

CAST IN SPACE ■ BILDRÄUME UND BLICKRÄUME IN DER ANTIKEN WELT (UND DARÜBER HINAUS)

In the last decade, the question *what is space?* has been increasingly replaced by the question ***how is it that different human practices create and make use of different conceptualizations of space?*** Inspired by new approaches that let the “spatial turn” contaminate the discourse on the “pictorial turn” and the centrality of the visual, we set the focus on *visual* conceptualizations of space and ask the questions *how can visual practices and their images contribute to construct different conceptualization of space?* Specifically: *What does ancient images tell us on space?* and *how can we approach this issue by means of contemporary art historical and art anthropological studies?*

SECTION 1: PERSPECTIVES

The first section discusses the question of how space is evoked and constructed in pictures. The focus here is set on the multiplicity and aesthetic complexity of visual techniques that past societies deployed to signify depth on flat surfaces. What kind of relationship is there between the human perception of the environment and the visual conventions used in the past to encode space into pictures? Can we formulate hypothesis concerning the cultural cognition of space through images? Attention shall also be given to the relationship between visual and textual constructions of space: what can we learn from the differences and interplays between the way a text and an image describe space and evoke place? Can we identify homologies in textual and visual rhetoric conventions? Do texts and visual media essentially differ in the way they imply and construct the perspectives of their addressee?

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SECTION 2: SIGNSCAPES

This section is dedicated to the exploration of the space *around* the image, which we may tentatively call the image’s “signscape”. Here, the focus is on how images are used to mark and structure their surroundings, either by their placement or, particularly in the challenging case of small-scale images, by their movement. How can we define and study the interactions between the signscape shaped by images and the space of human action and behavior? Is it possible to use images to explicitly construct and structure specific political or sacred places, and, if yes, how exactly? Is it possible to isolate specific iconographic or media-related qualities that are required to root images in certain places rather than others? If we study ancient images that were used in rituals, are we allowed to separate matters of intervisuality and image reception or shall we rather give priority to the analysis of the ritual?

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SECTION 3: IMMERSIONS AND CONTAMINATIONS

The third section of the workshop is devoted to case studies of “immersive images”, i.e. images that, by deploying ad hoc visual techniques, invite the beholder to enter into their virtual space and act within it. A mirror type of immersive images are images that step beyond their being mere representations and enters the world of agency as acting subjects. Both kind of immersive images blur the boundary between subject and object and contaminate the common sense ontology that distinguish the “real world” from the world of representations. Contemporary art theory has been much intrigued by the analysis of mixed realities, complex interfaces and the cyberspace. What happens if we transfer this body of thoughts at past or non-western visual cultures?

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