

CALL FOR PAPERS: Special issue of *Visual Studies*

Visual intervention and the (re)enactment of democracy

Guest editors: Nicole Doerr, Thomas Olesen, and Anna Schober

This special issue builds on the understanding that pictorial and visual intervention has become increasingly central to the way societies enact, re-enact, and process their tensions, identities, and values. Pictorial media and visual performance initiate, deepen, convey and transform conflict in contemporary democratic societies, but also in the informal public spheres emerging in one-party societies such as China or and in illiberal democracies (“democraturas”) such as Russia. Art and popular visual culture mediate solidarity and constitute a community spirit, revive democracy and expand our sense of reality. Pictorial media, artistic expression and the creation of a visual presence in the streets and via new social media serve activists and political actors to stage distrust toward elites, to represent claims, but also to make counter-expertise visible and to denounce shortcomings and undesirable developments. In the political process pictorial media and visual performances become sites of controversy and debate about society and about political initiatives, about what is right and wrong, pure and dirty, good and evil by combining a productive agency with a representational effect. They can tip reigning certainties into crises and produce events as well as stirring the production of further, different images. Finally, they provide fantasy creations in which the subject can view and examine itself anew and often expose elements and tendencies that remain un-articulated in what is explicitly discussed in public negotiation.

This special issue proceeds from our conviction that the visual sensitizes us to aspects of the political that are not always “seen” and acknowledged in more standard accounts of politics and democracy. It invites original, high-quality contributions that reflect on this transforming, powerful and growing role of pictorial and visual intervention in shaping the social, cultural, and political processes of our societies. These could cover both contemporary and historical analyses, just as they could focus on democratic as well as non-democratic societies. We also welcome contributions that look beyond progressive, modernist, and leftist interventions to investigate pictorial and visual intervention in phenomena such as populism, fundamentalism, conspiracy, technocracy, and fanaticism. Our understanding of the pictorial and visual includes a variety of media (for example photography, video, artwork, cartoons, posters, etc) and trans-media phenomena. Successful papers should offer a strong theoretical argument, but must also relate to real-world cases and phenomena.

Visual Studies has an interdisciplinary orientation and welcomes contributions from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives. Please take a look at the journal’s website to familiarize yourself with its aims and scope before considering to submit a paper.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=RVST>

Submitting your paper

All papers submitted to the special issue will undergo initial screening for suitability and quality. Those selected will then enter into a standard external review process according to the journal's procedures. The word limit is strictly 8000 words, including abstract, notes, and references. The journal allows unlimited use of black and white images and a limited number of color images (1-2 per paper). It is important that authors make sure they have all the necessary permissions to use their images *before* submitting the article. Please refer to the journal's website for additional information:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?show=instructions&journalCode=rvst20>

Papers must be submitted through the journal's website no later than 1 September 2021. When submitting, please make sure to choose the relevant option to indicate that your paper is intended for the special issue. We make initial decisions before 1 October regarding the set of papers that we want to move on for external review. We expect publication in Fall 2022.

For inquiries to the guest editors, please contact Thomas Olesen at tho@ps.au.dk.

For inquiries to the journal, please contact Julie Patarin Jossec at patarinjossec.julie@gmail.com.