
The reflection on images is a crossing point of many different theoretical fields and disciplines: art, aesthetics, symbolism, iconology, psychology, sociology and religion. This ample range of disciplines might be a trace of the complexity and vitality of the notion of image itself. It is not surprising that in the centuries different interpretative tools and different attitudes towards images have been developed, sometimes there have been even clashes between an iconoclastic and a philo-iconic attitude. Needless to say, in the contemporary age the media – with their powerful use and sometimes even abuse of images – challenge the thinking on this ground, calling the attention once again on the status of images.

Generally speaking, the problematic nature of images may be summarized as follows: on the one hand, an image appears eminently self-explanatory, its meaning immediately understandable beyond any linguistic content (it is not by chance that images were used as didactic and educational tools on the walls of Christian churches, or that they are the focus of contemporary political propaganda and marketing). On the other hand, however, an image manifests something which is not there, as it is implied in a cultural, theoretical and/or political context which has to be recalled and referred to in order to fully understand the image itself. In this sense, the meaning of an image is actually the invisible behind it, which has to be investigated, explained and brought to light, in order to fully catch it. Also, the image can lay claims to a unique mode of signification: to capture what is otherwise ineffable, either intrinsically or temporarily. Finally, an image can be evoked through a linguistic expression (metaphors, allegories, visualization practices), thus becoming evidently and intrinsically linked to the linguistic context itself, but even integrating – or overcoming – it.

Thus, an image cannot be fully understood at a first glance, or just on the basis of its appearance: it needs a careful and long reflection, aiming at grasping the meaning lying in the image and beyond it, at the same time.

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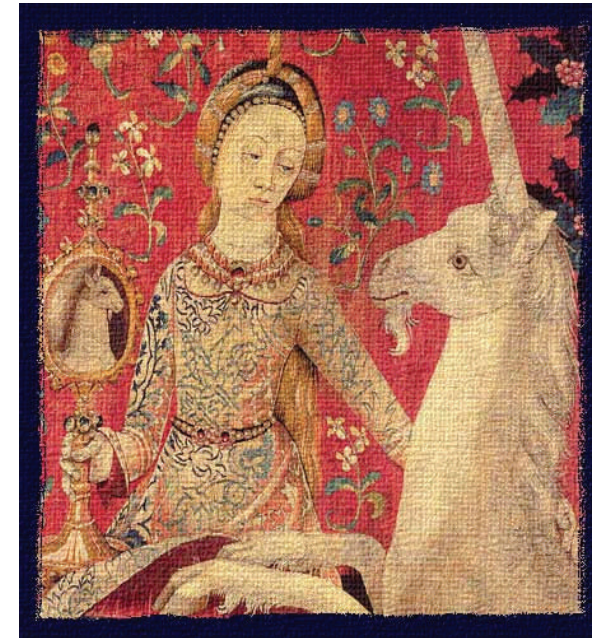
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Program of the Workshop

Reflecting on Images



Organized by Mimma Congedo
in collaboration with
ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry

24th - 26th April 2008

ICI Berlin



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24th April

19:30 Opening lecture by Sigrid Schade (Zürcher Hochschule der Künste)
Representation. A Concept within the Feminist Debate on Visual Culture and its Potential for a Critique of Bildwissenschaften

25th April

11:15 Christoph Holzhey (ICI Berlin) – Mimma Congedo (ICI Berlin / University of Milan)
Welcome and opening remarks

FIRST SECTION – IMAGES IN CULTURAL TRADITIONS

First Session – Moderator: Dorothea von Mücke (Columbia University)

11:30 Paola Maria Rossi (University of Milan)

Image and Imaging in Vedic India

12:10 Irene Cusmà (University of Pavia)

Islamic Aniconism

12:50 Cinzia Pieruccini (University of Milan)

Anthropomorphism and non-Anthropomorphism in the Images of the Hindu Gods

13:30-15:15 Lunch

Second Session – Moderator: Cinzia Pieruccini (University of Milan)

15:15 Marcello Ghilardi (University of Padua)

Reflecting (on) Images: the Notion of Xiang in Chinese and Japanese Traditional Aesthetic

15:55 Sara Fortuna (ICI Berlin / Freie Universität)
Manuele Gagnolati (ICI Berlin / Oxford University)

Subject-Object-Subject: Image and “Aspetto” in Dante's Paradiso

16:35 Mimma Congedo (ICI Berlin / University of Milan)

Images and Imagination in Giordano Bruno's Works and in the Yogini-hrdaya

17:15-17:30 Coffee Break

17:30-18:15 Round table – Moderator: Antke Engel (ICI Berlin / Institute for Queer Theory)

19:30 Lecture by Dorothea von Mücke (Columbia University)

Nach der Natur/After Nature. Grünewald's Paintings in Sebald's Poem

26th April

SECOND SECTION: INTERPRETING IMAGES

First session – Moderator: Christoph Holzhey (ICI Berlin)

9:30 Antke Engel (ICI Berlin / Institute for Queer Theory)
Housework, Handicraft and Sexual Labour. Visual Representations of Gender, Sexuality and Neo-liberal Economy

10:10 James Adam Redfield (ICI Berlin)
Images and the Ethics of Anthropological Knowledge

10:50-11:05 Coffee Break

Second Session – Moderator: Gabriele Dietze (ICI Berlin)

11:05 Markus Ophälders (University of Milan)
Reading Picasso's Guernica.

11:45 Kinga Araya (ICI Berlin)
Presenting Un-presentable: Crossing Checkpoints in Surda with Emily Jacir.

12:25 Coffee Break

12:45-13:30 Conclusive round table – Moderator: Markus Ophälders (University of Milan)

13:30 Lunch
