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DESCRIPTION

The topic of the special issue is the agency of visual forms of knowledge and knowledgeable forms of seeing. The articles procure a historical and interdisciplinary sampling of how visual and textual forms of expression produce knowledge.

The realm of texts and that of images are interwoven and interdependent in ways that resist differentiation and territorialisation, but remain nonetheless in a tense relationship. This calls for conventional distinctions between words and images to be redefined: images can be written and texts can be shown. This tension between texts and images, and between visual texts and textual images, is revealed and analysed in a series of case studies ranging from ekphrastic texts in Antiquity via religious images in the European Middle Ages to literary images in the French Enlightenment.

The aim of this Special Issue is to revitalise the discussion about the relationship between images and texts. The articles discuss texto-visual relations as generators of agency and tension. We do not consider the relationship between texts and images to be built exclusively on competition and struggle for medial supremacy, and we do not view it as a wholly harmonious one, but as a dynamic relationship of coexistent rivalry and affection. The aim is neither to present a new theoretical framework for the study of texts and images, nor to recycle old ones, but rather to sample the chaos of the world's multitude and describe the constellations of each case presented.

The term image, in this context, includes material images, such as objects of art or physical artefacts, as well as the para-visual; that which is seen with the mind's eye through memory, dreams, devotional experience, visions, or reading. Thus, virtual images created by texts are of great interest. Moreover, texts are viewed as able not only to create or become images before the mind's eye but also to generate aliveness or experiences of presence in the reader. This becoming visual or becoming alive of texts is closely related to the processes referred to in classical rhetorical theory as ekphrasis (“description”) and enargeia (“vividness”). By means of vivid descriptions, the orator aims to bring the battle between two cities, the character of a person, a place, or a work of art alive in the minds of the audience. The agency of rhetorical ekphrasis is, however, not an imagined, fictional agency. Like the image of the Virgin Mary seen by a visionary saint, it has a corporeal agency that can be taken as evidence (autopsia) of real presence.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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