MOBILNOŚĆ

Instytut Kulturoznawstwa
1976 - 2016

VISUAL METHODS IN MOBILE MEDIA RESEARCH

international seminar

May 23-24, 2016
Institute of Cultural Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
ul. Szamarzewskiego 89
Collegium im. Floriana Znanieckiego, auditorium D

23.05.2016 **17:00**	Keynote: **Luc Pauwels**, University in Antwerp *The Shifting Contours of Visual Research: a critical discussion of options, issues and prospects*
24.05.2016 **10:00**	opening and introductions - **Marianna Michałowska, Magdalena Kamińska, Agata Skórzyńska**
10:30	**Agnieszka Dytman-Stasieńko, Jan Stasieńko**, Department of New Media, Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa *Visualizations and big data as activism tools*
11:00	**Marianna Michałowska,** Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań *From Physical Movement to Data Circulation: Visual Mobile Media Looking Awry*
12:00-12:20	coffee break
12:20	**Anna Nacher**, Institute of Audiovisual Arts, Jagiellonian University, Kraków *From physical space to 'cybermobilities': ontogenesis of a networked imagery*
12:50	**Ewa Wójtowicz**, University of Arts in Poznań *Seeing the Invisible. The Visibility of Data in Post-media Reality*
13:40-14:00	coffee break
14:00	**Paweł Wieczorek,** University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Warsaw *News undressing*
14:30	**Tomasz Żaglewski**, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań *Mobile Imagination in Graphic Storytelling: Using a Graphic Novel Format as a Tool and Area of Mobile Media Research*

SUMMARIES

Luc Pauwels, University in Antwerp
The Shifting Contours of Visual Research: a critical discussion of options, issues and prospects

Visual research methods in the social sciences and humanities exemplify the view that valid and unique insight into culture and society can be acquired by carefully observing, analyzing and theorizing its visual dimensions and manifestations: visible behavior of people and aspects of material culture. This array of methods ranges from analyzing existing or 'found' visual data of a variety of sources, to the production of visual materials by the researcher. But visual methods also include approaches that try to more actively involve the field under study through using visual materials in interview situations to trigger partly unanticipated factual information and projective comments, or to prompt the subjects of research to become producers of their own visual data and views for scholarly or activist purposes. Finally visual methods do not just provide tools to collect or produce visual data but they also embody opportunities to 'communicate' insight in culture and society in novel ways.
In this lecture I will provide a concise but integrated overview of the many options and resources that currently exist in the visual study of culture and society, emphasizing their specific strengths and limitations. This overview will then serve as a baseline to further discuss the largely untapped potential of emerging visual and digital practices and technologies to study and communicate key aspects of contemporary culture.

Agnieszka Dytman-Stasieńko, Jan Stasieńko, Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa
Visualizations and big data as activism tools

Contemporary big data gathering and visualization techniques offers various and rich opportunities for presenting persuasive messages formed for social actions, ecological movements and other forms of activism. Our presentation will show the most significant cases of the use of visual methods by activism groups starting from visual rhetoric and aesthetics for presenting their programmes and projects to a persuasive use of maps and diagrams and sophisticated big data visualizations and apps. Special focus will be given to mobile technologies and visualizations of movement, displacement and migration.

Marianna Michałowska, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
From Physical Movement to Data Circulation: Visual Mobile Media Looking Awry

What is visual mobile media? Having considered the evolution of media archeologically, visual technologies were always mobile: camera obscura, photography, film were movable and made people move. Mobile media in the narrow sense are identified more often with smartphone's technology or information and ways of communication they enable. However, in the broad sense of the word, a "mobile" regards mostly to the pure movement of machines, commodities, living organisms, ideas and data. Thus, while talking about "mobility" not only physical aspects of technologies and spaces (John Urry) should be considered but its immaterialities as well. Physical flows of the bodies goes together with travelling ideas and radiation of light (Sean Cubitt, Peter Adey and Paul Bevan). Mobility can be visible and invisible in the same time. Nevertheless, even invisible it can be visualised in the cultural practice.
In the paper, I will draw the basis for a research project devoted to the question of visualisation by means of mobile technologies. How mobility can be inquired with visual tools.

Anna Nacher, Institute of Audiovisual Arts, Jagiellonian University, Kraków
From physical space to 'cybermobilities': ontogenesis of a networked imagery

Researching the production of the imagery in the mobile media requires serious consideration of what constitutes the digital media object in the hyper-connective and highly networked environment. What up until now was perceived solely or primarily as the stable representation of the world gives way to the image understood in terms of "the continuous actualization of networked data"* or "networked terminal"**. However, I would like to argue that analysis of this new visual environment should not be limited to the procedures of data processing. I propose it fully acknowledges the complex processuality of the visual objects' production and circulation within networked media, switching the focus from the ontology of digital imagery to its ontogenesis. Showcasing some examples of the participatory mapping, I propose instead the processual and relational concept of image as energy exchange, to some extent inspired by the philosophy of Gilbert Simondon - reaching out beyond both the constraints of representationalism*** and the premises of "new aesthetic"****.

* R.Marie, I. Hoelzl, *Softimage. Towards a New Theory of the Digital Image*, Intellect, Bristol – Chicago 2015, loc. 146 (Kindle version)
** Ibidem.
*** The recent critique of representationalism stems from at least a few sources, including performative theory and posthumanism: S. Kember, J. Zylinska, *Life After New Media. Mediation as a Vital Process*, MIT Press, Cambridge – London 2012; Ch. Salter, *Entangled. Technology and the Transformation of Performance*, MIT Press, Cambridge – London 2010. See also: N. Thrift, *Non-representational Theory. Space, Politics, Affect*, Routledge, London - New York 2008; B. Anderson, P. Harris, *The Promise of Non-Representationalist Theories [in:] idem, ed., Taking-Place: Non-Representational Theories and Geography*, Ashgate, Farnham – Burlington 2010.
**** D. M. Berry, M. van Dartel, M. Dieter, M. Kasprzak, N. Muller, R. O'Reilly, J.L. De Vincente, *New Aesthetic, New Anxieties*, V2, Amsterdam 2012, http://v2.nl/publishing/new-aesthetic-new-anxieties Retrieved: November 29, 2015; J. Bridle, „#sxaesthetic", 15. 03. 2012, http://booktwo.org/notebook/sxaesthetic/ Retrieved: November 20, 2015; J. Bridle, http://new-aesthetic.tumblr.com/

SUMMARIES

Paweł Wieczorek, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Warsaw
News undressing

I will be taking off useless elements from news in my speech.

News published by media gains various extras which are connected with certain distribution channels. Such information packs create illusion that new types of media are being established. Scientist cannot fall into that trap. He should make the news naked. I intend to present those unnecessary extras on the basis of selected social media and new aggregators. I will prove that such extras practically do not bring any content to the information i.e. their content may have no value for the researcher who is looking for genres of news in the net. I will build universal visual schemes of extras which exist in various distribution channels. Those will be like exclusion tables.

Such cleaning is the intro to the study of digital news in context of culture, i.e. defining reasons basis which recipients react to news as well as placing this reaction in a social context. Recipients may not recognize the content of information packs. Furthermore, they have tools and needs to extend those packs. Researcher must know where a border between news and extras is and in which situations one should treat the info pack as a whole and in which take it to pieces.

Ewa Wójtowicz, University of Arts in Poznań
Seeing the Invisible. The Visibility of Data in Post-media Reality

This talk aims at updating the analysis of data visualisation by pointing at the particular qualitity of post-media reality: the invisibility. It may be as well the invisibility of data, being sent and gathered by electronic mobile media, and the hidden, yet inevitable, technical infrastructure, that supports its circulation and may have an environmental impact. Therefore, this talk is going to present some artistic practices that give utterance to critical (re)construction of what is invisible, but essential in post-media reality. The proxemic, mutual relation between objects and places may be discovered by artistic activity that aims at data materialization (Unknown Fields Division) or data interpretation based on current events (Forensic Architecture). For that reason, the outreach of data visualisation beyond graphic design, results in exposing the technical infrastructure - unnoticed, but fundamental for keeping the illusion of virtual ubiquity (Tim Arnall, Evan Roth). Questions enabled by artistic investigation aim also at the possibilities of scientific research of visual (big) data based on regularities and patterns (Julien Prévieux) and disclosing information by using the tactics of a " leak" (Julian Oliver). Artists are interested not only in, so-called, architecture of information that supports the information "cloud" (Stéphane Degoutin i Gwenola Wagon) or urban spaces, mapped by prototypes developed within the field of speculative design (Superflux). They also formulate theoretical proposals, like James Bridle in his concept of "New Aesthetics", powered by perceiving the physical reality with the criteria rooted in information reality. That is why the invisible is so meaningful in the post-media reality, which is infoxicated and overflowed with images. Art offers a window to look at important issues and provides modes of searching for solving the emergent problems. Obviously, art not only applies evidently visual methods, but also abandons them for the sake of theory in order to avoid the shallow, visual attractiveness. This change of perspective enables – paradoxically – to see more, because the theoretical cognitive capacity is enhanced by critical interpretation that art implements by using the visual methods in a natural way.

Tomasz Żaglewski, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
Mobile Imagination in Graphic Storytelling: Using a Graphic Novel Format as a Tool and Area of Mobile Media Research

According to Luc Pauwels, the proper "visual turn" in social sciences should include two kinds of researcher's methodological approaches. First of them is the deeply understanding of a visual content, that can be put under consideration, not only as a "tank" for a narrative input but also as a specific structure of visual signs that demands an adequate deconstruction based on a formal (and not only social) relations of an image. Second suggestion for the visual-based research refers to the final presentation of a study's results that far too often comes only as a seemingly "blind" form of a visual material (film, photography, website etc.) that once again doesn't encourage us to rethink the implications of an image-mediated method of analytical explanation. I believe that visual methodology, as suggested by Pauwels, can be perfectly adopted by a rather marginal medium that is a graphic novel, which underlines the crucial issues for the graphic-orientated discourse. A discussion about adopting a graphic novel aesthetic for the visual research came back lately after the premiere of a Nick Sousanis "Unflattening" book, that tries to create a modern theory of a "multi-dimensonial" perception and its social implications by using the graphic language which happens to be a remedy, according to author, that helps us to break the visual/language division. "Unflattening" as an academic experiment can be perfectly used as an example of adopting the specific visual language that at the same time is treated as a final presentation of researcher's study. By treating this example as a starting point, I would like to suggest the need of including a graphic novel into the depository of visual methodology that is dominated by photography, film and so called new media. Following this postulate, in my presentation I'm going to consider the visual representations of a mobile media culture and its functions on the basis of a wide graphic narrations. As a start, I would like to recreate the "mobile revolution" that came with the famous phone-watch used by Chester Gould's "Dick Tracy" character and compare it with the modern examples of a mobile media-orientated comics. It appears that the characteristic function of Tracy's phone-watch, that was described by Judith A. Nicholson, as a tool for racial and technological exclusion during the Great Depression era, re-appears in today's presentations that follows the restrictive function of mobile media in graphic fiction and creates only an ostensible image of a mobile media democratization.