



Copenhagen, 23-24 April 2021

## THE LURES AND THE TEARS OF THE IMAGE

*PATTERNS INTO A PULSATILE IMAGINARY (RHYTHM, RESONANCE, AND REVERIE)*

### BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

**KRISTUPAS SABOLIUS**, Institute of Philosophy of Vilnius University, and research affiliate at MIT (USA)  
**Imagination and Milieu**

Imagination is frequently conceived in binary terms. For instance, one considers it within the framework of the opposition between reproduction and creativity; or the faculty of subject and the social imaginary. This presentation proposes an interpretation of Gilbert Simondon's *Imagination et invention* in the broader context of the philosophy of imagination. By outlining the role of imagination that exceeds imagining individual, Simondon's assumptions provoke to think of the idea of 'associated milieu' as the realm of potentiality that should be included in the cycle of invention process. Rejecting the primacy of representation, Simondon's take enables us to conceive imagination in the context of to all living beings—as 'the function of life' that exceeds functionality.

*Kristupas Sabolius* is a research affiliate at MIT (USA) and professor of philosophy at Vilnius University (Lithuania). He is the author of *Imagination and Matter* (ed., 2018, Vilnius University Press, in Lithuanian), *Proteus and the Radical Imaginary* (2016, CAC and Bunkier Sztuki, in Polish and English) *The Imaginary* (2013, Vilnius University Press), and *Furious Sleep. Imagination and Phenomenology* (2012, Vilnius University Press), as well as numerous essays, among others, "Rhythm and Reverie: On the Temporality of Imagination in Bachelard" In: Rizo-Patron, E. (ed.) Casey, E. S. (ed.) Wirth, J. M. *Adventures in Phenomenology. Gaston Bachelard*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. 2017, signaling the contradictory function of imagination, appearing in all the major theories of Western thought. He is also an active public intellectual and a writer of novels, theatre plays and scripts, including *The Gambler*, Lithuania's nomination for the foreign-language category at the 2015 Oscars. He is the leader of the winning European research project 'The Future of Humanity: New Scenarios of Imagination' (Vilnius University).

**BISSERA PENTCHEVA**, Stanford University  
**Astral Flowers: Choros, Coro, Corona in Medieval Art**

This paper explores the astral floral imaginary conjuring saintly presence and how the latter is quickened into the sensorial through the music, incense, and cult images designed for and put in performance during the festal liturgy of Ste Foy at Conques, Auvergne

*Bissera V. Pentcheva's* innovative work in acoustics, art, and music has redefined the field of Byzantine architecture and is now expanding into Western medieval art. She has published three books with Pennsylvania State University Press: *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*, 2006 (received the Nicholas Brown Prize of the Medieval Academy of America, 2010), *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium*, 2010, and *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space and Spirit in Byzantium*, 2017 (received the 2018 American Academy of Religion Award in excellence in historical studies). She has edited two volumes: *Aural Architecture in Byzantium: Music, Acoustics, and Ritual*, Ashgate 2018 and *Icons of Sound: Architecture, Music and Imagination in Medieval Art*, Routledge, Routledge 2020. Her work is informed by anthropology, music, and phenomenology, placing the attention on the changing appearance of objects and architectural spaces. She relies on film to capture this temporal animation stirred by candlelight. Another important strand of her work engages the sonic envelope of the visual--music and acoustics--and employs auralizations that digitally imprint the performance of chant with the acoustic signature of the specific interior for which it was composed. Her current book project explores the art and music of Ste. Foy at Conques.

**LILIAN MUNK RÖSING**, Copenhagen University  
**Incarnation and “Déchirure”; Annunciation and Crucifixion**

By the term of “incarnation” Georges Didi-Huberman points to an alternative to the term of “representation”, asking not what the picture represents, but what it makes perceptible through its materiality. In *Devant l’image* (1990) he argues that we should always “think the tissue of representation together with its tearing” (“penser le tissu de la représentation avec sa déchirure”). We should always pay attention to the flaw or the cut in the representational tissue, that which disturbs or disrupts sense-making. The “déchirure” may be the red stains of paint splashed over the neat ink lines depicting a crucifixion scene in a medieval picture, or it may be the white pigment or the color pools or panels in Fra Angelico’s annunciations. It is not by chance that Didi-Huberman finds the “tearing” of the representational tissue in annunciation or crucifixion scenes, as these in the Christian imagery are the primal scenes of incarnation, of God-becoming-man or the spiritual-becoming-material.

Implicit in *Devant l’image* I find the germ for a typology of paintings based on the themes of annunciation and crucifixion. To put my thesis quite strongly: There are basically two kinds of paintings: the annunciation type, exploring the preconditions for something to appear, and the crucifixion type, letting the body and its fluids make their imprint on the canvas. To avoid the pretension of being exhaustive, I would at least dare to say that a lot of paintings in art history are of either the annunciation or the crucifixion type, even if not representing the biblical motif of the annunciation or the crucifixion. One might also speak of two fundamental gestures of the art of painting: on the hand the attempt to capture the light, on the other hand the human body leaving its traces on the canvas. If the works of the crucifixion type disrupts the tissue of representation by a surplus of materiality, the works of the annunciation type suspends representation in order to explore the precondition for something new to appear.

To prove my point, I would like to give some examples from modern Danish art history (Anna Ancher, Vilhelm Hammershøi, Theodor Phillipsen) – some of the paintings that have struck me as being of either the annunciation or crucifixion type when I have been strolling in Danish art museums for the last few years.

*Lilian Munk Rösing* is Associate Professor at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, Copenhagen University, and a literary critic at the daily newspaper Politiken. She does her research and writing in the cross field of aesthetics, psychoanalysis, and cultural criticism. Her most recent books are on the painter Anna Ancher (*Anna Anchers rum*, Gyldendal 2018) and Lars von Trier (*Hvorfor skider bjørnen i skoven*, Spring 2019). In English she has published one book: *Pixar with Lacan. The Hysteric’s Guide to Animation* (Bloomsbury 2016) and co-edited another one: *Analyzing the Cultural Unconscious. Science of the Signifier* (Bloomsbury 2020).

**MARCIA CAVALCANTE**, Södertörn University in Stockholm  
**“Emergences and Ressurgences” – Notes on the unformed in conversation with Henri Michaux**

The proposal is to reflect on the pulsatile imaginary focusing on the coming to image rather than on images. I propose, under inspiration of Henri Michaux, to think this movement towards as a movement towards without a destiny, as “emegences and ressurgences”, a poetics of the drawing lines.

*Marcia Cavalcante* is Full Professor at the Södertörn University in Stockholm at the Philosophy department. Main fields of research: German Idealism, Hermeneutical Phenomenology, Ancient Philosophy, Contemporary Philosophy with special interest in the relationship between philosophy, poetry and arts, especially music. Main philosophical question is about new temporal and spatial categories to think the experience of a beginning.

**NICOLETTA ISAR**, Copenhagen University

### **THE IMAGINARY OF THE CRUCIBLE: *RITE OF SPRING* – RITE OF DIS-IMAGINATION**

Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* started with a riot. Whether it was the music with its savage rhythms or the dance that provoked the monstrous scandal it was unclear. It is however not the public opprobrium that will capture my attention in this paper. Not the scandal as such, but *skandalon* that designates the obstacle that repels and attracts simultaneously in *The Rite*. I mean, the “stumbling stone” or the Chosen One, and her implacable sacrificial dance around which a pulsatile imaginary is weaved.

In spite of the amount of research interest aroused throughout time by Stravinsky's *Rite* there is no inquiry into the intricate phenomenon that has disrupted the course of the cultural history at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. generated by his work. No examination into the exorbitant imaginary that opened the door onto the untamed path of “knowledge” that unexpectedly sprung from the tragic *pathei mathos* of Aeschylus straight into Modernity. It will be my argument that Stravinsky's *Rite* takes us to such path of “knowledge by ordeal” to unveil the crucible in art, anticipated in his own dream of the solemn pagan rite that was foundational for his work. The crucible dream triggers an archetypal vision that binds together cosmos, dance and death in one image. Sitting in a circle, the elders watch the young virgin (the Chosen One) *dancing herself to death*: “They were sacrificing her to propitiate the god of spring.” The intense experience generated by Stravinsky's work is akin to the Dionysian transformative power of art envisaged by Nietzsche. Stravinsky's dance of the Chosen One evokes verbatim Nietzsche's vision: “When man approaches death, he no longer walks, he dances.” (Zarathustra) In Stravinsky's *Rite* it is the Chosen One who is approaching death. She does not walk anymore but she dances; as in Stravinsky's dream, the virgin is *dancing herself to death*.

But what does it mean *dancing herself to death*? What kind of music could contain the uncontainable violent moment? What kind of dance could embody the dance enacted in the horizon of death? This paper will analyze this final moment when everything goes over the edge in *the Rite*. We are here, as the American conductor Michael Tilson Thomas put it, “in the uncanny world for which there was no precedent.” Stravinsky's music has become a series of “gestures” rather than sounds, accents, and beats to accompany the spasmodic victimary dance. Abruptly, like a rift (*Riss*), Life tears out (*Riss*) from Death – a moment of quivering silence. I should call this a rite of dis-imagination (*Zerrbild*).

*Nicoletta Isar* is Associate Professor at the Institute of Art History and Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at Copenhagen University. She holds the title of *docteur ès lettres* in Byzantine studies from the University Sorbonne – Paris IV. She is the author of “*XOPÓΣ: The Dance of Adam. The Making of Byzantine Chorography*” (2011), a breakthrough study in Byzantine scholarship that uncovered an original term *chorós* linked to *chôra*, which has since become instrumental in Byzantine studies, and beyond. She has long been involved with the theory of image as a scholar equipped in Classical studies, which enabled her in seizing the paradigm shifts of image throughout time, and in conducting comparative discussions around new phenomena in contemporary visual culture. Her research reflects her academic formation, as well as her intellectual horizon of all-embracing propensity for eclecticism within the comparative cultural studies, focusing continuously and consistently on themes reflecting the patterns of imagination and *poetics*, as they emerge in the visual, the acoustic, and lately in the sensory studies. Her latest book *Elemental Chorology – Vignettes Imaginales* (2020) addresses the imaginary of chorology across time, from *chôra*, *chorós*, and *chortós*, moving into the pathos of the elemental as they manifest themselves within creation and imagination.

**MARIE-LUCE LIBERGE**, University Paris VIII Saint-Denis  
**Imaginary of the Window: A Sensitive Travel through Images**

The window is a recurring motif and abundantly present in the history of art. Over the centuries, its representation has never ceased to fascinate the artists. Passages between two worlds, a boundary between thresholds, a partition-space between inside and outside, the real and the symbolic, it seems to structure the limit of spaces. It also seems to refer to a mental universe and seems to help create a kind of waiting time at the heart of the image. For this contribution, I therefore propose to focus on the window as it can be at the heart of the device of the image and to take its motif as a pretext for our reflection. Through a few selected works, I will question the notion of force present in the work evoked by Deleuze in *Logique de la sensation*. First, I will try to see how this can be related to the idea of suspended time in the work and how this sensation potentially gives a feeling of incompleteness of the work. Then I will see how this incompleteness of the image is possibly related to the operation of a latency of the image. A latency and suspension that could be related to the idea of elevation: elevation of the gaze, elevation of the viewer in difficulty and in a posture of autonomy and co-construction of the image itself by the investment of one's own reverie. Because the viewer, through his own sensations, can become a "storyteller and translator" (Rancière) of the work through his own imaginative investment. For Leon Battista Alberti the image is, moreover, "an open window through which one [can] look at history" (*De Pictura*, in 1435). Knowing that for Alberti, history is to be understood in the sense of a myth. The window would thus be a window in the window, where the viewer could perhaps write his own myth, his own fable, his inner tale ... Finally, I will try to question the motif of the window in the work and its possible vibratory and poetic impact attached to the light presentified in the compositions.

*Marie-Luce Liberge* holds a doctorate in aesthetics, science and technology of the arts from EDESTA (University Paris 8). Qualified as a lecturer in 2019, she is the author of various texts and articles on art (editions of L'Harmattan, Geuthners, Faculty of Letters of Agadir, University of Montreal, Textuel): *Esthétiques du rire & Violences de l'histoire*, Collection: Eidos – art, L'Harmattan, 2019; *Rire, Violence, Histoire dans les images & les oeuvres*, L'Harmattan, 2016; *Images et Violences de H'histoire*, L'Harmattan, 2014. She was a research grant holder at the University of Paris 8 where she taught for several years. She has also taught Letters, Culture and Communication at the IUT of the University of Paris-Saclay. She is also a graduate of the Sorbonne Nouvelle in cultural mediation, she has worked for various cultural institutions.

**ANDERS MICHELSEN**, Copenhagen University  
**The Mass of the Visual: Developments in the early Soviet Union as Post-imaginary experience?**

The paper introduces the trans-visual project developed in the past decade as a response to the focus on discourse critique in visual culture studies. The project addresses the visual as a dynamic and transformative sensibleness: what is defined as an ordered doing of matter; a mattering – something that it contends, is still not really understood.

One interesting inroad to the visual as mattering can be found in the development of visual art in the 20 century; it's attempt to surmount representation, its involvement in direct meaning per visual in the terms of e.g. Marcel Duchamp's 'manifestations' and ideas of 'infrathin separation', and its attitude of a profusive and direct social relevance; all of which would become signatories of postwar art and the astounding success of what is now termed contemporary art.

The paper details this in analysis of the role of visual art of the agit prop movement, "a new way for culture propaganda" (Iakov Okunev), which seemed to amass the visual for revolutionary ends. It further draws lines to Dziga Vertov's filmic project and his conception of "the Kino-Eye" and end up with a brief reflection on why – on this background – it is high time that art history and visual culture leave the age old ide of the representational image behind including its problematic relationship to the notion of the imagination.

*Anders Michelsen* is associate professor, PhD, University of Copenhagen and has been involved with research into design, visual culture contemporary art for more than 30 years. He is currently working on a second PhD

(dr. phil) on the creative materiality of trans-visual, as well as co-organizer of the project Visual Practice in collaboration with Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, and the project Trans-Design, organized by the University of Copenhagen and Abaarsso Tech University, Hargeisa, the Somali Peninsula, which contributes to the development of local sustainable architectural and urban design for Africa.

**ULRIKE KUCH**, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany  
**Moving Lights. Architecture as Image**

According to German art historian Hans Belting, an image is not just something that *represents* a topic on a literally superficial layer, but it *presents* itself in its specific spatial, temporal, artistic and even political context. Furthermore, the image „acts“ (Horst Bredekamp), it activates the viewer with its presence, its colours, its forms and its topic. Thus, image, viewer, and space create together a multi-sensorial experience.

In my talk I will argue that architecture in that sense is „imaginary“. Superficially seen, architects create perspective views or arranges details and painted walls to aesthetic (and – of course – functional) arrangements. However, seen from the other side, architecture itself becomes active: It moves the viewer, it creates atmospheres and multi-sensorial experiences. Architecture becomes image. To prove this thesis I will approach the architectural image through the peripheries of built environments, through cinematic experiences: Light installations by Anthony McCall and video-projections on buildings are examples to show the involvement of architecture and space, light and motion, human body and its perception. In Anthony McCall's works dark space sets the tone. Haze in combination with a concentrated, in circular shapes moving ray create a sculptural installation that seems to suspend all kinds of reality – except for the visitor's own. On one hand, architecture is reduced to a container: walls are not visible. On the other hand, seen from the image-theoretical point, haze, darkness, light, time and viewer creates a specific spatial, corporal, sensuous experience. And this indeed is what architecture tries to achieve also in built environments.

Looking at video projections („mapping“) on buildings, the situation is different: Here, architecture is the screen. Yet it is not a blank canvas. In fact, again light, architecture, (open) space and the viewer interact in the process of perception. The architectural screen is a vivid part of the installation. In combination with music rhythm becomes the striking feature of this kind of architectural imagery. In contrast to McCall's installations the visitor is not thrown back on him/herself in a at minimum reduced surrounding but the sensory excess characterises the perception.

Going back to theory, thinking about architecture as image enriches the discussion about the status of the image itself, as Burioni/Beyer/Grave put it: „If we consider architecture as serious subject in this context, it can become a surprisingly tempting challenge for the formation of [an image, U.K.] theory.“ Thus, McCall's works and video projections will help us to discuss if architecture can be image, what kind of images architecture creates and whether this discussion might enrich image theory at all.

*Ulrike Kuch* is Dr. phil. Dipl.-Ing. research associate at the chair of Theory and History of Modern Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany. Ulrike earned her doctorate with an transdisciplinary dissertation on “Stairs on Film” from the Faculty of Media in Weimar. She studied architecture at Bauhaus-Universität, Technical University Helsinki / Finland, University of Arts and Technical University / Berlin. Her fields of research include architecture and film; phenomenology and architecture; architecture and the image. Recently Ulrike edited “Das Diaphane. Architektur und ihre Bildlichkeit” (transcript 2020), which explores aspects of a mediality of architecture.

**HENRIK OXVIG**, IBBL/Royal Danish Academy  
**Architecture as space created with our imagination through images and narrative**

*Working with our imagination, so that images via the time of the narrative become spaces through which we move: A consideration of how to visualize and tell about architecture via the screens of the classrooms.*

Architecture cannot be created without images and drawings. We are used to experiencing architecture through photographs. Often we only know architecture through image reproductions. But in reality, architecture is a representation of a prior work with many different images and drawings – and the distance that the image

requires of the viewer to become an image must be overcome if we want to experience and understand the spaces of architecture.

Already Alberti was aware that the perspective he had described in his treatise on painting had limited significance for architecture, where parallel lines do not meet in a vanishing point. The perspective thus plays no role in Alberti's later treaty on architecture. According to Juhani Pallasmaa, however, it is in particular Alberti's painting treaty that has had an impact on later architecture which help to explain that our understanding of what architecture is is tied to what we can consider from a distance – as an image. Pallasmaa: "Architecture's one-sided focus on the visual has never been as clear as in the last 50 years, where a form of architecture that seeks to create spectacular and eye-catching images has dominated."

The presentation will consider how architectural analysis by its presentation can activate our imaginations of space, thereby helping to transcend the widespread notion that architecture – and the world we live in – can be reproduced as an image.

*Henrik Oxvig* has previously been assistant professor at the Department of Art History, Aarhus University and associate professor at the Department of Art History, University of Copenhagen. Since 2005, he has been associate professor and head of the PhD program, first at the Academy of Fine Arts' School of Architecture and since 2013 at The Royal Academy. His research concerns how the scientific in general and art history in particular can fertilize the creative practice.

**DYLAN GODWIN**, Vancouver British Columbia  
**“CONFUSION AT SEA”**

In his 2005 essay “Respecting the Chasm,” American poet Joe Wenderoth ascribes a sort of holy status to the experience of spatial confusion: I write poems from day-dream, which is the state or mood that obliterates the kind of sense that registers specific locale. Day-dream space is illocal, to use a Dickinsonian term—it is wherein my ordinary sense of where I am is no longer operative. My paper, tentatively entitled *Confusion At Sea*, will elaborate upon Wenderoth’s poetics of reverie (and the Dickinsonian sensibility that informs it), and ask specifically what role the poetic image plays in the dislocations that characterize poetic activity and feeling. I will propose, though, that we not abstract “image” from the more theatrical and materially energetic concept of *scene*. Here, having turned lyric inquiry into a mode of dramaturgy, I will focus on one of the wilder scenic transformations that underpins the production of poetic space—namely, the foregrounding of backgrounds, or the rushing into prominence of previously ambient elements of the environment. My paper will then turn to water (!) and argue that no ocean has ever fully settled into a backdrop. Though we might identify a restlessness in ALL backdrops (and, indeed, many theories of media treat the instability of backgrounds as axiomatic), I will argue that with oceans this is exceptionally the case. I will illustrate with readings of fragments of works by Henri Michaux (who figures forth the oceanic sublime in the register of the ridiculous) and paintings by Gustave Courbet (who tempers oceanic foregrounding along rhythmic shores).

*Dylan Dodwin* teaches English literature at Coquitlam College just outside of Vancouver British Columbia, but have been living in Copenhagen since the pandemic began. I received my PhD in Comparative Literature at the Stony Brook University (State University of New York) in 2020, and prior to that received degrees in English and literary theory at the University of California at Davis and the University of British Columbia.

**LOUIS KAPLAN**, University of Toronto  
**Star of Darwin: Melech Ravitch’s Photo-Poetic Reverie and the Imagining of a Jewish Refuge in Australia**

Shortly after the Nazis’ assumption of political power in Germany in 1933, the prescient and prolific Warsaw-based Yiddish poet Melech Ravitch had a vision that he must travel to Australia to find a place of refuge for persecuted Jews. Ravitch made this epic journey that summer and he eventually travelled to the Northern Territory in October/November to scope out a potential site for a Jewish refugee settlement. While not a photographer, Ravitch packed along his Kodak Brownie camera and took some snapshots along the way, and, thus, we have a record of ninety images with poetic captions of this journey. While encountering destitute

aboriginals and endless stretches of uninhabitable desert, this presentation will review how Ravitch projected his fertile imagination upon outback reality dreaming of a Jewish utopia to come in line with his territorialist vision. In this way, he follows the substitutive logic outlined in Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Reverie*. "There are times in the life of a poet when reverie assimilates even the real.

Then, what he perceives is assimilated. The real world is absorbed by the imaginary world." This absorption of the real by the poetic (and political) imaginary is definitely at play in the last photograph that Ravitch took of the Star movie theater in Darwin. This is a perfect example of the imagination "making us create what we see" (Shelley) as Ravitch imagines that this cinematic symbol is always already Jewish in nature – that it constitutes a Star of David inhabiting the landscape on top of a Jewish government building. As he daydreams, "Is this already the Jewish State house in the new territory?" He also refers to this uncanny encounter as "a joke of history" being played on him and thereby engages with the poetics of imaginary/counterfactual history. In addition to Bachelard, I want to frame Ravitch's photopoetic flights of fancy and his "longing to inhabit" Australia in relation to a rarely discussed section (16) in Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* where he discusses the "fantasmatic" of landscape photography. This passage's focus on the imaginary goes against the grain of the indexical theory that frames much of Barthes' classic. It also situates the *punctum* in terms of a temporal tearing that helps in the further interpretation of Ravitch's photograph and its poetics of reverie.

*Louis Kaplan* is Professor of History and Theory of Photography and New Media in the Graduate Department of Art History and affiliated faculty member at the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto. He also served as the founding Chair of the Department of Visual Studies at the Mississauga campus. Kaplan is the author of numerous books in the field of photography studies including *Photography and Community* (Minnesota, 2005) and *Photography and Humour* (Reaktion, 2017). Among his many journal articles and book chapter contributions, he has published most recently "Horizontal Thinking and the Emergence of Visual Culture" in the *Wiley Blackwell Companion to Visual Culture* (2021).

Kaplan also has collaborated on research-creation grants supported by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada with artist Melissa Shiff. These projects utilize the new media of augmented reality and virtual reality in order to explore *Imaginary Jewish Homelands*.

**LISE HENRIETTE HINDSBERG**, Copenhagen University

**The Dream of Vividness: The Iconicity of Sound in the "Gloria in excelsis Deo"**

C D F F F E F G E G F E. What at first sight appears to be a meaningless compilation of letters is in fact the "visual" sound of Domenico Ghirlandaio's *Adorazione dei Magi degli Innocenti* (1488). The letters are the tone names of each note represented on the *rotolo*, which semantically operate as twelve individual signs of sound and rhythm, but together they signify the "cantus angelici". Instead of asking why Ghirlandaio chose to represent this specific melody for the "Gloria in excelsis Deo", I will discuss why it was included at all. The representation of this heavenly choir will prove to be far more complex than just a reference to the Gospel of Luke 2:14 when considering the notation as part of the agency of the image. In this paper I will explore the notation for the "Gloria in excelsis Deo" from the point of the iconicity of sound, and how the notation on the *rotolo* contributes to the dream of vividness; an ambiguous ontology where the image at the same time both is and is not what it images. I will argue that the notation reveals an expectation of the viewer's response as the notation can be seen to operate as an invitation to the actualisation of the image. The notation reaches into the collective memory of the Renaissance beholder, since the sound of the "Gloria in excelsis Deo" would have filled the church space during liturgy. The notation on the *rotolo* encourages the viewer to give voice to that which until the moment of enactment is nothing more than a silent potentiality of a sonorous experience of vividness. By this resonance the iconicity of sound draws the viewer into the large retinue of people who have come to bear witness to the epiphany of Christ.

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**MIKKEL IBSEN SØRENSEN**, the translator in Danish of Gaston Bachelard's *Poétique de l'espace*  
**Translating the imaginative – sequences from Gaston Bachelard's *Poétique de l'espace***

Setting out from reflections occasioned by my ongoing work on translating Gaston Bachelard's *Poétique de l'espace* to Danish, I will present some critical remarks on the semantics of imagination, revising received assumptions on the synonymity – or even translatability – of terms such as *l'imagination*, *Einbildungskraft*, *phantasia*, and the Danish *opdigtning*. The distinction between imagery and dreams will be found to have a complex and fertile etymological background in Romantic and Germanic languages, and must of necessity force the translational effort.

Turning to the philosophical implications of this distinction, these preparatory remarks will allow a more acute appreciation of the novelty of Bachelard's material or creative imagination in contrast to the transcendental and productive imagination in Kant's *First* and *Third Critique*. The stakes in this concept have been set at least since Heidegger's treatment of the Kantian (lack of) conception of power of the imagination, but as will I will try to show, the function that the imagination fulfills is decisively different in the two diverse phenomenological methods employed by Bachelard on the one hand and Husserl and Heidegger on the other. Finally, having revisited this philosophical backstory, I will re-assess the particular and unexampled influence that Bachelard's work, both epistemological and poetological, had on creative visual and plastic arts of his time, taking the pre-Situationist Asger Jorn as a rich example. Jorn himself worked and wrote in a shuttle movement between Danish and French, and his discursive output, both in terms of his written texts, letters and commentaries and the textuality embedded in his artworks will this take this presentation back to its departure, the poetical dimension of translation.

*Mikkel Ibsen Sørensen* is a Danish writer and translator, and the author of several books:  
*Den kommende opstand af Den Usynlige Komité*, oversat fra fransk *L'insurrection qui vient*, Århus: After Hand, 2011

- Bog: *Indføring i borgerkrigen* af TIQQUN, oversat fra fransk *Introduction à la guerre civile*, Århus: Antipyrine, 2016
- Bog: *Inhabit* af anonym forfatter, oversat fra engelsk *Inhabit*, København: Sjette position, 2018
- Bog: *Drapetomani* af Jasmine Gibson, oversat fra engelsk *Drapetomania*, bragt som chapbook på [fredagften.net](http://fredagften.net), januar 2021
- Bog: *Karman. Et kort skrift om handling, skyld og gestus* af Giorgio Agamben, oversat fra italiensk *Karman: breve trattato sull'azione, la colpa e il gesto*, København: THP, 2021
- Bog: *Rummets poetik* af Gaston Bachelard, oversat fra fransk *La Poétique de l'espace*, København: Mindspace, under udgivelse.
- Bog: *Patriarkalsk poesi* af Gertrude Stein, oversat fra engelsk *Patriarchal Poetry*, København:

**ANDERS BILLE PETERSEN & NILS BLOCH-SØRENSEN**  
**Kunstangst**

To this day art discourse and curation continue to be shaped by Enlightenment ideals; the Kantian notion of disinterested judgment, canonizing knowledge in encyclopedias, and research practices founded in the natural sciences, still dominate our way of disseminating art. This Enlightenment legacy urges us to dispose of our individuality, either by putting ourselves in someone else's place, or by striving towards objectivity and repeatability.

However, arguably art does not hold a definite, unambiguous value, meaning or purpose, but rather constitutes a crisis of signification inciting the spectator to create meaning based on his or her individuality. In order to designate this profoundly personal and ambiguous art experience, we propose the term *kunstangst* [art anxiety]. This term derives from the existentialist concept *anxiety*, which originates in the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard and his book *Concept of Anxiety* (1844).

In the existential anxiety proposed by Kierkegaard, we become conscious of our existential freedom. We understand that we are free to choose our actions, but also that we ourselves must take full responsibility for those actions. Anxiety is caused by the awareness of being a self, a free self which entails the endless potential of choosing. What can be chosen is not clear, only that the possibility of choice exists. The possibility of action



presents itself in anxiety – a possibility without content. It is this anxious consciousness that we see mirrored in aesthetic experience, and we believe that this indeterminacy of signification can account for the intensity of aesthetic experience. Kunstangst is an experience in which not only the plurality of the artwork is revealed, it is also a state in which the spectator is faced with a cognitive and emotional endlessness within herself. This endlessness, this unstable intimacy with the artwork, is comparable to the freedom that rises in existentialist anxiety: facing the disturbing loss of meaning - the absurdity of existence - which is at the root of existentialism's radical conception of freedom. Art has the ability to encapsulate life's meaninglessness and the freedom of the individual. We must not evade this anxiety, instead we must embrace it by projecting personal significance onto the art work.

This fundamentally creative approach to art consumption finds backing in Gaston Bachelard's book *Poétique de la reverie*. This theory allows us to explore the co-creative position of the spectator in relation to kunstangst.

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#### ***Imaginary Reverberation***

#### **From Gaston Bachelard's *Transsubjectivity* to Jacques Rancière's 'Confused' Knowledge**

The imaginary is a reverberating force that simultaneously activates our mind, soul and physical existence. It unexpectedly occurs at the surface of our psyche, originating in our soul and generating a response which can be felt physically. The intensity of visual or poetic imaginary has its own dynamism. There is no causal relation between our unconsciousness and the spontaneous emergence of a poetic image. The rhythm of a poetic image echoes with our past, but is not a product of our past experiences since the resonance of a poetic image comes for its present emergence, from its spontaneity and its ecstatic novelty, and not from our psychological or cultural past.

For Gaston Bachelard, the imaginary reverberation does not have a derivative nature. Even if it implies certain consequences, or echoes, of our past, our imagination is oriented towards the future. The poetic image, as a product of our imagination, spontaneously becomes an extension of us, a part of our subjectivity, activating an entire linguistic mechanism and structuring our being. More than this, the phenomenology of imagination, a very important tool in studying the poetic imaginary, can help us understand the transsubjectivity of the poetic image (Gaston Bachelard) which resides in its essentially variational and non-constitutive nature.

The poetic image, as a volatile object of our creative consciousness, resonates differently in every individual, and its constituted transsubjectivity can be associated to a particular manner of understanding, an indistinct manner of thinking, conceived as "confused knowledge" (Jacques Rancière) – a territory of thought that is present outside it and identified with the non-thinking. For Rancière, the "confused knowledge" is not necessarily a less significant form of knowledge, but a paradoxical concretization of a specific form of thinking, constituted through relations between thinking and feeling. This type of knowledge is meant to change the regimes of understanding art and redefine the imposed relations between thinking and non-thinking, activity and passivity, accepting the poetic imaginary as an instance that denies any restriction or norm, thus signaling its force of resistance.

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**Alessandro Ferraro**, PhD Fellow at University of Genoa, Italy

**Dialectics between invisibility, imagination and scientific knowledge in defining abstract pictures: *The New Abstract Vision***

Starting from a less-known essay by Beaumont Newhall – *The New Abstract Vision* (1947) – it is my goal to show how the abstract picture represents a mimetic and metaphorical process of our visual culture that merges on the same level immateriality, invisibility and imagination: according to this idea, abstraction can be considered as a historical condition that influences our relation with the images and the production of abstract knowledge that we derive from them. As remembered by Philip Ball in his recent essay *Invisible. The Dangerous Allure of the Unseen*, invisible and abstraction have been two cultural logic that informed our imagery concerning how we deal with pictures and images in terms of presentness and absence, materiality and immateriality. In *The New Abstract Image*, besides proposing scientific images and renowned abstract artworks as part of the same visual culture, Beaumont Newhall focuses on the role that imagination played in the definition of what is abstract. Going back in time, John Tyndall in *The Scientific Use of Imagination* (1870) has written that imagination is a scientific tool that permits us to understand the image data and through which we classify the information we gather from the image itself. Significantly, forty years later, Kasimir Malevič in his essay *The Non Objective World* considered the first scientific visualizations of tuberculosis' bacilli imagined and depicted by Robert Koch as "purely abstract images".

In a particular way, since they are not representational, abstract pictures affects ourself and our collective imagery: their ambiguity gives us a specific responsibility in understanding them and it also allows us to think about their peculiar effects on us. Methodologically, during my speech I will show the importance of Beaumont Newhall's theories concerning abstraction, its effects on how we react at "the abstract" in the pictures and the linkings with Worringer's theory of empathy and abstraction; I will also consider his ideas in the light of the most recent studies concerning the abstraction in contemporary visual culture, such as the notion of *General Abstract Image*.

Alessandro Ferraro, art historian, is currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Genoa, IT, in Contemporary Arts and Media Studies. After a curatorial master degree at the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, he worked at the curatorial department of GAM in Turin and in contemporary art galleries. In 2017 he received a research fellowship at the Stiftung Hans Arp in Berlin. His research interests are focused on the impact of contemporary theory of abstraction in contemporary art and visual studies. His Ph.D. thesis (Beyond reality: artistic and scientific imagery in the light of abstraction) consists of a phenomenological study of the so-called "concrete abstractions" in contemporary arts and media studies. Member of the Cultural Dream Studies Network and affiliate of the DAFIST Department (Unige), from 2019 he teaches the course "History of exhibitions and curatorial practices" within the program "Methodology for the study of contemporary art". He is currently working on a paper concerning the interplay between abstraction, imagination and contemporary visual culture.

**MARTA CHIARA OLIMPIA NICOSIA**, Palermo, Italy

**Foemina imaginans. Visual Reveries as Creative Acts**

The present paper aims at creating a continuity and a reconciliation between the reverie as identified by Gaston Bachelard and the common phenomenon of having reveries that is identifiable within certain milieus along the 19th century.

The paper is based on my previous PhD research *L'Art de la rêverie. Female Daydreaming in 19th-Century Painting*. Through the collection of several paintings from the 19th century it was possible to identify and analyse a specific iconographic category: the representation of a character having a daydream – that is, a reverie. In these images a character is depicted in a dreamy, absent and sometimes rapt attitude, apparently doing nothing; with almost no exception the character represented is a woman. The diffusion of this representation highlights the fact that having reveries is apparently not only an attitude in which it was alluring to depict women, but also it was an actual pastime, practiced especially by upper classes women. During the 19th century the female capacity to daydream was regarded with a mixture of suspicion, pity and curiosity. It was widely known and often represented; it was generally dismissed by philosophers and doctors as a vain fantasy, dangerous to indulge in; it was considered the useless product of the female weak intellect, incapable of real creation. Conversely, the reverie practiced by women of the 19th century, and largely represented, is perfectly compatible, *mutatis mutandis*, with Bachelard's later theorisations. Starting from the ideas developed in *La poétique de la rêverie* (1960), these paintings, and consequently the daydreaming activity they represent, will be read under an unbiased new light, allowing us viewers to connect with them in new ways.

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**MATHIAS SRISAKUL LARSEN**, Copenhagen University  
**He Weeps For You. On rhythmic sensations in video.**

Video's unique ability to translate an input into electronic signals, and turn out a modulated output, has made it an alluring medium for artists who wished to explore the multi-sensory realm of human experiences. What characterises video is the recording of an input, and after turning it into an electronic signal, is able to manipulate the signal in more ways, e.g. modulation, wiping, feedback, delays, etc., and create an output through a speaker or a screen/video projection. Now what the output is an expression of is the process which has taken place within the system, which makes video a highly adaptable medium, and also why it is so hard to set into one specific category. Due to the way in which video works it has been argued to be a primarily rhythmic medium, granting privilege to sound rather than image. Together with this comes that it has sculptural qualities, from the fact that it interacts with resonances and vibrations, which interacts with the space. This becomes much apparent in closed-circuit installations, which occupies the space and interacts with this on account of its *open source* properties. The ways in which bodies are affected by resonance is discussed by Deleuze in "Logic of Sensation", to which the modulation of tonality plays a major part in providing the body with sensations. Participants are affected through sonic resonance and audio-visual exchange with the installation, which brings up interesting questions from a somaesthetic view. Particularly in terms of how it affects our perception and experience of space, and also how it plays into our imagination of self. In the works by American artist Bill Viola has been described as "beyond visual representation", as his goal is to render visible what is otherwise ineffable, like experience, sensation, and rhythm.

Sources:

**CALYPSO GILLET**, Paris 3, Sorbonne Nouvelle (France); University of Copenhagen (Denmark)  
**Immersion in Gérard de Nerval's visions: where reality and fiction collide**

"There are two ways of going beyond figuration (that is, beyond both the illustrative and the figurative): either towards the abstract or towards the Figure."<sup>1</sup> Literature allows us to experience reality in radically different

ways from our usual perception. Gérard de Nerval's poetic work questions the blurry line between fiction and reality, through the concept of image. Victim of extremely vivid visions and apparitions, he translates his dreams into poetry through visual and oneiric language. Gérard de Nerval wrote *Les Chimères* in 1854, "not in the hardest of [his] disease, but in the very middle of [his] hallucinations"<sup>2</sup>, pulling his reader into the middle of his torment. Indeed, *Les Chimères* allows the reader to experience Gérard de Nerval's "fictional immersion", a state of mind in which fiction and reality merge into imagination, as conceptualised by Jean-Marie Schaeffer in his work *Why fiction?* (Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Pourquoi la fiction?*, Seuil, Paris, 1999). In "fictional immersion" imagination becomes stronger than perception. The subject thus lives simultaneously in two different worlds: the real environment and the imagined universe. This is an active state of the imagination, with a real sensitivity for the imagined. This immersion is not a hallucination, but rather a "consented illusion". But what if the boundaries between the real and the imagined were blurred? This paper aims to analyse how the boundaries between reality and fiction merge thanks to the work of the imagination in the poetry of Gérard de Nerval, addressing two main questions: how does imagination shape aspects of experimental literature? How does the poetic image create (fictional) immersion in poetry? This analysis aims to create an interdisciplinary approach to literature, art history and medical humanities, in order to widen the perspectives on imagination traditionally conceived.

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Master's degree in La Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3 in Paris, France. Comparative literature and specialisation in Medical Humanities. Master thesis entitled "Immersion and decentralisation in Gérard de Nerval's and Edwin Abbot's work". Erasmus in Copenhagen, Denmark for 6 months (January - July 2021). Three-year intensive program preparing for the national competitive exam to enter the École Normale Supérieure (ENS) in Paris, France. French literature, English literature, Philosophy, History, Geography, Spanish and Ancient Greek. Teacher and tutor for students from middle school to high school. Literary teacher specialized in French literature, Philosophy, English, Spanish and History. Pedagogic training and vulgarisation. Foundation of a theatre association named "La Comedia Dératée".

**GUSTAV HODER**, PhD Fellow Copenhagen University

**Miniaturisation, between ritual and play**

Taking the Makapansgat pebble, a prehistoric manuport believed to have been picked up by our distant ancestor *A. africanus* for its face-like aesthetics, as an invitation to speculate, this presentation attempts to locate one possible *origin* of Homo imaginans. Equally following G. Bachelard and G. Agamben, such an origin, mythological as well as a scientific, can be found in a number of archaeological miniature objects, such as the Makapansgat pebble and prehistoric Venus figures. The contexts of these objects are usually difficult to consign, and are interpreted as children's toys as well as non-descript sacred objects. These two categories are also difficult to separate within the archaeological record itself.

I propose an interpretation that attempts to locate a possible point of origin before these two categories: By interpreting miniature objects in the light of what Bachelard called a philosophy of the imagination, we arrive at the dominant interpretation of these objects in the archaeological record as objects of "ritual" significance, echoing Bachelard's claim in *The Poetics of Space*, that "The cleverer I am at miniaturizing the world, the better I possess it." Bachelard however actively disregards the category of toys, which is the class of miniature objects that we are used to encountering.

In a second step, by putting Bachelard in dialogue with Agamben's theory of the origins of historicity in miniaturisation, we are led to a hypothesis regarding miniature objects as carriers of historicity, and play precisely as the profanatory activity, that separates objects from their sacred function: "The toy is what belonged - *once, no longer* - to the realm of the sacred or of the practical-economic." In this sense, "What the toy preserves of its sacred or economic model, what survives of this after its dismemberment or miniaturization, is nothing other than the human temporality that was contained therein: its pure historical essence." (*Infancy and History*)