



CALL FOR PAPERS

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July – December 2022

Special Issue

The algorithmic images between media, art, and society.

Edited by

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The technological developments of still and moving digital images have prompted some profound transformations in the theoretical debate. Indeed, digitized images do not simply (or do not only) constitute the “remediation” of previous technological forms of pictures; instead, they are based on new principles and the new logic of production, existence, circulation, and use of visual objects.

Images appearing on the screens of smartphones, tablets, televisions, cinemas, shop windows, smart glasses, virtual reality helmets, and so on all consist of partial displays of dynamic data sets and data cubes subjected to automated algorithmic treatments. As such, algorithmic images possess a liminal and residual existence compared to the actual processes of elaboration of the visible in an invisible form. Furthermore, algorithmic images constitute an adaptation to the human sensory of processing speeds that we can’t experience by our organism: we are therefore hosted into a “real-time” and a “live” temporality built from a myriad of extremely fast sub-processes. Ultimately, the centre of gravity of visual phenomena (and therefore their theoretical interest) shifts from the image and its uses to the devices and algorithmic processing that precede and prepare the displaying of data in visible (and possibly audible) forms.

This “algorithmic turn” in visual studies has resulted in complex consequences. We can highlight at least three. First, the boundaries between disciplines dealing with visual objects have been blurred: film and media studies, semiotics, aesthetics, art history, archival science, visual sociology,

etc. are today jointly observing this newly emerging landscape. Second, the research on images is increasingly confronted with extra-medial and extra-aesthetic areas, from data science to surveillance processes, from the uses of images in scientific research to those in warfare. In the past, visual studies emphasized the connection between images, their contents and social phenomena; today, the focus has shifted to optical devices and dispositives as the places of transition between different uses of images. Finally, algorithmic images have pushed the reflection toward the relationship between expressive productions and technology, both in its aesthetic or metaphysical entanglements and archaeological heritages. Interactions with visual devices have increasingly appeared to be comparable to technical tools, with all the complex processes related to the mutual constitution of objects, images and subjects that these practices involve.

The new special issue of *La Valle dell'Eden / East of Eden* intends to map this territory and identify new areas to explore. A part of the issue derives from the workshop “The algorithmic image between media and art”, organized by the editors of this dossier at the Casa Della Cultura - Milan during the Spring of 2022. Other scholars are kindly invited to contribute to this debate by responding to this call for papers. In particular, the editors invite the submission of proposals concerning:

- Epistemological and theoretical-methodological questions related to the different contemporary approaches to the image, and their dialogue.
- Visual art products based on algorithmic images, and their relationship with technology, artistic inventions, the art market, the role of the artist, etc.
- Dispositives of production, manipulation, circulation and exhibition of images, even from the archaeological perspective of their development.
- The statutes of algorithmic images and their semiotic, aesthetic, social and ontological characteristics.
- The evolution and transformations of the relationships between the “indexical” image and the “artificially” constructed image (also regarding the new processes of automated image creation by Artificial Intelligence).
- The relationship between images, visual devices, and social environments, including new and old practical uses of images as well as old and new forms of their agency.
- The establishment of digital image archives and new algorithmic search techniques within them.

The articles can either address specific aspects of these issues, present bibliographic reviews and original proposals, or analyze specific and symptomatic cases to trace general ideas, trends, and principles.

Deadlines and Methods of submission

The proposals (an abstract of up to 1,500 characters), accompanied by a short biography of the author, must be sent by 20 June 2022 to one of the editors of the issue (ruggiero.eugeni@unicatt.it; roberto.diodato@unicatt.it) and at the same time to the editorial staff (eden@unito.it).

The complete essays (max 30,000 characters) must be handed in by 1 October 2022.

La Valle dell'Eden / East of Eden (<https://eastofedenjournal.wordpress.com/>) is a Film and Media Studies journal, established in 1999 and published by the Universities of Turin, Pavia, and Genoa. The Journal adopts an open, non-blind peer review system, which allows a frank and dynamic dialogue with its authors, in order to promote a quick and informal review process.

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