizing diverse digital technologies to revive dead singers by creating holographic bodies and sounds of the deceased.

The essay by Feijoo and Pavez analyzes children’s use of media in relation to a new method of advertising in media such as You Tube. This new advertising strategy effectively influences children without giving explicit ad messages, but instead, by obscuring the marketing with games and narratives.

Dang and Segers, in A Comparative Analysis of Visual Satisfaction in the Digital Museum, on the other hand, examine customer satisfaction while experiencing a digital medium. The authors perform a comparative study between two digital

museums in China by conducting survey and in-depth interviews to assess information quality, system quality, perceived usefulness, perceived usability, and a museum's image on visitor satisfaction. This is rather a small case study in a particular region, but its implication can be significant because it is one of the first empirical studies on digital museums in China.

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Denize Araujo

Universidade Tuiuti do Paraná, Brazil

Deborah Tudor

Souther Illinois University, USA.

Sunny Yoon

Hanyang University, South Korea.

Editoras convidadas