Week 40: October 4-8, 2021

Abstract

The Western visual language has long been modeled on the human experience. Images were created to represent the world as it was seen by a single person. Mechanical photography both strengthened this regime by producing vast amounts of images that claimed to represent external reality, but also began to undermine it by separating the visual capacity from the human eye. In the 1920s Russian avant-garde director Dsiga Vertov built a visual theory and aesthetics on this separation and the potential of mechanization.

Today, digital image-making has unsettled the relationship between images and human experience is more than ever. Ubiquitous pre- and post-processing mean that images are more generated than recorded, often never to be seen by humans but used for automated processes. Moreover, contemporary realities have become so complex, abstract, and stretched out over time and space, that the individual visual experience is less and less able to make sense of it. After all, how much can documentary photography reveal about data-centers or climate change?

In this module, we are investigating visual theory and artistic approaches that, like Vertov 100 years ago, respond to these contemporary challenges by creating a new type of "realism", which the artist Paolo Cirio calls "evidentiary". A visual language that is able to account for the reality we are living in. We are, among others, focussing on works by Trevor Paglen, Suzanne Treister, Marc Lombardi, and Forensic Architecture.

Course requirements:

Attendance (80%)

Participation in reading, discussions, and group presentations

Submission of a very short paper, personal interests in relation to the theme of the

Monday

Human/Post-human Photography

Invention of the Central Perspective (1420)

Walker Evans (1903–1975), https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/evan/hd_evan.htm

Robert Frank (1924-2019): Americans, 1959, https://www.lensculture.com/articles/robert-frank-the-americans

Nan Goldin (1953-), http://www.artnet.com/artists/nan-goldin

Michael Aschauer

- River Studies https://m.ash.to/en/Projects/riverstudies
- Rivers as lines https://m.ash.to/en/Projects/WhatIfYouWouldPullRiversToAStraightLine
- 7C-Days https://m.ash.to/en/Projects/7cdays

Abu Ishaq al-Istakhri, 10th Century
http://www.myoldmaps.com/early-medieval-monographs/211-al-istakhris-world-map/211-istakhri.pdf

Harry Beck. London Subway Map, 1933
https://www.theverge.com/2013/3/29/4160028/harry-beck-designer-of-iconic-london-underground-map

Google Maps, London Subway System 2021
https://www.google.com/maps/@51.5075274,-0.0849736,11.26z/data=!5m1!1e2?hl=de

David Claerbout. Olympia (The real time disintegration into ruins of the Berlin Olympic stadium over the course of a thousand years). since 2016
https://davidclaerbout.com/Olympia-The-real-time-disintegration-into-ruins-of-the-Berlin-Olympic

Talk at HBK, Leizpig, 2019

Reading:

Rubinstein, Daniel. 2018. "Posthuman Photography." In The Evolution of the Image: Political Action and the Digital Self, edited by Marco Bohr and Basia Sliwinska, 100–112. Routledge.
https://www.academia.edu/31425877/Posthuman_Photography

Foster, Hal. 2017. "Real Fictions. Alternatives to Alternative Facts." Artforum International,
https://www.artforum.com/print/201704/real-fictions-alternatives-to-alternative-facts-67192.

Braidotti, Rosi, and Maria Hlavajova, eds. 2018. Posthuman Glossary. Theory. London Oxford New York New Delhi Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic.

Entries: Art (Tom Holert) / Posthuman Critical Theory (Rosi Braidotti) / Postimage (Ingrid Hoelzl) / Sensing (Jennifer Gnabris, Helen Pritschard)

Tuesday

Realism(s)

Realism, 19th Century Painting, Gustave Courbet (1819–1877)
https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rlsm/hd_rlsm.htm

Tsiga Vertov: Kino-Pravda (1920s) Man with the Movie Camera, 1929

Cinema Verité / Direct Cinema

Photo Realism

Evidentiary Realism

Evidentiary Realism. GROUP SHOW. FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 31, 2017

https://nomegallery.com/exhibitions/evidentiary-realism/

Exhibition Catalogue, https://nomegallery.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ER_Catalog.pdf

Read

Introduction by Paolo Cirio

- The Other Nefertiti, by Nora Al-Badri and Jan Nikolai Nelles
- Seamless Transitions, by James Bridle
- Reconnaissance, by Ingrid Burrington
- 2 Works, by Mark Lombardi.

Paolo Cirio https://www.paolocirio.net/

Wednesday

Conversation with Paolo Cirio

via Zoom

Seeing Machines

Read:

Trevor Paglen: Seeing Machines, 2014, https://www.fotomuseum.ch/de/2014/03/13/seeing-machines/

Harun Farocki, Eye/Machine, 2000,
https://www.harunfarocki.de/installations/2000s/2000/eye-machine.html

Read:

Crawford, Kate. 2021. Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Chapter 5, Affect. p.151-179)

Lecture:

Kate Crawford, Trevor Paglen. Datafication of Science, 2019, 32 min
https://www.hkw.de/de/app/mediathek/video/69622

* Kate Crawford and Trevor Paglen, AI. The Politics of Images in Machine Learning Training Sets

- Fondazoione Prada: Training Humans, Fondazione Prada, Venice, 12 Sep 2019 – 24 Feb 2020 Review, we-make-money-not-art.com, Dec. 16.2019
- Paglen, Trevor. "Invisible Images (Your Pictures Are Looking at You)." The New Inquiry (blog), December 8, 2016

Thursday

Forensic Architecture

https://forensic-architecture.org

Read:

Weizman, Eyal. 2017. Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability. Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books. Introduction p. 13-33

Weizman, Eyal. 2019. "Open Verification." E-Flux Architecture (June 2019), 2019. https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/becoming-digital/248062/open-verification

Lecture: Weizman, Eyal: Forensic Architecture – Lecture, Haus der Kunst, Munich, Nov. 2018 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bc49ppFXG1w&t=463s (start at 11:30)

Works:

- The Killing of Nadeem Nawara and Mohammed Abu Daher, https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-killing-of-nadeem-nawara-and-mohammed-abu-daher
- Triple Chaser: https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/triple-chaser
- Intentional Fires in Papua https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/intentional-fires-in-papua
- The Murder of Halit Yozgat; https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/the-murder-of-halit-yozgat, https://www.nsu-tribunal.de/en/
    - Lawrence Abu Hamdan: 77sqm_9:26min at Documenta 14 https://forensic-architecture.org/programme/exhibitions/77sqm_926min-documenta-14
    - https://news.artnet.com/art-world/documenta-14-kassel-forensic-nsu-trial-984701

Friday

Forensic Architecture

Cont.

Writing of papers

1-2 pages, personal interest, relating to themes discussed during the week.

Presentation of ideas for paper

Afternoon

individual writing

personal mentorat (if interest)

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Last update: **2021/10/07 09:16**