

# ICONOTOPOI / BILDKULTUREN

Conference abstracts

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**HOREA AVRAM (McGill AHCS)**

## **Images *Ex Machina*: Space, Representation and Performativity in Mixed Reality**

As most of the accounts on the subject suggest, image is perceived first and foremost as a—resemblant, indexical, iconic, symbolic, mental etc.—representation.

Re-presentation, that is. Inventing its own process of presentation, the image becomes “an act”, as Nicolas Bourriaud’s much-celebrated *Relational Aesthetics* reads. Especially in a technological context, art practice pushes image from a passive status to an active condition. New media, we are told in another seminal book, (*The Language of New Media* by Lev Manovich), “turn most images into image-interfaces and image-instruments”. And, I would add, they turn them also into image-spaces.

Image-space, in the sense I propose here, is a particular situation related to a specific technology: Mixed Reality. “Mixed”, since it contains in its sophisticated technological organization both reality (real space and real viewers), and digital information (artificial image). Two entities that not only overlap, but cooperate in real time, in direct correlation with the involved participant.

It is precisely the viewer’s active presence *inside* it that confers the image its spatial dimension. Image-space is not something to simply *look at*, but also something *to act in*. It is not simply a *presentation*, but an event that asks for a *presence*. In other words, space-image *takes the place* (i.e. it represents) but it also *takes place* (in the sense of action). What particularizes image-space is its ontological status, directly related to viewer’s participation *in real time*: the image-space itself is created and adapted according to viewer’s presence (through position tracking systems, registration and image calibration).

So, this is where my paper operates its inquiry: to define image-space (from an aesthetic, scientific and representational perspective), and to analyze its particular condition, balanced between “thing-ness” and “event-ness”, while surveying its mode of conveying meaning and its social and cultural impact.

Two seminal Mixed Reality works are considered in my discussion: Jan Torpus’ *Life Clipper 2* (2006-2008) and Rebecca Allen’s *Liminal Identities* (2004).

**CAROLINA CAMBRE (University of Alberta)**

## **The Un-Likeness**

“It is not down in any map; true places never are...” said Captain Ahab. (Moby Dick)

A true place is essentially unmappable, cartographically unavailable, and yet Melville’s Ahab seems to know how to find it.

“23 de enero” in Caracas where neither the police will enter nor taxis respond to calls, is home to the “colectivo Alexis vive”. Despite being one of the most dangerous places in Venezuela, hope is a palpable presence in this “barrio”. The members of the “colectivo Alexis vive” are explicit about including Che Guevara’s face in murals, banners, t-shirts and all visuals representing their community. What for? This presentation explores this image through a digital story about a Venezuelan community covered in murals visually contesting dominant societal structures with its cultural labour.

Visual anthropologist Jean Rouch called for the opening of imagination and dreams into the world of academic work. In response, I take the broader example of protest art as a cultural practice that can help us open toward these other possibilities of conceptualizing and communicating visual

experience. Is there a way to understand the multiple and varied renderings of Che Guevara's image as events in their own right? Often the image hardly looks like him at all, and yet it is recognizable, it is an unlikeness.

Guided by, though not restricted to, two triadic frameworks: Hans Belting's Image, Body, Medium, and Georges Didi-Huberman's Visible, Visual, Virtual, this case explores what this image does and says. I ask: to what extent does this community enact an understanding (through unacknowledged visual competencies) that can contribute to discourses surrounding ways images in public spaces do their work?

### **TAMMER EL-SHEIKH (McGill AHCS)**

#### **There is no "I" in "Team": A Comparative Study of Douglas Gordon and Phillippe Parreno's Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait (2006) and Harun Farocki's Deep Play (2007)**

In 2006, Douglas Gordon and Phillippe Parreno's film *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* (2006) was shown for the first time at the Cannes Film Festival. The film follows the now controversial anti-hero Zinedine Zidane for 90 minutes during a relatively uneventful Villareal/Real Madrid match. Recorded with 17 cameras, (including two Panavision HD cameras on loan from the U.S. Department of Defense!), the film is a richly textural meditation on movement, affectivity and mass mediation. But it is also a portrait. Parreno's stated objective for the film was "to follow the main protagonist of a story without telling the story." Nevertheless, one year after the debut of Gordon and Parreno's film, Zidane's story would insistently unfold before 1.5 billion incredulous viewers in the final minutes of the FIFA World Cup match between France and Italy.

The infamous 'head-butting' incident that sealed the soccer star's fate is presented in a 12-screen video installation called *Deep Play* (2007) by German filmmaker/documentarian and media theorist Harun Farocki. Farocki's *Deep Play* (2007) stands in an odd relation to Gordon and Parreno's 'portrait.' Farocki all but annihilates the very terms of Gordon and Parreno's psychologically charged, character-driven story. The head-but appears as a blip on one of Farocki's 12 screens at the end of a 1.5 hour real-time video loop of the game. If Gordon and Parreno succeed in figuring Zidane as a 21st century icon, Farocki's installation renders the star, his team-mates and his opponents equally as mere potentialities - as configured positions on the playing field, defined statistically by monitored heart-rates and average speeds. And yet, it is the story of Zidane, and indeed, of the 21st century history in which he is inscribed that springs forth in both Gordon and Parreno's film and Farocki's installation.

In my paper I will consider the methodological basis for a comparison of these projects. What kinds of images are at play, so to speak? Do Farocki's "operational images" undermine Gordon and Parreno's representation of an iconic historical subject, or lay bare the technical and discursive conditions of the production of such subjects?

### **ANNA FRIZ / JASON ROVITO (Ryerson and York)**

#### **Giving up the Ghost: of Bachelard and the Bees**

In preparing to approach it as phenomenal entity, we suggest that the image must first become disentangled from its semantic bondage to the visual. As Gaston Bachelard stressed, the image is integrally related to the sensorium of the imagination, 'the subject of the verb to imagine.' And, as such, can only be investigated phenomenologically, in its spatio-temporal function of pushing reality beyond itself.

To draw out Bachelard's hypothesis we seek to perform an intervention-exorcism within the field of 'spectral ecology.' For, in regards to those wireless media that exploit the electromagnetic field, the image of the ghost has achieved clichéd status within both the popular and critical imaginations—a correspondence which has tended to naturalize our contingent understanding of the

spectrum (itself haunted by the visual connotation of ‘spectre’), whilst obscuring the materiality of these wireless systems through a constructed semblance of ‘invisibility.’

Thus, focused on the particularity of the mythical image, we seek to exorcise the distorting figure of the ghost from our understanding of the spectrum in order to pursue the knowledge embedded within alternative image-spheres. Hence, we turn to a contemporary wireless myth—that the mysterious disappearance of large percentages of the bee population is the result of electromagnetic pollution caused by increased mobile phone use. Though this theory has since been debunked, its stubborn persistence within the public imaginary provides us with expressive material through which we can phenomenologically investigate the polluting effects of wirelessness upon the essential mobility of Bachelard’s category of the ‘aerial imagination.’

**MLADEN GLADIC (eikones/Princeton)**

**Contact. Movement of Pictures and the Image of *Survival***

On Mai 29, 2008, the Brazilian government organization *National Indian Foundation (Funai)* published pictures by photographer Gleison Miranda of a hitherto never photographed group of native Americans, their housings, and agricultural producing areas in an ethno-environmental area along the Envira River in the Western Brazilian state of Acre. In 1895 German art historian Aby Warburg had traveled to Arizona and New Mexico to study the artwork and rituals of Native Americans, the results of which he presented almost 27 years later as “images” which were to be accompanied “with words” in a lecture that was to become one of his most popular publications.

A comparison, or *comparative vision*, of both Miranda’s and Warburg’s material proves to be fruitful only if one considers what cannot be seen in the pictures themselves but nevertheless leaves its traces in the specific contexts, or rather texts that accompany them: the paths these pictures have taken and those of its photographers respectively. While Warburg’s interest lay primarily in the excavation of certain religious and anthropological foundations of (western) pictorial representation, which would *survive* in both Renaissance art and German Reformation, *Funai*’s justification to publish the pictures of the *uncontacted* deals with another mode of survival, which leads away from the interest in so-called “primitive” culture and its forms of representation. Here the pictures not only serve to prove the very existence of their subject, they rather serve both as an argument to secure the isolation of the natives and to prove their physical *fitness* for survival.

**JASON E. HILL (University of Southern California)**

**Radiophotography and PM Daily’s Pictorial Dismantling of Photographic Objectivity**

In July 1941, the New York City newspaper PM Daily published a set of unattributed press photographs taken on the Soviet/German front and transmitted by radio over the North Pole to New York. The exigencies of wartime communications across Europe and the primitive state of Soviet radiophotography at the time of transmission combined to produce in these images a strikingly hybrid formal character, manifestly both photographic and, because heavily retouched by a darkroom technician, handmade. In PM’s pages, these images did serve their purpose as reportage, but they also, and more importantly, figured as components within the paper’s larger project of dismantling the prevailing, and dissimulative, journalistic discourse of photographic objectivity.

The rhetoric of photographic evidence’s unmediated credibility had, by 1940, come to be broadly mobilized in the US to bolster reactionary public opinion against labor, civil rights, and American military engagement overseas. Refuting photography’s evidentiary transparency therefore became a key strategy in PM’s Popular Front campaign of visual pedagogy, which insisted upon the necessity of the Left’s judicious, reflective engagement with the visual field. PM actively dissociated an image’s medium from connotations of relative authority, granting photography no immanent priority over illustration or even abstract art in its efficacy as a discursive technology; the integrity

and acuity of the messenger mattered, not the medium of the message. Motivated by Horst Bredekamp's classic discussion of Art History as Bildwissenschaft, and drawing on American and Continental theories of image-relations, the present study considers the role of these anonymous radiophotographic images in PM's construction of a distinctly image-centered journalistic counter-discourse.

**CHRISTIANE HILLE (Humboldt University, Berlin)**

### **Explorations inside the Image**

Challenging the Foucauldian notion of the irreducible relation between word and image, scholars from all academic fields have come to emphasise the particular nature, or *Eigensinn*, that images confer in their non-verbality. Yet despite the fact that a growing awareness of the distinct status of the image has come to engage scholars from various academic fields in the study of the image, differing linguistic notions and academic traditions have highlighted rather than overcome the dichotomous matrix that distinguishes the material from the mental notion of the image.

Sharing the conference's interest to challenge this linguistic divide in the study of images, this paper suggests a case-study analysis of a collaborative video-installation by the German-speaking artist Peter Welz and the American choreographer William Forsythe that explores the intrinsic nature of the image along the practice of bodily movement. *Retranslation / final unfinished portrait* from 2006 is based on the last, unfinished portrait by Francis Bacon. The oil-sketch, which has been enlarged by Peter Welz as a c-print serves as the two-dimensional space provided for the bodily movement of William Forsythe, who attempts to enter and inhabit the image with his body. Working out a particular choreography, the dancer seems both to fold his body into the material of the picture-plane and at the same time redraws Bacon's sketch in from of a mental image in the space of his performance. Filmed from different perspectives by Peter Welz, the joint artwork of the American and the German artist translates the particularity of the image into the language of movement, which shall be discussed as an analytic approach to the study of the image that operates besides the dichotomy of its material and mental quality.

**INGRID HÖLZL (Institute for Art Theory and Cultural Studies, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna)**

### **Digital Morphologies of Photography – The Ken Burns Effect**

There is a tendency that can be observed in recent exhibitions of photo-based art: artists turning away from the photographic print in favour of the dia projection widely used in amateur photography. In contrast to the classical dia projection being a distinct succession of single images with the klick klick of the dia carousel moving on to the next image acoustically reinforcing this distinction, here, analogue dia projections (Beat Streuli) or digital data projections on monitors (Fischli/Weiss) transform the single images through continual superimposition into a new form of movement-image (Deleuze).

The filming over photographs with a moving camera (travelling, panoramic or zoom) is an effect used in documentary film in order to "animate" longer sequences of photographs: It comes as no surprise that this effect, taken up by digital film- and video postproduction software such as Adobe After Effects or Final Cut Pro is named after Ken Burns, a documentary filmmaker known for his frequent use of this effect. The Ken Burns effect allows not only the professional, but also the amateur to create in only a few steps animated photomontages out of a sequence of digital(ized) photographs.

Which consequences do these new "dynamic" forms of photographic images have on our perception and our conception of photographic images? How can their new fluid temporality beyond

the dichotomy between still and moving images be understood and adequately termed within the framework of image studies? In how far their morphokinesis differs from morphing techniques used in analogue and digital animation?

In my lecture I will examine and pursue these questions and risk a preliminary theory of the "liquefied image" based on a sample of contemporary art works recently exposed in Europe.

**STEFANIE KLAMM (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science)**  
**The Image as Object: Classical Archaeology and its Strategies of Visualization**

Classical archaeology represents a discipline that relies heavily on visual tools. As an object based science, archaeology has to retrieve objects of investigation not only in the place where they are actually situated but also make them available to a broader scientific discourse. Moreover, archaeologists have to retrieve their objects from the ground. Only by visualization of excavation finds and contexts one can get the objects out of the ground and on the desk.

Thus, the paper takes images as part of scientific practices in archaeology and looks at the transformation of images as objects of inquiry throughout the archaeological working-process, including the first documentation at the excavation as well as the changes in the publications and the presentation to a broader public, e.g. exhibitions, journals etc. It investigates the different contexts and purposes that these images of scientific objects have. Particularly relevant for this approach is the mid-nineteenth century when different instruments of replication and reproduction, like photographs, drawings, prints, and plaster casts, were used side by side. It is this "rivalry" of media, which is important for the formation of knowledge in the archaeological discipline. Therefore, the materiality of the image is to be taken seriously by focusing on its means of production and reception.

The actual image will be a starting point, thereby also acknowledging the cultural and political context within which the images were produced and received. In the case of archaeology it is in particular the interplay between an aesthetical approach and the scientific positivism of the 19th century, which informed the specificity of archaeology. Therefore, the paper wants to trace the relations of this discipline to the cultures of representation in other sciences that contributed to the set of visual knowledge in archaeology. Scientific visualizations take only place in the context of relevant practices.

**STEFANA LAMASANU (McGill AHCS)**  
**Text-Image Wars: Contentious Representations of Trauma in Popular Visual Media**

My project focuses on popular visual narratives of large-scale tragedies, such as the civil wars in Rwanda, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Yugoslav Wars, and 9/11. Through it, I examine the fraught relationship between lived tragedy and the seemingly lighter nature of 'lowbrow' media, by engaging with close analysis and intertextual readings of graphic novels, computer games, and film and television adaptations.

This dialectic between the trivial and the tragic points to established visual "regimes of truth" [1], to the paranoia and iconophobia surrounding lowbrow representations of trauma, and ultimately to issues of artistic legitimacy and canonization. The resistance and the iconophobia caused by images of tragedy provide the opportunity to reflect on the limits of representation of such serious topics. Parallel to a war on terror, there exists a "war of and on a body of images" [2] where cartoon depictions of religious figures are weapons with wide reach, and the known image of the Abu Ghraib prisoner is turned into the comic strip "Bionic Abu Ghraib Man".

The essay will engage with W.J.T. Mitchell's studies on iconology, as well as those on iconoclasm by Martin Jay, Marie-Jose Mondzain, and Dario Gamaboni, along with Umberto Eco's

theories on the limits of interpretation, and Paul Virilio's conceptualization of war in the current times of information overload.

1. Here I paraphrase Foucault's notion of the "regime of truth." Foucault, Michel. "Truth and Power" in Power/Knowledge. New York: Pantheon, 1980.

2. Mitchell, W.J.T. Interview by Asbjørn Grønstad and Øyvind Vågnes. "An Interview with W.J.T. Mitchell" in Image and Narrative, issue 15, November 2006.

### **PALOMA LOPEZ GRÜNINGER (eikones)**

#### **Research into the Experimental Interactive Visualization of Etymological Knowledge**

This project investigates the power of images not through an exclusively theoretical (verbal) inquiry, but through iconic practice, by generating images. On the side of visualization, I explore how pictures direct our idea of the represented, how content and image relate to each other, how the functions of the employed medium can be described, and which roles aspects such as abstraction or complexity play. The project also gives impulses for critical re-readings and re-viewings of common (and mainly language-driven) interpretations of visual structures.

Etymological knowledge serves as an example and material for the design process, through which new visualizations are developed. In a second step, I examine the impact of these new visualizations for etymology on our understanding of this linguistic discipline.

To find new visualization methods, it is crucial to study different historical visual precedents, and the debates surrounding them. Certain models, for example, have strong pre-established readings. (The first part of my research shows that visualizations on etymological questions are extremely rare, but the study of images of evolution in Biology shows very interesting analogies and similar problematic.)

Theoretical interpretations of image-systems or models play a very important role in our understanding and interpretation of images. Theories, as well as images, help us to sharpen our view, but both of them also develop their own dynamics: they can bias our perceptions and help establish conventions. Through an applied iconic research process, this project aims to engage different perspectives on the mutual information of visual and linguistic discourses, and to question mutual biases or interpretation, in order to explore the different aspects of the power of images at play within these processes.

### **BIRGIT MERSMANN (eikones)**

#### **Loss of Face or Self-Awareness? Shame, Body and Gaze in Contemporary East Asian Art**

In the so-called shame cultures, among them counted the East Asian culture, visual representations are traditionally characterized by ascopism. Very rarely, the gaze is represented directly – be it on the level of the motif, the gaze constellation between seeing and being seen, or be it on the level of media technology, that is the construction of the gaze. Exceptions are normally due to Western influence. The East Asian viewing goes without directedness, without setting one's sights on something/somebody; it proves to be non-fixable. Compared with this, in Western visual (arts) culture representing and showing the gaze as an instance of subject recognition and social proscription seem to be prevalent.

The globalization of art, particularly the occidentalization of East Asian art, has broken up the opposition between visual shame and guilt cultures, and effectuated hybridization. The human body, either naked or costumed, directly appears in the images of East Asian contemporary art, exhibiting itself and attracting the gaze. Also the reverse viewing direction, the gaze out of the picture, i.e. the shameless fixation of the beholder becomes an obsessive motif, especially in the field of photography. How the gaze switches between shame and guilt, delophily and theatophily (Leon

Wurmser), collective outlawry and self respect, will be illustrated by representative works of contemporary East Asian artists, among them Makoto Aida, Miwa Yanagi, Mariko Mori, Zhang Huan, Qiu Zhijie, and Hein-Kuhn Oh.

### **CHRISTINE MITCHELL (McGill AHCS)**

#### **Watch Your Tongue: Picturing "Bad" Translation on the Net**

This paper examines the websites *engrish.com* and *hanzismatter.com* to reflect on languages and perceptions thereof as they 'translate' through digital media and across cultural divides. Both are weblog-style archives of images of 'bad' translation. *Engrish.com* collects and displays photos of "humorous English mistakes" (primarily from signage and packaging in China and Japan), while *hanzismatter* catalogs instances and explanations of the "misuse of Chinese characters in Western culture" (mainly in tattoos and advertising).

Imagistic renderings of language (e.g. sound poetry, typographic experimentation and codework) have long served to 'make strange' writings that are otherwise decipherable and readable, unnoticed in their 'being language'. While the websites under consideration likewise engage in pictorial representation and comparison to similar, albeit cross-linguistic effect, their objective is not to shatter the illusion of linguistic transparency, but rather, to signal translational 'failure'.

While these sites can certainly be read as promoting ethnocentric and stereotypical views on language, the linguistic playfulness and translational mobility afforded by the technological context in which they now emerge might also be seen as questioning linguistic standardization, challenging traditional assumptions regarding 'native' tongues and blurring 'naturalized' boundaries around so-called 'national' languages.

In forwarding the non-intuitive idea that language is most 'material' in its senselessness, this paper pits prevailing notions regarding 'good' translation—that it requires specialized, professional and insider knowledge—against other 'unauthorized' linguistic manifestations—both human and machine translated—characterized by in-betweenness, hybridity and even nonsense. Amid vociferous talk of 'universal translatability' and 'universal code', this paper calls instead for a focus on the 'materiality of translation' and translation practices in the analysis of cultural texts.

### **STÉPHANE MONTAVON (eikones)**

#### **Touchons du bois**

Emery, l'artiste inconnu, mon contemporain, veut postuler un atelier à Paris. Il demande à l'universitaire qu'il faut bien que je sois, d'autoriser son travail en rédigeant quelques lignes pour le dossier qu'il présente au jury.

Avec mon intervention, je me propose donc de parcourir, à la manière monographique, photos, vidéos et autres installations d'Emery. Je vérifie alors pratiquement ce que dit Marie-José Mondzain dans son *Homo Spectator*, à savoir que les images sont ouvrages à la fois de mains, de regards et de bouches. Je dirais un montage d'éléments hétérogènes qui en dernière instance doivent faire oeuvre. Par chance, ce montage s'avère idoine à composer lui-même avec la section "Polysensorial Images" d'Iconotopoï, puisque, à tout le moins, je peux établir de cas en cas cette constante que la distance optique est minée par des charges tactiles. Or ces exemples offrent en retour à mon papier la plus-value d'une réflexion sur la magie de l'empreinte. Encore que, ce faisant, je dois me dédouaner non seulement envers Georges Didi-Huberman, mais aussi envers Lacan et son apologue des sardines dont je cherche à tirer un supplément, inaperçu du maître en personne, et offert aux auditeurs. Complicité de l'art et de la critique, de leurs lieux communs ? Ou juste hospitalité ? A la fin de cette invention qui aimerait devenir moins dupe d'elle-même, le seul qui risque de rester sans feu ni lieu, c'est Emery. Touchons du bois.

## **YASMINE NACHABE (McGill AHCS)**

### **Akram Zaatari: An Artist Response to the Lebanese War**

After the 1975-1991 civil war in Lebanon, the government decided to erase most of the traces of the war in rebuilding the Central Beirut Downtown district of Beirut that has been destroyed. Artists like Akram Zaatari, however, resisted this attempt to blot out the tragic memories of the war by producing artwork that valorizes past experiences lived by the artist during the war and its on-going aftereffects.

By analyzing the way Zaatari re-articulates temporal chronology in his appropriation of past images to re-activate past events in the present, I intend to examine the various temporal strategies he deploys in his media art production techniques. This research examines the way Zaatari's artwork interrogates the past, now that we are remote from it but can still access it through multi-media art and photography. The artist in his investigation of the past undergoes constantly mutating roles from artist to archeologist, in archiving past experiences, to historian in narrating scenarios of past events. This research explores the ways his artwork generates time by transforming passages from an irreversible past into an on-going present experience that is yet to be determined as the present future.

I will argue that Akram Zaatari's use of anachronistic, suspended and simultaneous images in the context of the war, past and present gives a thickness to memory. Being an open-ended project, Zaatari's art production is significant to contemporary art criticism. His intervention in the re-appropriation of past images and his manipulation of both still and moving images brought to light a new aesthetic dimension of the images. This intervention is itself considered as post modernist in nature as it deals with the time and memory discourse that seem to trouble most of postmodernist current thinkers.

## **NINA SAMUEL (eikones)**

### **Chaos. Some remarks on scientific visualisation.**

According to Bruno Latour there is no such thing as a singular scientific image because "representations are [always] transformed within chains of representations" [1]. As they only exist as part of a series, scientific images are subject to an economics of circulation and modification that seems to contradict the notion of singularity. Nevertheless the singular image does play an important role in scientific visualization and can gain a significance that exceeds its being part of a transformative chain. Referring to image techniques in complex dynamics in the 1970s and 1980s, *vulgo* chaos theory, my contribution seeks to approach this particularity of scientific visualization and its double existence as both autonomous image and as a "sample of traces" („Stichproben aus Strömen von Spuren“, Latour).

Focussing on the preliminary drafts in a sketchbook of Japanese scientist Yoshisuke Ueda who first encountered a "strange behaviour" in analog simulations of a nonlinear oscillator in 1961, the case-study starts at a very early moment in the history of computer-graphical representation of chaos. This series of drafts is directly related to Ueda's discovery of the so-called and today famous "Broken Egg Attractor." Privately preserved in the archive of researcher Bruce Stewart in New York, these drafts have never been published or otherwise made accessible. Ueda's exploration of the (visual) form of (mathematical) formulas will be the starting point for considerations about the interdependence between analogue and digital image techniques in this field of science as well as on the relation of seeing and discovering and will furthermore lead to other examples of chaotic imagery that were produced some years later in the U.S. (e.g., by Benoît Mandelbrot and John Hubbard).

As my contribution presents an approach in the field of Iconic Criticism that methodologically originates from the concept of "art history as historical *Bildwissenschaft*,"[2] the

singular image per se with its specific form is one central focus, but in the same way, the study seeks to take into account the context of technological production and reception as broadly developed in certain fields of the history of science. Hence the study itself has to cope with more than one heterogeneous *Bildkultur*: on an epistemological level with the inner tension of every scientific visualization itself, on a sociological level with culturally different scientific communities (Japan and the USA), and on a methodological level with the attempt to productively mediate between human sciences and natural sciences.

1. Bruno Latour, "Der „Pedologen-Faden“ von Boa Vista – eine photo-philosophische Montage," *Der Berliner Schlüssel. Erkundungen eines Liebhabers der Wissenschaften*, ed. Bruno Latour (Berlin 1996): pp. 191-248.
2. Horst Bredekamp et al: „Bildwelten des Wissens," *Bildwelten des Wissens, Kunsthistorisches Jahrbuch für Bildkritik, 1.1., Bilder in Prozessen* (Berlin 2003): pp. 9-20; Horst Bredekamp, "A Neglected Tradition? Art History as Bildwissenschaft," *Critical Inquiry* (Spring 2003; 29,3), pp. 418-428.

## **JAN VON BREVEN (eikones)**

### **The Biography of an Image**

How do images come into being? How do they shift between different realms of knowledge? And how is it possible to describe the changes that occur to images in the course of time? By closely looking at the biography of a photograph that the French geologist and photographer Aimé Civiale took of an erratic boulder in the 1860s, I will try to exemplarily answer some of these questions.

In 2007, the photo appeared on a website of the Bibliothèque nationale de France and was shown in the related exhibition. It has a peculiar history, because it was taken at the time as part of a geological undertaking and aroused interest in the scientific community, but was little later forgotten. Only recently has it reappeared in photo-historical contexts. Obviously, something strange has happened to this photo. While it is unarguably still the same image, it has on the other hand become a very different one: it is used differently, it is looked at differently, and it means something different now than in 1860.

I am interested in this change the image has undergone during the last 150 years, and tentatively I will describe this change not only as a shift in reception, but as an actual alteration of the image itself. Inspired by Lorraine Daston's *Biographies of scientific objects*, I want show that such a "biographical" approach could be useful for the historical study of images. As an alternative type of narration, it would allow to ask how an image comes into being and how it acts on its surroundings. It may help to better understand the image's relation to its referent, to other images, and to its own materiality. And it finally could generate new questions: for example, what happens to an image during the time nobody looks at it?

## **JAKUB ZDEBIK (The Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art, Concordia University)**

### **The Critical Diagram: Abstraction and Thought in Paul Klee, Francis Bacon and Janice Kerbel**

Gilles Deleuze conceptualizes his theory as a form of painting, saying that, like art, it needs to shift from figuration to abstraction. By searching his works for visual devices it is possible to formulate a way to think about philosophy through art according to the concept of the diagram.

The diagram is comprised of the constraining tracing (repetition) and the exploratory mapping (difference): this duality makes of the diagram a graphic device that is spatialized according to its own internal geography. After Foucault, Deleuze shows how the diagram fills the ontological gap (or non-place) between what is visible and articulable, or image and text, giving it a mandate to think through images in a way that is based on Immanuel Kant's notion of the schema.

The schema is the “third thing” bridging intuition and concepts through imagination. It is crucial to the process of thought. The schema is a way of thinking in images that are not exactly images.

This incongruence is captured in the work of Paul Klee and the “new dimension” he erects: the flatness of his abstractions is underscored by the typographical elements which are vividly contrasted with his three-dimensional landscapes living on a simultaneous plane. Francis Bacon painted with diagram by his own admittance: a zone of anti-cliché abstraction forced into the plane of a figurative subject.

In this essay, I would like to explore the visual work of artist Janice Kerbel and especially her *Deadstar*, 2006 series which depicts maps of cities that are not meant to exist but are nevertheless depicted in meticulous plans. Her work articulates elements of cartography, graphics, virtuality and imagination since she often depicts objects that exist between what is objective and imagined therefore re-enacting in art Kant’s schema. Accordingly, I would like to ground Deleuze’s theory in Kant’s philosophy, use Klee and Bacon as examples of this concept and explore Kerbel’s art in order to show the diagram as a spatial and visual critical device.