Alçınkaya, İbrahim Mertcan
University of Warsaw

Powerful Images of Power: Representation of Police Power in Future State: Dark Detective

As an inherently visual medium, comic books enable useful discussion on the visual representation of power, notable in the superhero comic books. From the famous cover of the first Captain America comic book on which he punches Hitler, to Frank Miller's revisionary Batman of the 1980s as a cynical and power-hungry authoritarian-altruist, American superhero comic books offer ample material for critical analysis of the unique ways in which American visual culture engages in the concept of power. This paper offers a close analysis of Mariko Tamaki and Dan Mora's Future State: Dark Detective (2021) as a representation of police futurism and police power. As such, this paper discusses Future State as a potential cultural reproduction and legitimization of police power through Bruce Wayne/Batman—who will be discussed as a police agent rather than a vigilante in its broad understanding—Gotham City, and the Gotham City Police Department. Future State's narrativization and visualization of Gotham City arguably proposes the reader a Mark Fisherian "Capitalist Realism" with a twist: In a world in which neoliberal capitalism is the "least worst" socioeconomic infrastructure (Fisher 2009), the police project is not only the least worst method of public safety, but it is the only option for the wealth-inequality-based modern civilization to exist. In this view, Bruce Wayne/Batman and the GCPD act as agents of policing tasked with "fabricating and maintaining social order" (Neocleous 2000), further reproducing and reinforcing police power.

Antonowicz, Zuzanna
University of Warsaw

Adult Adolescents and Scopophilia: Appearance, Appeal and Political Passivity in Consumer Capitalism

This presentation explores the convergence of psychoanalysis, theory of visual culture, and a theory of capitalist power, with a focus on the growing phenomenon of adult infantilization. I argue that the aesthetic and behavioral adoption of youthfulness—or outright childishness—by adults in late-capitalist societies is both a symptom of political disengagement and a mechanism that reinforces it (Barber, 2007). This phenomenon is particularly visible in consumer behavior, beauty standards, and the growing popularity of media originally designed for children or adolescents, now consumed by adults. Rather than a mere cultural quirk, this dynamic reveals deeper structures of subjectivity under neoliberal capitalism.

My analysis draws on Julia Kristeva's notion of the adolescent phase as a psychic space in which the subject desires an unattainable ideal. In *This Incredible Need to Believe* (2009), Kristeva

emphasizes that the contemporary loss of belief—in religion, collective ideals, or utopias—has disrupted the symbolic passage into adulthood. In parallel, Christopher Lasch in *The Culture of Narcissism* (1991) contends that the decline of religious frameworks has intensified narcissistic tendencies, linked to an inability to confront aging, death, and otherness. Kathleen Woodward (1989) complements these ideas by insisting that age must remain central in our understanding of narcissism, highlighting how capitalist culture marginalizes aging bodies and minds.

Infantilization is further reinforced by the consumerist logic of planned obsolescence: not only are products designed to be replaced quickly, but subjectivity itself becomes commodified, transient, and replaceable (Barber, 2007). Individuals are encouraged to identify with youthful, marketable images rather than with stable or mature social roles. The result is an arrested development—a cultural refusal to "grow up"—that aligns with capitalism's need for endlessly renewing desire and compliant consumers.

I argue that scopophilia—the pleasure of looking without acting—is the dominant mode of libidinal engagement in this context. It replaces relational and political action with visual consumption, aesthetic projection, and self-optimization. As such, the aesthetic preference for youthfulness functions not only as a lifestyle choice, but as an ideological tool: a mask of freedom concealing deep structures of alienation, loneliness, and political passivity.

Through this theoretical lens, I suggest that the aesthetics of infantilization and scopophilia reveal a contemporary libidinal economy in which appearance becomes a site of both control and fantasy. The paper contributes to debates on image, affect, and power by situating visual culture within psychoanalytic and political critique.

Basiuk, Tomasz
University of Warsaw

Some Transnational and Interclass Readings of Camp in Polish Visual Culture

I compare works by a contemporary Polish queer artist and by a prominent twentieth-century filmmaker to several iconic post-WW2 American visual texts with a view to the category camp, which remains absent from these works' critical reception.

Karol Radziszewski's design of a mural intended for a major Polish museum may be compared to Andy Warhol's *13 Most Wanted Men*, which was taken down shortly after its unveiling. Radziszewski, who pays regular homage to Warhol, has seen his design rejected already before its execution. The scholar Magda Szcześniak reads Radziszewski's playful response to this public rebuke along lines that seem to invite some mention of camp although she avoids using the term. Her strategic prevarication is reminiscent of those readings of Warhol's relationship to social class in which the category camp is similarly problematic (Grudin).

Justyna Jaworska explicitly rejects referencing camp in her reading of Marek Piwowski's short film *Hair* because—in her view—the term camp, unlike the term queer, renders the dimension of class opaque. However, works such as Jennie Livingston's documentary portrayal of Harlem drag balls in *Paris Is Burning* and John Waters's campy take on class in *Pink Flamingos* illustrate that camp aesthetics can adequately address class, as is arguably the case in Piwowski's documentary.

Camp practices question the rigidity of gender and sexual identities while they provide consolation to those falling outside normative bounds (Sedgwick). However, camp also performs an analogous—if less acknowledged—role with respect to social class, as I show by citing writings on camp, queerness, and class (Newton; Benderson).

Blocian Ilona
University of Wroclaw

Image in Interdisciplinary Research

Contemporary image research is characterised by an interdisciplinary nature, with numerous studies incorporating the effects and results from related disciplines into the conceptual frameworks they develop. An interesting set of conclusions is drawn by comparing the philosophy of images and its findings regarding the socio-political functioning of images, the role of visuality in thinking processes, with the findings of research in visual sociology, the psychology of visual thinking and visual communication research. The imposition of these perspectives of research findings appears to culminate in a particular common set. The objective of this presentation is to delineate this common set.

Bojarska, Katarzyna
SWPS University, Warsaw

Images Digging Deep. Feminist Environmental Art Facing Political Violence

I would like to devote my presentation to artistic and curatorial projects of environmental art and reflection on the futures to come – in the aftermath of both political violence directed against people and violence directed against nature. The artists and curators whose work will be discussed offer critical approaches the power of the image and to both past and future that can be framed as learning from the coexistence with the matter of the past and looking into the future of the matter. The analyzed artists/curators appear not so much as contemporary incarnations of Benjaminian 'angel of history,' but as subjects who rather than gazing at the debris descent into its depths, and penetrate it. The presentation will examin the influence of such practices on politics of image production and the concepts of artist's critical enagegment with political violence and its memory.

Borczyk, Karol
University of Warsaw

Power and Image in The Sopranos: Initiation and Disillusionment

The Sopranos, a series about New Jersey mobsters that brought back the golden era of Television, appears to be a perfect case study for the power of image and the images of power. Unsurprisingly, for members of the Mafia few acts assert authority more definitively than a commission of a murder. Christopher Moltisanti's first killing in the pilot episode of the show can be interpreted not only as a way of exerting power, but as a beginning of an initiation narrative, a genesis of Christopher's self-creation, a story through which he constructs his assumed persona of a gangster. The aforementioned deed unfolds in a pork store. On one of the walls we can see an affixed, monochrome photomontage of old American pop culture heroes. As Chris shoots Emil Kolar, with every bullet shot, the camera cuts to singular close-up frames of three of the characters on the collage: Humphrey Bogart, Dean Martin, and finally Edward G. Robinson. This artistic choice elicits meaning well beyond paying homage. The extradiegetic framing of the scene may connect Christopher's first killing with his yearning for fame and mythic status, qualities that these three stars surely possess. Just as the legends of the golden age of Hollywood, Moltisanti wants to be etched into history, cherished as an immortal image. Moreover, both Bogart and Robinson are mainly recognized for their appearances in crime films, and portrayals of morally complex, ambiguous figures, which may be a way of correlating the notions of power and violence. This intercutting, together with other metacinematic elements exhibited in the pilot, becomes an illustration of Christopher's character fictionality and performativity– and a foretaste of the way the show will explore the power of interconnected images and frames, creating a new story out of the well-remembered bits and pieces of a convention that seemed to exhaust itself. This paper will examine closely this scene, demonstrating how Sopranos self-consciously comment on both the genre of the mobster cinema in a way that seems to both undercut and re-establish the very genre it critiques.

Bowe, Geoffrey, Istanbul Technical University
Turowski, Mariusz, University of Wrocław

The Worldly Philosophy of Liberal Eudaimonism: Art History in Dialogue with Political Theory

The paper combines two methodologies to examine late Enlightenment ideas of governance and liberal eudaimonism. The first part looks at the evolution of Jacques-Loius David's ideological painting, focusing on the movement from the Raphael inspired *Death of Socrates* and *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*. Whereas the *Death of Socrates* focuses on metaphysical citizenship, *Napoleon* represents a more pragmatic history painting both in terms of David's politics and vision of governance/citizenship. Reflections on the difference in gestures of the

central figures illustrate this change. David's classical symbolic approach is echoed in the work of Slovenian artist Franz Cauchig, whose depiction of *Phaedrus and Socrates* contains a critical allegory that reflects on the displacement of the Hapsburgs by Napoleon. Finally, considerations of Hegel's idea of Napoleon as a manifestation of the *Weltseele* is considered via an examination of the 1895 Harper's Magazine cartoon of Hegel doffing his cap to the conquering Napoleon at Jena, an event that ironically resulted in the closing of Hegel's university and his subsequent displacement from university positions for almost a decade. This brief eclectic foray into art history is meant to illustrate a shifting of political and metaphysical positions in the Napoleonic era, leading to the second part of the paper which follows a more traditional route to an examination of eudaimonistic liberalism.

The second part of the presentation employs social-political studies (governance studies) methodologies in order to examine the influence of classical (ancient and medieval) political thought on early modern and contemporary political philosophy and political theory (and social sciences in general) within the broader theoretical concept of liberal eudaominism (eudaimonist liberalism). The concept encompasses the family of wordly-philosophical approaches such as developmental-republican, developmental-democratic, positive-freedom, ethical-liberal, human/social development, human capabilities, left libertarianism etc. The focus is on a history that includes not only what happened in the Renaissance, the "long seventeenth century"; or the Enlightenment, but also goes back significantly to the Athenian and, above all, Roman ideals of "res publica", "republican freedoms"; and "mixed regime" (*virtu* as a balance between *onore* pursued by *ottimati* and *libertas populi*), based on the ontological-political domain ("the custom and the way of life", *ethe kai nomina*), but also with the foundational/root notions of "demos" and "kratos", where democracy refers to the idea of power in the sense of "capacity to do things" (Josiah Ober). Studies on this topic are carried out in relation to the concept of "negative republicanism", the problem of the primacy of positive freedom (positive rights), and the tensions between positive/creative and negative/protective theories of governing, political agency and sovereignty. They highlight the crucial role of Hegelian understanding of soveriginty as a combination of radical-egalitarian-populistic (Rousseauian) approach with the notion of the reason of state. In a methodological sense, the studies attempt to establish a correspondence and potential integration of the project of "ontological" interpretations proposed by Leo Strauss, C.B. Macpherson, and more recently Geoff Kennedy, Ellen Meisksin Wood, Onur Ulas Ince, Laura Brace, and George Yerby with the "contextualist"/historicist program of the "Cambridge School" in the history of political ideas developed by Quentin Skinner, John Dunn, John Pocock, and Richard Tuck in contrast with essentialist approaches based on Carl Schmitt radical rejection of the liberal/democratic/republican project and the notion of politics/governance, posed against the concept of the political understood as an existentialist expression of agonistic tensions between technical/technocratic constructions of (and hegemonical struggles for) "majority" and "minority"/"exclusion-inclusion". At the same time, theories and practices of emancipation, representative government and participatory democracy are analyzed here and juxtaposed with projects of empire-building, maintaining a patriarchal society and "exclusive citizenship" (enemy-

friend and "alien" logic outside and inside biopolitical states and systems of international relations, according to conceptualizations by Schmitt and his followers, like Gorgio Agamben). In addition to historiographical and contemporary debates on centrist liberalism, there is also a reference to the theoretical foundations of this program - the "developmental ontology" defined by J.S. Mill, T.H. Green, John Dewey and C.B. Macpherson, focused on positive freedom, human capabilities and the normative-economic category of well-being (Frank Cunningham, Brian Caterino, Phillip Hansen, Daniel Hausman on the one hand and Carol Gould, John Christman, Maria Dimova-Cookson, Nancy Hirschman and Ian Carter - on the other). Centrist liberalism/eudaimonistic liberalism is presented here as a result of the tension between the historical development of "negative republicanism" and a doctrine/theoretical program determined by the ideal of positive liberty ("positive republicanism") with a constant play of components of undermining and negations in the rhythm of the "Polanyian pendulum": times of egalitarianism and the "embedding/rooting" of the market in society opposed to times of "liquefaction", the domination of the market over society, laissez-faire, neoliberalism and financialization of all aspects of social-political ontology and epistemology.

Brinker, Christine A.T.
Leuphana University Lüneburg

Dynamics of Visceral and Semiotic Modes of Perception in Miyazaki's Bloodborne

One avenue through which images gain power, is via the emotional effect they either cause inherently or which has been assigned to them. I am more interested in the first, in the fundamental guttural reaction to visceral and disturbing imagery, while at the same time evoking sensations of comfort and homeliness. Freud explored this concept as *das Unheimliche*, the non-homely, the uncanny home. As these images speak to us on a visceral level, circumventing the phenomenological labour of semiotics and implications, they also remind us of our basic animality, that we remain living beings, rather than mere amalgamations of socially constructed tropes and regulations.

In this, video games present a novel way of engagement, as they ask us to engage somatically with the image. The image is not just an image, it is a representation of a virtual space. The aesthetics of the image are the aesthetics of the space we inhabit. This seems generally applicable. Elements like colour, dirt, art etc. change drastically how we perceive, interpret and thus act within a space, even if the interactions physically afforded by the space did not change. Video games merely present the chance to engage with this theme in a more stable environment, which actually can be observed and thus analysed in its entirety.

Bloodborne is a real-time action RPG, produced by Fromsoftware and directed by Hidetaka Miyazaki. In terms of art-direction and narratives, it borrows heavily from Victorian-Gothic and

Horror aesthetics, making overt references to the works of Lovecraft, Poe, Wells and Stoker. In its design of areas and monsters, Bloodborne utilises a mix of symbolism and visceral discomfort. There are monsters being crucified, their blood shared in an act of communion. A multi-story research facility evokes the terror of historical mental asylums. Alongside these historical-symbolic inspirations we can find monster designs that lean into trypophobia, arachnophobia, ophidiophobia, thalassophobia and more.

The narrative of the game actively engages with these interactions of the symbolic and the visceral. Beasts, both internal and external, are sought to be kept under control via rituals of self-discipline and aesthetics of enlightenment. The leaders of the so-called Healing Church try to transcend humanity altogether, seeking to contact the cosmic entities from beyond reality in an act of eldritch apotheosis.

In this paper, I would like to explore these interactions between conscious and subconscious perception of images and how they affect human behaviour. I am drawing inspiration from Kristeva's theories on the abject, mimetic studies as well as eco-crip and eco-queer theory. Freud's theory of the uncanny was already mentioned previously.

Butsykina, Yevheniia
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

Motherhood in Wartime: Between Iconography and Bodily Experience in Ukrainian Women's Art

This research explores two contrasting representations of motherhood in the context of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine: traditional iconography rooted in Western Christian and modern art, and the lived, embodied experiences expressed by contemporary Ukrainian women artists. While mass media and state propaganda draw upon established visual tropes of maternal suffering and protection, artists offer alternative, first-person perspectives that complicate and resist these dominant narratives. In this context, I would like to present this research within *the Images and Power* conference topic.

The war has profoundly shaped gender roles in Ukraine. Women, often crossing borders alone with children, are framed by the state as caregivers, while men are assigned the role of protectors. This binary is reinforced through pervasive imagery: the mother as giver of life, as protector, refugee, rape victim, or mourner—visual motifs echoed from the Virgin Mary to Goya's Disasters of War. Such representations, predominantly created by male artists, contribute to regressive gender dynamics, fueling post-war policies that may jeopardize reproductive rights and reinforce maternalist nationalism.

By contrast, contemporary Ukrainian artists—such as Alevtina Kakhidze, Dana Kavelina, Lesia Khomenko, Maria Kulikovska, Kateryna Lysovenko, Vlada Ralko, and others—reframe motherhood through phenomenological and feminist lenses. Their works emerge from direct experience and reflect motherhood not only as suffering or protection, but as an active negotiation with vulnerability, care, and joy amid war. These artists, whether displaced abroad or remaining in Ukraine, use art as a method of survival and meaning-making.

The study identifies two broad modes in contemporary artistic response, not as binaries but as overlapping frameworks: (1) the refugee mother, creating in exile while navigating alienation and loss, often supported by art residencies abroad; and (2) the staying mother, who reclaims bodily intimacy and sensory grounding in war zones. Exhibitions like Women at War (2022, curated by Monika Fabijanska, Chicago) and Milk for Teo (2024, curated by Oleksandra Pohrebniak, Kyiv) reflect these modes. For instance, Milk for Teo foregrounds breastfeeding as an act of hope, reclaiming the maternal body as a site of survival and future-making.

This research critically engages with Susan Sontag's notion of "regarding the pain of others," emphasizing the need to counter voyeuristic depictions with authentic, self-represented narratives. It also interrogates how aestheticization of war through maternal imagery risks depoliticizing both motherhood and the war itself. Artistic practices, in this context, become spaces for asserting subjectivity over objectification and for embodying joy and care as resistance.

In addition to Ukrainian case studies, the research draws comparative perspectives from artists responding to wars in Syria (e.g., Diala Brisly, Laila Nseir), Afghanistan (e.g., Shamsia Hassani), and Kosovo (e.g., Alketa Xhafa Mripa). Methodologically, it combines visual analysis, feminist phenomenology, and semi-structured interviews with artists and curators, supported by research in digital and physical archives (e.g., Secondary Archive, Humboldt University Library).

Chomski, Omer Chomski and Eliyahu Keller
Technion IIT

Future Imaging in Times of Crisis: Corporate Visions in WWII Advertising

In 1942, at the height of World War II, the Seagram Company published an astonishing advertisement. Promoting the company's signature whiskey, it was crowned with the title "Men Who Plan Beyond Tomorrow." Strangely, however, and above a photograph of the beverage itself, it featured an expansive metropolis in which hovering streamlined vehicles traverse single-tiered highways both above and below the ground. The city, adorned with a row of towering skyscrapers reminiscent of modernistic visions, is organized as if to leave space for the crossing cars and parking airplanes. In between, sparse tufts of grass struggle to animate the barren plazas, where not a single human disturbs the geometric perfection of this urban landscape. Below the city, dark

canals mirror the highway above, channeling sleek ferries laden with faceless, one-dimensional silhouettes—mere placeholders for future inhabitants whose faces are yet to be revealed.

Just months earlier, The Aluminum Company Of America (Alcoa) had launched its "Aluminized America" campaign, pairing two visionary posters—one depicting a multi-leveled futuristic city and the other the village of tomorrow. In the city scene, razor-thin skyscrapers and suspended bridges soar above gleaming trains and elliptical cars, all framed by meticulously arranged groves of trees tracing sweeping curves. In this future city, according to the ad, aluminum applications would "wipe out traffic bottlenecks, improve removal of sewage and waste, and make the life of the city dweller lighter, brighter, and more efficient in dozens of ways." Yet, as with Seagram's portrayal, these promised fortunate inhabitants are nowhere to be seen in the metropolis's empty streets.

Images of the future landscapes, and cities in particular, became a dominant vehicle of US corporations to mobilize the public during World War II, a period of catalyzed rapid advances in production, scientific research, and material innovation in which America's largest corporations were themselves mobilized to secure victory and prepare for peacetime prosperity. Yet the striking images that these firms produced raise more questions than answers. Why did corporate advertisers use the future to promote commodities, from aluminum to whiskey? How did these commodities and the utopian landscapes in which they appeared shaped Americans' hopes, anxieties, and sense of agency during the war and in the post-war era? Finally, what can these "futurescapes" tell us about the relationship between people, technology, and the built environment when the human subject is at once central to the narrative and conspicuously absent from the image?

This paper examines how corporate advertisements transform visions of tomorrow into powerful marketing vehicles amid a period of unprecedented technological acceleration. Just as contemporary societies grapple with profound technological changes, rising corporate influence, and geopolitical uncertainties that reveal our collective desires and anxieties about the future, much can be learned from these historical "futurescapes." Far more than mere commercial tools, these images served as mirrors reflecting cultural provocations and social contradictions. By analyzing Seagram's and Alcoa's campaigns alongside contemporaneous examples, this study invites an open-ended exploration of how images of the future function during times of crisis. In doing so, it encourages reflection on who we imagine ourselves to be within the cities we design and

Dadejík, Ondřej and Martin Kaplický
Charles University and University of Southern Bohemia

Image and Aesthetic Experience

Imagination is usually understood as a power to conjure up images or "pictures" in the mind related to previous experience, either as memories or as new images, i.e., new creations that exceed and

extend in various ways what has already been experienced. Typically, then, the concepts of image and imagination are related primarily to the visual sense and what is visible. Image is then understood as the evocation of a distinct quasi-visual image, and imagination as the faculty that makes this process possible. This commonly shared conception of imagination is the result of the long-standing prevalence of philosophical (or metaphysical) theories of the world, for which the starting point of inquiry is the distinction between *reality* and *appearance*, or *reality* and *its image*, *mind* and *body*, reason and the senses, or subject and object. For it is only in such a world that the introduction of a faculty makes sense, which, on the one hand, produces something that should be visible, that is, *images*, but which nevertheless produces them in the *mind* that cannot itself see. In such a world, it is necessary to introduce a faculty that is somewhere between the mind, located somewhere inside the body, *and* the body that is in contact with the outside, and thus mediates between thought and the senses. Otherwise, the former would remain empty without the latter, and the latter would remain blind without the former. But what does such an imagination do in moments when we do not merely recognize in our world what corresponds to an imagined pattern, shape, or form, wherever they come from? What does it do when directly involved in dynamically evolving new events? What happens to those perceptions of so-called "lower senses" and their echoes, and resonances, neglected by this oculocentrically based "mental image"?

In our paper we will try to outline a non-dualistic conception of imagination and the image, i.e. a conception for which the starting point is not a world divided into the part that can be perceived and the part that can be thought, nor a world in which the reason authoritatively decides what is real and sight, as the closest sense to it, makes all the other senses less relevant. We will attempt to introduce the concept of imagination and the image in terms of the process philosophy, drawing primarily on the work of Alfred North Whitehead, John Dewey, and Andrew Paul Ushenko. We will focus on the role of images and imagery in aesthetic experience. We will show that the reception of the aesthetic images does not have the character of a clear picture but the character of a fuzzy fusion of different feelings with clearer centers and vague peripheries. We will pay attention to the role of not only visual but also haptic, olfactory, kinesthetic, or, in other words, synesthetically perceived qualities and their "images". In this sense, we can speak about the rhythm or melody of paintings, the smell of the setting of a literary story, or the atmosphere of a musical piece.

Davidavičius, Mantas Antanas
Vytautas Magnus University

Marxist Image of Nature in the Soviet Union: From the War Against Nature to Ecomarxist Attempts

Even though Marxism's relation to the utopian thinking is a well known fact, the interpretations of their relation are usually limited to considerations in the socio-economical sphere. Thus, it is often overlooked that Marxism had a very distinct approach to nature, and for quite a while –

approached the natural world through aggressive utopian imagery, ideology and symbolism. I am proposing to examine the Soviet transformations of the ideal image of natural environments. I will do this examination by analysing a transition from the orthodox Marxist-Leninist ideal of human-formed nature, to the emergence of ecological ethics and neo-romanticist notions in nature images of the late Soviet era. The first of the aforementioned approaches will be treated as arising from a literal implementation of the late works of Marx and Engels, which became a Soviet ideological standard of the relationship with the natural environment, known in the West as "Lysenkoism". This approach encouraged an ideological fight against nature and naturality, mastering the nature and completing the nature's incompleteness. In this framework, nature was viewed both as a material of labour and labour's product, while labour itself appeared as a world-shaping force. The fusion of the concepts of nature and labour in the imagery justified grandiose projects of nature's reconstruction: from deliberate climate change, to river reversals and the conversion of deserts into fields. Meanwhile, the second approach – that of the late Soviet period – instead advocated for a utilitarian "stewardship" attitude toward nature. This part of the presentation will demonstrate that the decline of Lysenkoism in academic philosophy during the late Soviet era allowed for a reconsideration of the relationship between labour and nature, enabling images of Nature which break free from orthodox Marxist interpretation. By relegating labour to second place in the hierarchy of values, space was created for the a new ideal image, allowing some ecosophical thought. During this time, philosophical works inspired by Western authors - proposing alternative relationships with nature - began to be published in the Soviet Union. However, this second approach, while partially rejecting the values of the earlier model, could not - due to the internal constraints of Marxism - fully transition to a purely Western model of ecosophy. Thus, the ideal image of nature in the late Soviet period was a rather unique and contradictory synthesis of Marxism and western ecological thought. The whole transformation of this relation shows a transition from an image which is all-powerful basis of Utopia, to an image, which attempts to move towards more mimetic relationship with the surroundings yet retaining some qualities of the previously held approach.

Dimitrijevic, Ivan
SWPS University, Warsaw

Beyond or Before Words? Some Remarks on the Use of Images in Philosophy

Staring from "atopon eikonon" of the Cave, as Glaucon said, in the VII Book of The Republic, all the way through the images of the state of nature, the invisible hand, the veil of ignorance, philosophers have resorted to images surprisingly often. Are images additional arguments the purpose of which is to empower the rational argumentation a thinker had already developed independently from the image itself? Are they used because they resist to rational inconsistency? Can images then be reduced back to words? Or do they carry the thought beyond the words?

Finally, aren't they the ground from which decisive philosophical doctrines stem as their ratification?

In this paper I will try to answer to some among these questions by analyzing two images of Nietzsche's "doctrine" of eternal recurrence. Firstly, I will refer to the image of the demon from The Gay Science (§ 341). Then I will move to the image from The Convalescent from the III Book of Thus Spoke Zarathustra. There Zarathustra, who was lying in his cave for seven days, is indeed discussing with his animals about the inability of words to express the truth ("It is a beautiful folly, speaking: with it humans dance over all things").

I will argue that the two images (which are also semantically related) cannot be reduced neither to a cosmological, nor to a normative interpretation of the doctrine of eternal recurrence. These images represent a visual test one needs to overcome in order to gain happy life and this is the "meaning", a visual meaning, of Nietzsche's doctrine – given that images speak more than words and are harder to manipulate by means of rational (or sophistic) reasoning.

Doroszenko, Michał
University of Warsaw

Image-Example of Hermaphrodite. The Ancient Movement at the Center of Modern Medicine

For centuries the image of a hermaphrodite has been a non-image, given only by whispers and shadows that purposefully omitted discussing bodies (Foucault 1980). Such strategy was no accident, but can be called procedures of care, which indicate and maintain that which is fragile and important precisely by its omission. Thus, the image of hermaphrodite was a non-image, understood not as a lack of an image, but as an image that appears, in a way, by movement. The 19th century sees a rapid fall of this tradition (Mak 2012, ch. 3), which is being quickly replaced by new images which are made by medical and photographic imagining (Malatino 2019; Dreger 2003).

Hito Steyerl has given the most intuitive interpretation of this change: the body in the 20th century has become its image and techniques of its production, thus creating unsolvable paradox of medical-technological image which is yours precisely because it is not yours (Steyerl 2013, ch. 5). While this line of though calls for Lacanian or Maxist analysis, those simply lead to acceptance of the real-law divide. We must look past it. Here I propose a history of hermaphrodite as a history of movement, which has the advantage of indicating new emancipatory practices beyond those frameworks.

The ancient image of Hermaphrodite as given by Ovid in Metamorphoses (Book IV, 346-388) was quite simply what Aristotle called analogon: a movement between particulars. Hermaphrodite was created thru an analogy to two elements (male and female) by ambidirectional movement.

Moreover, the function of analogon becomes quite special, as Agamben reminds us, because it is an example that identifies other examples by analogy (Agamben 2008). Thus ancients proposed two types of hermaphrodite: the real one, which is the particular literary image, and pseudo-hermaphrodite, which is a group organized by the real hermaphrodite (Neugebauer 1908, p. 2). This model existed until the 19th century (Laqueur 1992).

This takes us to Bergson and his thesis on two types of movement, which explain why 19th century medicine rises against silence that long allowed lives of hermaphrodites. The ancient model was concerned with two points, the start and the finish, which thus presented movement's meaning. It was thus understood that hermaphrodite, as is evident in Ovid, is not a subject in itself, but only by virtue of two genders between which it moves – thus many centuries of silence. Modern understanding of movement refutes this claim: it understands movement in all its moments; devalues starting and finishing points; and refuses the claim that movement can be reconstructed at all (Deleuze 1989, ch. 1).

This gives rise to special use of hermaphrodites in modern medicine: the establishment of modern gender spectrum, understood as ambidiretional movement, but contrary to Ancient ideas, now the spectrum bears all the meaning. The hermaphrodite becomes the perfect example of the spectrum, an image of a movement that all bodies should embody. Thus gender emancipation needs to refute as well the Ancient movement at the core of medicine: Aristotelian gender spectrum.

Dybel, Paweł
Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw

Hans Bellmer's Doll Photographs and Nazism

Hans Bellmer was a prominent German artist, born in Katowice in 1902, associated with French Surrealism, who in the 1930s enthralled the representatives of this current with his photographs of dolls. Their peculiarity lay in the fact that, breaking with the way female dolls' bodies had been depicted in the hitherto tradition of visual arts, he gave them a strongly deformed and disfigured form. This way of presenting women's bodies, which had clear traces of sado-masochism, also had an important political dimension. It struck at the canons imposed on artists by the Nazis in 1930s Germany, according to which they were supposed to depict women's bodies. Those who did not meet these requirements in their creations were regarded as representatives of degenerate art and persecuted in various ways.

In my presentation, I would like to confront two different approaches to the political dimension of Bellmer's puppet creations by feminist-minded authors: Theresa Lichtenstein, author of a monograph on Bellmer's art, and Susanne Baackmann. They differ fundamentally in their interpretations of the meaning of these creations and in their conclusions. This difference eloquently reflects the controversy that still surrounds the reception of Bellmer's work in the art critic community today.

Dzioba, Damian
SWPS University, Warsaw

Between Memories and Pictures: Meaning-Focused Interventions Using Images of the Past and Present

Human tendency to evaluate the past and envision a better future - especially during critical periods of life - has been a subject explored by countless artists, philosophers, and scientists. Physical images, foggy memories of the past, or visualizations of what is to come are often seen as coping mechanisms that help individuals endure present hardships or even enhance overall satisfaction with life.

Relaxation and therapeutic techniques that fundamentally work with imagery, such as guided imagery (GI), and its music-enhanced variant (GIM), are well-documented for their ability to improve well-being and reduce symptoms of stress and depression (Beck et al., 2015; Jerling & Heyns, 2020; Krau, 2020).

More interestingly, recent literature on meaning-based interventions - designed to deliberately enhance a sense of meaning in life - suggests the effectiveness of image-focused techniques in supporting more existential and eudaimonic aspects of well-being (Manco, 2021; Steger, 2022). One such intervention involved the use of physical photographs of objects that held subjective meaning for participants, resulting in increased life meaning, life satisfaction, and positive affect (Steger, 2014). This study was later replicated and extended to an online format with similar results (Van Zyl et al., 2020).

Other meaning-based interventions commonly use nostalgia and past imagery to support meaning through increasing feelings of social connectedness, narrative construction of life stories, and motivation toward meaningful life goals (Sedikides et al., 2018; Sedikides & Wildschut, 2018; Abeyta & Pillarisetty, 2023; Yin et al., 2024).

The purpose of this presentation is to review current literature on meaning-based interventions that employ different forms of imagery, aligning with the theme of the conference: "The Psychology of the Image."

Freedman, Daniel A.
Uzhhorod National University

VGORAY Platform

In contemporary visual culture, images increasingly saturate perception, often overwhelming cognitive filters and emotional regulation mechanisms. This project proposes a radical departure from image-based visuality toward an experiential modality grounded in interferential light and

ambient sound immersion. Building upon the VGORAY platform and the Harmonic LaserSound Immersion (VHLSI) methodology developed by the SMART City Institute, we explore how polychromatic laser interference patterns, void of figurative imagery, can engage perceptual and emotional processing differently than conventional visual representations. Instead of representing objects or narratives, the fluctuating, rhythmically modulated fields of light invite participants into non-verbal cognitive engagement, focusing attention on sensory resonance, embodied perception, and neuroaesthetic flow. Pilot studies using the Perceived Restorativeness Scale (PRS) demonstrated that exposure to structured light-sound environments enhances emotional clarity, reduces cognitive fatigue, and facilitates attentional recalibration. These findings suggest that light as dynamic interference, rather than static image, can serve as a tool for emotional regulation and cognitive restoration. This presentation proposes a redefinition of the visual encounter: away from semiotic overload toward sensory purification. In doing so, it interrogates the power and limitations of traditional imagery and proposes an alternative model of affective-cognitive visuality that may have profound implications for education, therapy, and immersive art practices.

Garrison, James
University of Massachusetts Lowell

A Gu That's Not a Gu: The End of Art in China?

"A gu that is not a gu! A gu, indeed! A gu, indeed!" – Confucius (Analects §6.25)

When is a Gu not a Gu? Well, when this ritual drinking vessel is not used in drinking rituals (perhaps because it's behind glass in a museum). A related question arises: When is music not music? Confucianism traditionally maintains that music ceases being music proper when it is lewd and creates social chaos instead of social harmony. In working out this idea, Confucian philosophy offers considerable resources for addressing a major issue in contemporary philosophy of art—indiscernibility.

Photography, mechanical reproduction, found art, and the like have all led to a crisis of "indiscernibles" in the artworld, whereby anything might be art, thereby ending the narrative of art's quest to define itself, per Arthur Danto's influential "end of art" thesis. However, careful consideration of cultural expression in Confucian East Asia indicates that there might be more to the story.

Consider the Confucian connection between ritual, music, and the so-called rectification of names. Within this framework, which is a major fundament of East Asian culture, there is a deep-seated prohibition on anything being art, such that art is continually defined through and/or against unfolding political definitions of symbolic life.

Hence, where indiscernibles might be a concern in a Confucian context, the primary issue is not the artwork, but with the ethical implications and political fallout of having a person lay claim to a title which they have not earned in practice and where the concern for rectifying names, ritual,

art, and symbolic existence is about preventing negative outcomes on the ethical/political level. It will therefore be shown that the kind of "indifference" and "complete anaesthesia" of which Danto speaks is a conceptual non-starter where art meets politics in contemporary East Asia (and China specifically).

Zyzik, Grzegorz
University of Opole

Corona Astralis and the Sisters. Poetry as the Source of World-Building in Tension

My speech will focus on the relationship between poems of Maximilian Voloshin and computer game Tension. It is my belief that Voloshin's Corona Astralis cycle represents the earliest germination of the ideas that would eventually become Tension. I think that a critical analysis of the poem will reveal that developers from Ice-Pick Lodge almost certainly were inspired to create the game based on the contents of the poem, and returned to text many times for guidance during the creation of the game. The plot, the characters, the tone, even the mechanics of the game can be found in a foetal state in Voloshin's poem. It's my belief that the poem is best interpreted as a whole, and as reflective of the beginning of the game- not the start of the narrative, but the very inception of Tension. To that end my speech, I will be taking the poem's utilized verses and be attempting to suss out how they manifest themselves in the finished version of the story and game. My central thesis is that Tension reflects the identity of the player. Each player's actions are related to how the game text is read. In the conclusion of my speech I am going to outline the possibilities of using Computer games in discovering identity.

Khachatryan, Marina
Blisko Siebie Center for Diagnosis, Therapy, and Support

The Power of the Image in the Courtroom - How Visual Narratives Shape Perceptions of Guilt and Innocence

In the age of visual culture, images play a fundamental role in shaping social consciousness, particularly within the justice system. Photographs of defendants, footage of arrests, or visualizations of evidence presented in court, though perceived as neutral documents, have the potential to strongly influence perceptions of guilt or innocence. This presentation analyzes the mechanisms of visual representation of accused individuals, demonstrating how images shape social attitudes, affect judges' and jurors' decisions, and manipulate public opinion.

Psychological research, such as Goffman's (1974) work on identity framing and Entman's (1993) theory of selective exposure, shows that the way a defendant is portrayed—e.g., images in handcuffs or unfavorable poses—creates unconscious biases and stereotypes. These images

reinforce negative associations with criminality, even when guilt has not been proven. High-profile cases, such as O.J. Simpson in the USA or well-known Polish trials where media visually "convicted" suspects prior to verdicts, highlight the power of images as elements shaping public narrative and social stigma.

A particularly significant phenomenon is "social conviction"—when a person, despite later acquittal, is regarded as guilty by public opinion based on media imagery. An example is the Justin Carter case (USA), where the media portrayal as a brutal criminal dominated public perception despite insufficient evidence. Similar cases in Poland and other countries underscore how visual power can precede formal justice and negatively impact defendants' lives. Moreover, strong public opinion pressure and the risk of social vigilantism can indirectly influence the court's stance. In cases of intense media attention and social pressure, judges and prosecutors may feel compelled to consider societal expectations, potentially leading to harsher sentences or procedural decisions even when objective evidence is ambiguous. Thus, the power of the image and visual narratives not only shape perceptions of defendants but also materially affect trial proceedings and outcomes. The presentation also draws on forensic psychology literature, where studies by Bradfield (2002) and Bornstein & Miller (1996) demonstrate the influence of defendants' appearance on verdicts— the "halo effect" and aesthetic biases often determine the severity of rulings, undermining objectivity. At the same time, visual evidence presented without context and critical interpretation can lead to misuse and injustice. The conclusion emphasizes the need for ethical reflection on the role of images in judicial proceedings. Recommendations for legal regulations and practices will be discussed, highlighting the responsibilities of media, the justice system, and expert witnesses in preventing visual manipulation. Education and public awareness play a key role in mitigating the negative effects of visual power

Koncka, Aleksandra
University of Warsaw

Screening and Overshadowing: Adaptation as a Struggle for Power in Sherlock Holmes (2013)

This paper is an examination of the tension between an adaptation and its original, as well as between reality and fiction, on the example of the mini-series Sherlock Holmes (dir. Andrei Kavun).

The image of Sherlock Holmes is among the most famous and recognizable in fiction. Though it originated in the stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, its nature has been augmented by numerous subsequent adaptations to the point of becoming something of a myth – an already fictional character fictionalized further and further. The mini-series Sherlock Holmes subjects its titular detective to a similar process. The series presents a version of Holmes completely unlike Doyle's

character, only to show Doctor Watson gradually reinventing the original version of the detective in his stories. By focusing on Watson's role as an author – not a biographer, but a creative writer – the series explores the influence that fiction has over fact: the power of words and images to superimpose themselves over the malleable reality. Simultaneously, the artifice behind these images is exposed, as the well-known figure of Sherlock Holmes turns out to be not the detective's faithful literary reflection, but rather a distorted, romanticized echo, painstakingly constructed by Watson and his nameless, yet remarkably influential editor.

The metafictional approach to the source material distinguishes this adaptation from the numberless others. By inserting the original text into the world of the adaptation, the series creates a world and a person doomed to be overwritten, stripped of their identity and usurped by a fictional narrative. This paper is concerned not only with Sherlock Holmes, the emblematic figure of detective fiction, but also with the broader issue of a phenomenon (be it fact or fiction) being overthrown and replaced by an image more powerful than itself.

Księżopolska, Irena
University of Warsaw

Seeing Double: The Strange Case of Godkin Twins in John Banville's Birchwood

John Banville has been called the most visual contemporary writer, channeling the verbal into the visual image that gains an uncanny power over one's imagination. The strange aspect of his writing, however, is that while his images are incredibly vivid, wonderfully sensual and irresistibly captivating, there is at the same time a penumbral, underdeveloped quality to his descriptions which helps sustain ambiguity in everything that happens in the narrative and enhances the ambivalence of meaning lying beyond these plots and characters. For instance, a faded photograph with an almost invisible face of a "girl lost in time" appears in Birchwood and triggers the key events in its plot; in an epiphanic moment, the narrator, Gabriel Godkin, keeps shutting and opening his eyes, fragmenting the movement of ordinary life into separate snapshots; a woman ascends the stairway backwards, as if a film was being rewound in front of the reader's eyes. These and similar images, slightly out of focus, and yet somehow radiant and unforgettable, seem to structure all Banville's novels, and his narrators – usually unpleasant, cruel and fraudulent men, inward and self-obsessed – are yet possessed of a rare sensitivity and remarkable memory, which seems to almost redeem them. These figures constructed of voices are the malevolent demiurges, playing the "Godkin games", that is, the games of word(l)s, fashioning their universes according to their own desires.

This paper will examine the role of image and voice in Banville's Birchwood, seeking to answer the following questions: why is the narrator so obsessed with doubles? why does he speak so frequently in a way that fractures reality, re-distributing its particles across time and space? and what, if anything, is stable, actual, and unquestionable in this fiction of (non)existence? The proposed reading will rework the current critical consensus on the novel in a radical way,

suggesting that the entire plot is bogus, that the narrator's twin brother, Michael, exists only as an image made up of words – that is, has no actual existence within the story world, that the middle part of the novel ("Air and Angels") is an elaborate fantasy meant to replace grim reality, and that Gabriel Godkin attempts to warp the images he is unable to forget by refracting them through tinted lenses, cracked and tilted mirrors, and borrowed stories.

Lipszyc, Adam
Polish Academic of Sciences Warsaw

A Terrible Interpretation of the Stars: Image, Seduction and Anxiety in Clemens J. Setz

In "The Cat Lives in Lalande's Sky", a Sebaldian short story by the contemporary Austrian writer Clemens J. Setz, a painter named Conradi is haunted by a terrifying image: the constellation of the Big Lad that a man once showed to Conradi and that the painter cannot unsee. The narrator of the story, a writer troubled by an overwhelming anxiety, attempts to reconstruct Conradi's life path and, as the result, he also yields to the terrible seduction of the image, a fate that – perhaps – is also something that we, readers, are meant to share. In my talk, by referring to Benjamin on constellations and dialectical images, Wittgenstein on 'seeing as', as well as Didi-Huberman on tear-images, I shall try to describe and measure the function and the power of the image which stands at the heart of Setz's story and which can tell us much about the interplay between text and image in general.

Lisowska, Małgorzata
Value Based Healthcare Center Europe (Poland)

Transforming Visual Narrative in Oncology Through Artistic Microscopic Photography

Contemporary image culture has particular significance in the medical context, where visual representations can inform and shape illness experiences. In oncology, the oppressive visual layer and war narrative dominate, deepening fear and isolation. This presentation introduces a project using artistic microscopic photography to transform cancer perception and increase prevention awareness.

The project began after my diagnosis with triple-negative breast cancer in February 2023. Facing social exclusion and the dominant fighting narrative, I photographed my own cancer cells, creating artistic microscopic images. Instead of seeing monsters with pincers, I discovered dancing cells of surprising beauty. This changed my relationship with the disease – replacing fighting with acceptance, approaching treatment with tenderness and self-love.

The project gained international recognition in 2023. I won 3rd place in the Nikon Small World competition, the world's most prestigious microscopy photography contest with a 50-year history.

This achievement marked Poland's return to the podium after 31 years. My cancer cells formed in a heart shape became a manifesto of life, initiating a new visual narrative in oncology.

I created a series of artistic microscopic photographs of my cancer cells (from biopsy), tissue after 16 chemotherapy treatments, and healthy cells following single mastectomy, creating the exhibition History Written in the Body in Three Acts (2024). Currently, I collaborate with the National Institute of Oncology in Warsaw, artistically imaging historical cancer specimens from the 1930s-50s.

The presentation analyzes how alternative microscopic imaging can transform cancer perception – from fear-inducing to an integral part of human life. This project combines art and science to build a new narrative, reducing fear associated with illness and death while promoting cancer prevention.

In the broader context of image culture, microscopic photography democratizes medical knowledge, making the invisible visible. It enables patients to confront their disease at the cellular level, transforming cancer from an abstract threat into a concrete experience.

The project proposes a new visual paradigm where authentic microscopic images of cancers, presented artistically, complement dominant medical narratives, supporting patients in treatment and social reintegration.

I look forward to sharing my perspective, which has demonstrated significant social impact through transforming oncological narratives and making microscopic cancer imagery accessible to broader audiences.

Szostek, Mateusz
University of Warsaw

Kitsch and the Politics of Visual Seduction: Literary (De)Construction of Power in Milan Kundera's The Unbearable Lightness of Being

The exploration examines the literary deconstruction of visual power structures in Milan Kundera's The Unbearable Lightness of Being, focusing on kitsch's symbolic and ideological role. In the novel, kitsch is not merely a pejorative aesthetic category but a profound metaphor for the mechanisms by which political systems construct appealing, yet manipulative images of reality. Kundera's work is deeply situated in the visual-verbal interplay: the author transforms literature into a medium through which the deceptive seductiveness of ideological imagery is revealed and dismantled.

Framed within the socio-political context of Soviet totalitarianism, the paper analyzes how Kundera's characters—especially Sabina, a visual artist—negotiate their identities through their relationship to state-imposed images. Sabina's refusal to conform to the aesthetic of "socialist

realism" and her creation of layered, paradoxical artworks serve as acts of resistance against the totalizing logic of kitsch. Her visual expression, underpinned by the metaphor of the torn canvas, embodies the struggle to reclaim individual vision from the aestheticized, homogenous collective. In contrast, Franz, a Western intellectual, becomes ensnared by the romantic image of resistance itself, thus illustrating the cross-cultural reach of ideological kitsch beyond the Iron Curtain.

The paper argues that The Unbearable Lightness of Being offers a powerful case study of how literature can expose the seductive visual strategies used by power structures, including the use of cliché, sentimentality, and oversimplified imagery. Kundera's metafictional techniques—such as direct philosophical commentary, narrative interruptions, and ironic contrasts—disassemble the ideological spectacles of marches, parades, and national myths, revealing their dehumanizing core.

In dialogue with the conference themes—especially Literature (De)Constructions of Image—this analysis highlights how literary texts contribute to the critique of visual culture by making the invisible apparatuses of ideological image-making visible. By unmasking kitsch as the aesthetic ideal of all authoritarian movements—left or right—Kundera articulates a warning against the misuse of images to enforce conformity, suppress dissent, and manipulate collective memory. The novel ultimately exemplifies how literature can operate as a counter-image, restoring ambiguity, complexity, and emotional integrity in the face of totalitarian spectacle

Mažeikis, Gintautas
Vytautas Magnus University

Susana Buck-Morss' Negative Dialectics of Images

The paper answers the question "What does the negative dialectic of icons mean? The answer will be formulated through the analysis of Buck-Morss texts in the context of critical iconology. The example of the photography of A. Sutkus will be presented. Buck-Morss has done extensive research on the Critical Theory in general and on W. Benjamin's visual interpretations and T. Adorno's negative dialectics in particular. She builds on Benjamin's argument to develop a dialectical methodology for interpreting and translating images into philosophical language. In describing her intellectual strategy, Buck-Morss interprets Benjamin and joins him in calling for "a new critical analysis of the 'image as social object' in which theory itself becomes visual practice". She argues that the contradictory and intertwined autonomy, narrative and metaphoricity of visual images contribute to a shared understanding of twentieth-century history, but that this requires a dialectical theory of the image. Urbanist images are assimilated during their planning, inhabitation and assembly (walking, flâneur), or, I would add, in the case of photography, through the creation of inter-iconic compositions and comparative analysis. Like the actions of building and drawing, or photography and film, philosophical visual practice is similar. Each image and its evolution have a certain autonomy and internal logic, independent of the architect, the artist and

the interpreter. This is what makes the dialectic of the image possible. Images can move freely both inside and outside an urban, photographic or cinematic context.

They are autonomous from their history of origin and development. The portability, interpretability, empathy, comparability and transformability of the image are more important. Following both Benjamin and Adorno, Buck-Morss emphasises that the image is a contradiction in itself, presenting itself as an original work of art and at the same time negating its own value by emphasising the role of experience, which is different from the image. The artistic image allows a creative experience that corresponds to the many consonances and shades of the work of art. The autonomous character of images, their dependence on the play of analogies, emancipates our memory and allows a creative experience between the gap or absence of adequacy. On the contrary, an adequate understanding does not mean an artistic truth, but an enslavement to coercive discourse, propaganda or PR.

Marzurek, Antonina
University of Warsaw

"Even Worse Than Death": The Infernal Power Cycle in Arkady and Boris Strugatskys's Inhabited Island

This paper aims to analyse how Arkady and Boris Strugatsky construct the concept of power in their 1969 science fiction novel *Inhabited Island*. The text will be viewed as a reflection of the reality in which it was created, that is, the Soviet regime with all its absurdities, calamities and abuses, its terror, oppression and the propaganda machine. In *Inhabited Island*, the totalitarian state dominates its citizens via mind control, which can be seen as an overstated equivalent of propaganda. The mechanism of oppression appears to be unbreakable: in order to free the people from the effects of mind control, one would have to re-educate them using the exact same methods of enforcement, thus creating a vicious cycle of abuse, and eventually, one would presume, leading to the re-establishment of authoritarian system. Thus, through a series of interconnected images, *Inhabited Island* makes a commentary on issues that seem particularly relevant in the contemporary political context. This paper aims to examine such topics as the relationship between language and power, the question of who may hold the authority, and whether it is possible to get rid of illusions and delusions in a system that deliberately isolates itself by shifting itself into the realm of organised (and carefully supervised) fantasy. It will also scrutinize the way the text delves into the concepts of power and freedom, questioning the traditional definitions which seem to lose meaning under the pressure of total control. The paper will also consider the alternative title under which the novel first appeared in English, *Prisoners of Power*, alongside other metalinguistic aspects of the text. The genre of science fiction, famed for its capacity to generate powerful images that implant themselves into the readers' imagination, will be treated as a useful framework for reflection upon, and insight into, the society in which *Inhabited Island* was created, its anxieties

and falsified identity, both amorphous and overdetermined, and the replication of these aspects in totalitarian Russia of the 2020s.

Meredith, Cecylia
University of Warsaw

The Shadow of the Waxwing and Other Avian Imagery Across the Works of Vladimir Nabokov and Joanna Newsom

Pale Fire, a poem in heroic couplets, of nine hundred ninety-nine lines, composed by John Francis Shade during the last twenty days of his life, opens with an image of a bird, killed in collision with a windowpane. This waxwing – fragile, fleeting, dead – is a powerful visual motif present throughout the poem. Serving as both the beginning and the implicit ending of this cyclical text, the image of the bird is rendered central to understanding the whole of Pale Fire. The shadow of the waxwing slain finds its way to other literary and musical works. In the oeuvre of Joanna Newsom, it is arguably cast over each one of the poems. Although an explicit waxwing is hardly the first bird to appear, only mentioned in one of the final tracks of the third studio album, it is possible to trace every preceding and following avian reference back to Nabokov's novel. Newsom borrows this image, reworking it and inscribing it with new meanings, while remaining firmly in dialogue with its origin.

Larks, loons, canaries, and magpies are set to the sky in virtually every song. The 2015 album, Divers, drawing on Shadeian cyclicality, is built entirely around the call of a mourning dove. Yet, birds are hardly the thematic focus - they might be better understood as elements of an audiovisual language, facilitating discussions of grief, loss, and mortality.

Newsom has created her own unique avian alphabet and bird-based poetics. This paper explores how that language emerges through sustained, intertextual engagement with Nabokov's Pale Fire, by which bird imagery becomes a layered symbol of power. Tracing the flight path of the waxwing through both artists' works, it considers the power of avian imagery for poetic creation and its power to aestheticize grief, negotiate with mortality, and strive toward connection with the beyond.

Morawski, Karol
University of Wrocław

Perplexing Images. The Dynamics of the People and Imaginal Hegemonies

The fundamental aim of the presentation is to reconceptualise the problematic politicity of images in a theoretical perspective organised according to a popular-hegemonic centre. In other words, my intention is to identify a political experience highlighting the ambivalent role of images against the backdrop of the dynamics of popular subjects as polymorphous and hegemonically constructed

entities in relevant politico-social contexts in which both the people and various images are positive/negative agents.

The basic theses of the presentation are as follows: 1. images have always accompanied politics, nevertheless nowadays – with the development of technological and communicative infrastructure (new technologies, social media, artificial intelligence) and in the light of currently occurring phenomena and processes and worrying anticipations (e.g. migration crisis, populism, armed conflicts) – their problematic status is intensified and their power expansively maximised; 2. the image is a tool, site and witness of political antagonisms, open to hegemonic and counter-hegemonic interventions, appropriations, transformations – this is shown by the political rhetoric of images implying valorisations and devalorisations of the people, their nature, forms of mobilisation, effects of political action; 3. the people is the nodal point of the political field that focuses multidimensional conflicts, dilemmas and doctrines – its dynamics intersect with those of democracy, populism, nationalism, collective memory, or politically engaged art. My argument is related – among other things – to the following questions: how are we to treat images given their overabundance, overproduction, growing cultural domination? in what ways does the construction of the people make use of images?; what are the images of the people?; what are the possible forms of popular resistance in the context of imaginal hegemony?

Papedinskas, Tomas
Vytautas Magnus University

Rock March Festivals in Photography as Symbolic Representation of Political Changes

The period of Reform Movement of Lithuania (1988–1990) is established in institutional and collective memory of Lithuanian society by the photographs of important political events. However, only a few photographs of "Rock March" music festivals (an important part of Reform Movement) are published in the albums dedicated to these historical events, although their symbolic importance is equal to the pictures of political events. The paper discusses Virgilijus Usinavičius-Augulis' photographs of "Rock March" in years 1987 and 1988. They are analyzed from anthropologic perspective as images of liminal rituals in the wider context of historical development of rock subculture in Lithuania.

The paper argues, that culturally and historically associated with the ideas of freedom and resistance, rock music in the 1980s was particularly suitable for spreading the ideas of freedom and the specific political goals of the Reform Movement of Lithuania. Rock march festivals openly and officially linked rock music with political goals, and the rock subculture became a broader cultural phenomenon, significant for a large part of society. "Rock Marches" were an important part of the Reform Movement of Lithuania events, one of the rituals of transformation during the transitional period, which helped to unite society, symbolically express changes and consolidate them in the changing social and political reality. Photography also significantly contributed to this

process of change not only by symbollically representing it, but reinforcing it with unifying images of nation's strive for freedom. Today this kind of photographs can function as icnonc images, which awaken or create a collective historical memory.

Personeau-Conway, Sandy
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

The Visual Force of Sesame Street

While children's TV shows have evolved over time in terms of function, form, and distribution, they remain popular forms of mediated entertainment. Thus, they stand as important elements of not only cultural transmission and construction, but also critique. In this project, I examine how the U.S.-originated children's show *Sesame Street* uses visual imagery to speak back to issues of systemic inequities, particularly in the ways it addresses disability. The show is known for addressing important and sometimes-challenging topics, or topics that young people might associate with big feelings, such as parental addiction, death, or the birth of a sibling. Throughout *Sesame Street*'s broadcast history, viewers have watched characters with both visible and invisible disabilities with somewhat regularity (compared to other shows in the same genre). For example, in 2017, Julia—a girl muppet with Autism—joined the cast. Recently, the show welcomed Abbey and David, two human guests, who also star in the Netflix reality series "Love on the Spectrum." This project positions *Sesame Street* as a consequential mode of public pedagogy, in which viewers are presented with images that have an educational function, just as much as the dialogue and explicitly educational content. Additionally, this project is relevant to the theme of "Images and Power," as it asks how images of disability and ability serve to make possible a spectrum of cognitive and physical modalities of being human. This speaks to the power of images in social and mediated space.

Potaczała, Rafał
University of Wrocław

The Iconography of Blood Libel – Tool of the Antisemitic Propaganda Which Lasts to date? Exemplified by the Iconography of Andreas of Rinn

Iconography of blood libel served for almost 900 years as one of the most significant tool in an antisemitic propaganda. Still to this day, in some places, man can hear the stories about Jews kidnapping Christian children in order to use their blood to make the Passover bread.

In my presentation, I will focus on the longevity of the lie of the blood libel, focusing on the iconography and long-lasting cult of Andreas of Rinn. The legend of Andreas was created around 1620 by Trient-born humanist, doctor, historian and hagiographer – Hyppolytus Guarinoni. The

story takes a lot from the most famous legend of the blood libel – the one of Simon of Trient. Guarinoni was a strong-believing Catholic, raised in the cult of Simon. It's not a coincidence that he used exactly this legend to create the story of Andreas. Not only the history of the martyr but also his iconography takes a lot from the story of Simon. The earliest known illustrations of Andreas's legend come from year 1658. Composition of the copperplate is strongly inspired by the earlier compositions depicting story of Simon (for example the earliest known from 1475). It creates also its own compositions related to the events from Andreas's story. The most significant cycle for the iconography of Andreas was a series of copperplates attatched in Ausführliche Beschreibung der Marter, Eines heiligen und unschuldigen Kinds Andreæ, von Rinn, written around 1724 by Ignatz Zach. Graphics were created by Jakob Andreas Friedrich after designs of Josef Anton Funk. Artist from the workshop of Mildorfer family, used them to create the frescos in Visitation of Mary church in Judenstein around 1720 – the church previously devoted to Andreas. Series of 5 paintings depicted the most significant events from the legend. On commission of the bishop of Innsbruck – Reinhold Stecher, in 1989, Tirolian artist - Wolfram Köberl, covered the most brutal fresco – the scene of blood libel. The scene was replaced by the new one – Jesus among children. The situation was the outcome of a conflict between groups of priests and congregation. Although the cult of victims of the blood libel was officially abolished by the second Council of Vatican, there was still a group of people, who continued Andreas's cult in Tirol. The situation was very tense. Finally, almost at the same time when the blood libel fresco was covered, priest Gottfier Melzer published a book entitled Das selige Kind Andreas von Rinn. Ein wahrer Märtyer der katolischen Kirche – a book that recognizes Andreas as a real victim of Jewish violence.

Puczyńska, Weronika
University of Wrocław

Aby Warburg and the Woman as a Symbol of Power - Symbols as a Carrier of Psycho-Social

As Aby Warburg suggests, the symbols contained in gestures and facial expressions could be seen as carriers of the history of an era, which is made up of emotional factors (the dominant social group or tendency, the mood of the place). Art is perhaps an escalation of the inexpressible, namely the emotional-empirical charge. It is interesting to consider the role of the visual arts in reflecting the memory of culture, and the potential for providing a structure for the art of later eras. At the same time, it is worth noting that the patterns developed earlier in antiquity can be seen in the iconography of the arts of later eras, and they appear to carry the same symbolic charge.

It has been suggested that the figures known as the Caryatids, as well as Athena and Artemis, could be interpreted as representing women as 'bearers of order'. It is possible that the gesture could be perceived as a display of power, or perhaps a subtle indication of gaze or body posture. If I may, I would like to take the examples given and run with them. Nike of Samothrace - Nike of Warsaw

(victory, woman as symbol of military and spiritual power, Athena - Freedom Leading the People to the Barricades (woman warrior, strategist, guide), Medea - Judith (Gentileschi) - (woman as avenger, ambivalent force), Artemis - Diana (Boucher - classicism) - (independence, ferocity, force of nature). It is hoped that these examples will serve to illustrate the apologia that frames art-historical analysis on the basis of Warburg's methodology. If I may, I would like to suggest that I focus my paper on the role of women in ancient art, exploring their situations from a power perspective, which I believe could be of interest. I would like to think that this could be the beginning of a new way of looking at art, which could open up new divisions. It has been suggested that the initiated history of art and culture is an infinite psycho-social memory expressed through art, as demonstrated by the metaphor of the infinite Memosine Atlas, which Warburg did not complete.

Puhachenko, Marharyta
Borys Grinchenko Kiev University

The Evolution of Traditional Ukrainian Glass Jewelry from Its Origins to the Present Day

Jewelry has accompanied humanity since ancient times, fulfilling aesthetic, sacred, and social functions. It served as a symbol of status, a protective talisman, a marker of ethnic identity, and a means of communication within society. Glass jewelry, in particular, also reflects the technological development of civilizations, offering valuable insights into the technological progress of a society during a given period and its place in the global history of decorative and applied arts.

The earliest glass accessories found on the territory of modern Ukraine date back to the 6th BCE and were closely connected with the cultures of the Northern Black Sea region (Ostroverkhov, 2001: 15).

During the existence of Kyivan Rus and the Principality of Galicia-Volhynia, there was a notable technological breakthrough in glass production, including the invention of crystal glass (Shchapova, 1977: 246). Medieval craftsmen employed various techniques such as casting, stretching, blowing, winding, and pressing. They produced glass bracelets, necklaces, rings, and enamel jewelry, demonstrating strong ties with Byzantine artistic traditions (Rozhankivskyi, 1959: 13).

Each historical period is distinguished by characteristic imagery and styles of jewelry. For instance, bracelets reached their greatest diversity during the medieval era (Puhachenko, 2023: 16). However, the Mongol-Tatar invasion nearly destroyed the local glassmaking traditions, including the loss of Kyivan Rus' medieval crystal recipes.

The next significant stage in the development of silicate art production in Ukraine can be associated with the emergence of forest glassmaking (gutnytsvo) during the 16th century (Kharytonova, 2012: 202).

Traditional beaded jewelry included collars ("kryzy"), ribbon-like necklaces ("silyanky"), vertical chest decorations ("herdany"), and rectangular elements ("katiliony") (Fedorchuk, 2021). By the 20th century, fragile blown beads were assembled into jewelry known as "luskalky" (Puhachenko, 2020: 171). However, the most valuable were the "painted beads" made in Murano, found predominantly in the western regions of Ukraine.

During the Soviet period, the tradition of wearing glass jewelry in folk costumes largely disappeared. However, with Ukraine's regained independence, there was a significant revival of interest. Today, across all regions of Ukraine, more than 20 artisans maintain this tradition, either assembling jewelry from ready-made beads in traditional styles or creating original designs.

Glass jewelry using the stained glass technique is produced by artists such as Anna Pavlyk from Irpin and Maryna Yadrevskaya from Kyiv, who founded the brand "Yadrevska". There are also examples from Lviv, Odesa, and Sumy, such as the studio "Glass Art Stories".

Artists like Roksoliana Khudoba (brand "Haluzka") work with the fusing technique, while masters from the Kozii family and Boris and Yaroslava Palamarchuk develop the brand "Palamarchuk Jewelry," using hot enamel methods.

The most complex technique used today in the production of glass jewelry is lampwork, inherited from Italian glassmakers.

As this craft is not formally taught in any Ukrainian art institutions, approximately 15 artisans have independently mastered it across different regions, establishing their own brands and creating unique works in open flame techniques (Puhachenko, 2022: 227).

Roels, Walter
Radboud Unviersity

Breaking Away from the Ideology of the (Movement-)Image: The Influence of Søren Kierkegaard's Repetitional Faith on Gilles Deleuze's Cinema Volumes

This article explores Gilles Deleuze's evolving interpretation of Søren Kierkegaard's notions of repetition and faith, highlighting a significant shift from his initial skepticism to a later acknowledgement. Deleuze at first critiqued Kierkegaard's notion of repetition as a singular, transformative event — one that entails a "leap of faith". However, 15 years later, Deleuze revised his view suggesting that Kierkegaard's repetition entails a continuous, enduring engagement. Despite differences in their religious views, the two thinkers' ideas about creating originary movements now appear reconciled. This revaluation coincides with Deleuze's metaphysical exploration of movement in cinema, particularly through the movement-image and time-image, which address the disconnect between humanity and the world in cinema before and after World

War II. In this context, the break away from mass movements, often concerning ideology, evoked a sense of disillusionment.

Deleuze argues that re-establishing the connection between humanity and the world requires a form of faith or belief, subtly echoing Kierkegaard's ideas of repetition and faith. The time- image, in particular, comes to represent originary movements of the mind, enabling the movements of our everyday life again to unfold in a meaningful way. Creativity, as well as the question of where creativity originates, are central themes in Deleuze's oeuvre. Through this, I explore an ethical and existential dimension in Deleuze's thoughts on cinema.

Rychter, Marcin
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Greek Visions of Eros: Desire and Reality

Early Greek imagery of the god Eros, present both in poetry and in visual arts, will be interpreted with the intention to reveal its significance for philosophy and to disclose the latter's intimate links with sexual desire. Mythical images and narratives, functioning as tools to disclose crucial aspects of reality through symbolic images, had been intertwined with philosophy since its very beginnings as its pre-conceptual resources.

Before Plato used it as a central figure in *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, Eros appeared as an important image-concept in the works of Hesiod, Parmenides and Empedocles and as an decorative motif on numerous vases and vessels. This imagery displays several interesting features that call for philosophical interpretation and attention. Eros is always presented in motion, as a dynamic force pursuing fulfilment. It often displays a double nature, being accompanied by his twin brother, Himeros. Eros is usually envisaged as a young man or a boy and as such he does not hold a very prominent position in the Olympic hierarchy. Despite that, poets and early philosophers, followed by Plato, ascribe great significance to this figure, seeing it as a fundamental cosmic force.

Basing on the poetic and artistic visions of Eros, I will try to reconstruct an Archaic Greek idea of a relationship between the erotic desire and the reality as such. Then, I will explore the significance of this idea for Plato's conception of philosophy and its contemporary relevance.

Saliba, Elsa
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Prototypes, Heresy and the Ontology of Pioneering Artworks

Throughout history, some art pieces were labeled as rule-breaking or pioneering. Such artworks elicited strong reactions and rejection at first, but they ultimately broke conventional

rules in art and introduced new art movements. Although revolutionary artworks play a key role in art history and society, established theories in philosophy of art have left this central topic unattended. To address the gap in the literature, I offer an analysis of pioneering artworks by drawing on tools from the ontology of artifacts while introducing new concepts.

I argue that the emergence of pioneering artworks is comparable to the emergence of prototypes in artifacts. These artworks enable the creation of new art kinds, much like prototypes provoke the emergence of new kinds through the introduction of a new function. Furthermore, such artworks do not merely introduce a new function, as prototypes do, but rather one perceived as heretical— challenging established artistic norms and provoking strong audience reactions. Art kinds are regulated by conventions that were established with time following historical practices. Artworks that have features that differ drastically from conventional artworks are seen as heretical by institutions that exercise conventional power. Pioneering artworks are therefore *heretic-artworks* causing a clash within the world of art by introducing *heretic-functions*, a type of idiosyncratic functions that are not only unique but also controversial. Audiences that choose to appreciate such artworks are practicing a *heretic-use*, in accordance with the *heretic-function* of the artwork until the artwork's wider acceptance by art institutions. I conclude that a functional understanding of pioneering artworks that takes into consideration their disruptive power and the changes they induce in the artworld reveals their unique nature.

Sanches, Thany
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Guinea Pigs: An Anarchive of Fabulations of Multiple Sclerosis as a Somatopolitical Manifesto

This work investigates the experience of multiple sclerosis, a chronic disease whose symptoms ofien remain invisible to those who do not live with it directly. From a somatopolitical and performative perspective, the research understands the ill body as a potency for fabulations. The central methodology is the creation of an anarchive of fabulations, conceived not as a traditional archive, but as a multimedia and fabulatory practice that reactivates historical and personal traces, seeking to create an iconography for this disease and explore the tension between seeing and not seeing.

Central to this investigation is the figure of Marie Elizabeth Luc, identified as the first patient diagnosed with multiple sclerosis by Charcot at Salpêtrière. Luc is notable not only for her historical centrality but also for the absence of photographic images of her in Charcot's vast archives; she died before the creation of the photography department, thus escaping the hyper-visibility imposed on other patients. A drawing from her autopsy, however, offers a fragmented form of representation. The analysis of these historical archives and the personal experience confronts the dynamics of visibility and invisibility imposed on ill and singular bodies.

The process of fabulation stems from the author's experience as an artist and art educator, using collective drawing practices to "draw this ghost"—a way of establishing the presence of Luc and other bodies from the archive in the present. The work dialogues with cripistemology, the concept of corpomídia by Christine Greiner and Helena Katz, and authors such as Paul Preciado, Jack Halberstam, and Vinciane Despret, whose work inspires the idea of establishing the dead. By constructing this anarchive of fabulations, the research aims to transform the experience of illness and fragmented bodies into singular somato-political manifestos, challenging normativities and contributing to the "Visibility and invisibility in the image" area by analyzing the power of the image in constructing and contesting narratives about the body that resists.

Shirmarz, Reza
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Seeing Against Silence: Feminist Cartooning and the Subversive Power of Image in Post-Revolutionary Iran

In authoritarian regimes where speech is surveilled and dissent criminalized, images become potent sites of resistance. This paper investigates the politically charged visual activism of Iranian feminist cartoonist Firoozeh Mozaffari, whose work exemplifies how images can subvert state narratives and challenge patriarchal hegemony. Through a close reading of her cartoons, particularly those that circulated globally during and after the 2022 "Woman, Life, Freedom" uprising, I examine how Mozaffari transforms the image into both an affective performance and a rhetorical tool of protest.

Guided by Paula Serafini's theoretical framework of "performance action," this analysis applies the concepts of dissensus, prefiguration, and embodiment to explore how Mozaffari's minimalist compositions disrupt the "distribution of the sensible," articulate feminist futurities, and engage the body as a site of political trauma and agency (Serafini 3–5, 13–15). In Gender Discrimination, Mozaffari reconfigures the Venus symbol into a carceral architecture; in Choice of Clothes, she portrays a woman's identity manipulated through male-imposed religious norms; in Killing Women, martyrdom is reclaimed as a gesture of defiant remembrance. Each image enacts a visual dissensus, exposing what the state attempts to erase: the pain, resistance, and collective will of Iranian women.

These cartoons do not merely comment on oppression, they perform it. As Judith Butler argues, political appearance is an act of embodiment (Butler 34), and Mozaffari's figures insist on being seen, counted, and remembered. Her work also circulates through encrypted apps and diasporic networks, forming what Nancy Fraser calls a "subaltern counterpublic", a visual space of oppositional discourse generated by the marginalized (Fraser 67).

This paper contributes to the discourse on image and power by demonstrating that Mozaffari's art constitutes a form of feminist insurgency. It transforms silence into symbolic speech and channels the power of image toward a radical reimagining of justice, autonomy, and truth.

Stikkers, Kenneth

"Images of Divine Things": Jonathan Edwards and the Logic of Images

The title of this paper comes from a book by American Puritan philosopher Jonathan Edwards, Images or Shadows of Divine Things, in which he aims to demonstrate how everything in nature provides an image that intimates something divine and that nature is full of moral lessons, if we know how to see them. For example, violent storms at sea provide images of God's wrath against sinners; the ugly, despicable spider provides an image of how sinners appear in the eyes of God.

This paper will demonstrate, first, how Edwards's claim grows out of Puritan theological typology, influenced by the topical logic of Petrus Ramus and explaining the relationship between the Old and New Testaments by way of "types": events, people, and objects in the Old Testament ("types") intimate images of events, persons, and objects to be found analogically in the New Testament ("anti-types"). For example, Jonah in the whale is like Jesus in the tomb. Edwards extends this Puritan typology to include Nature as something like another "book," providing images that are analogous to those found in Scripture.

Second, the paper will demonstrate how Edwards established an aesthetic tradition, found in Transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau and beyond, whereby nature in the American mind is not merely a place of beauty and recreation but also contains spiritual significance and meaning.

Szpilka, J.
SWPS University, Warsaw

What Is There for Porn to Say About Bodies?

Pornography is usually understood as a form of representation fundamentally lacking any kind of depth. Porn is vulgar, literal, shallow; porn is the origin point for erroneous, if not outright dangerous ideas about our bodies and our sexualities. As long as those assumptions are held to be true, it may seem absurd to ask about what porn knows - what porn can say. Yet, it may be that supposed absurdity that makes those questions so interesting to ask. Can pornography be a form of knowledge, an epistemology, maybe even a critical practice? Is there anything about embodiment that pornography can say that we would not be able to learn otherwise? And what even is this "porn", as if the word was transparent and obvious in its meaning?

Timm, Michael
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Fanon, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre Towards a Critical Philosophy of Race

Many thinkers have sought to address racism through the philosophy of the imagination. Many scholars have recently attempted to address racism by mobilizing Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. To my knowledge, however, and despite significant recent scholarship regarding the imagination in his philosophy, few to no scholars have attempted to address racism using specifically Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the imagination.

This paper offers as a tool to critical philosophers of race Merleau-Ponty's and Fanon's critiques of Sartre's alternative between reality or perception and imagination. Others have shown racist habits or values to remain unconsciously 'efficacious' or 'real' in experience. The imagination similarly operates unconsciously in perception or reality. For Merleau-Ponty, contra Sartre, 'the imaginary world is not bad faith.' For Fanon, contra Sartre, it makes no difference if the "white" is one's "real or imaginary" master. Where reflective training remains impractical, changing racist imagination still plausibly if not probably changes racist realities or perceptions.

Uściński, Przemysław
University of Warsaw

"Am I not a Man and a Brother?" Visual Representations of Slavery in the Late Eighteenth Century

Examining selected visual representations of the enslaved peoples and the conditions of slavery, the paper will focus on the power of the image to both produce the affective response in the audience and provoke political reaction. The question of slavery and the controversies surrounding the topic become increasingly articulated in the late eighteenth century both in discourse and through images, including in print and in painting. William Blake's illustrations to John Gabriel Stedman's history of the slave revolt in Surinam provide a famous and important example, as does the iconic Wedgwood anti-slavery medallion, or the illustrations in Thomas Clarkson's influential *History of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade*. Analysing these and other images, the paper will focus on how, in the context of colonial policies and growing abolitionist movement, they would strive to integrate the historical context and the political intent (especially in case of the abolitionist message) into the very structure of the image, through diverse strategies that borrow also from the painterly, satirical, sentimental and emblematic traditions of visual representation. This will allow also for some reflections on the interconnections between image, power(lessness), history, social change and (in)justice.

Walkowiak, Magdalena
Abeloart

Time Represented in Photography: An Analysis of the Problem in the Film "Faces of the Beach" by Agnès Varda, Jr.

In the following text, I am going to examine the concepts of the processuality of change and temporality of the image. The main focus will be on the problem of large-scale portraiture in the film by Agnes Varda, a French filmmaker and an artist with the pseudonym JR, titled "Faces Places". In the documentary, the co-director Agnès Varda travels through France with JR (a street-art artist) capturing photos and printing large-format portraits of the people they meet along the way. The documentary, thanks to its form and character, was able to capture the creative process, in which the encounter with another person is expressed through an image. Enlarged to monumental sizes, the portraits are displayed in a variety of settings, engaging, capturing attention and evoking admiration for the faces of the people photographed. Among them, there is a photo of the director's late friend. The viewer has the chance to observe the process of staging this photograph, presented on the wall of an old seaside bunker. The viewer can also watch what happens to it when the sea tide begins to rise, advances and eventually floods the beach along with the photograph placed on it, making it a perfect illustration of the idea: Sequentiality and temporality of the image.

For we can find here the following elements: First, processuality, which shows us the successive phases of a large format photography production and all that happens to it in time and space. Second, there is temporality, which derives from the processuality; as already Aristotle identified time with movement and change. Thirdly, the processuality and temporality, mentioned before, are what in philosophy we call adventitiousness, that is, the imperfection and impermanence of existence. The viewer in the cinema watches the process of hanging the printed portrait, which the director places on the beach, and then sees what happens to the portrait as the tide begins to rise: it becomes more and more engulfed by the waters of the sea, until the portrait disappears from our sight. This represents not only the adventitiousness i.e. the impermanence of the existence of a work of art, but also hints the withering away and passing into oblivion, into nothingness, not only of someone's portrait but also, to some extent, the memory of the deceased person it depicted. Into oblivion disappears the material carrier of memory, which is the portrait.

Wiśniewski, Mikołaj
SWPS University, Warsaw

Power, Seduction and Invisibility: Mellville's Images

The peculiar interplay between power and image is perhaps the one constant theme of Melville's work, from the anxiety lurking beneath the idyllic landscape of the valley of the Typee, to the

perverse beauty of the scene of Billy Budd's "ascension." It is difficult, however, to find the precise word defining this interplay. Perhaps, as Adam Lipszyc seems to suggest in his book, that word is masquerade in that it is a display which at the same time conceals something. Melville's narrators, and – for that matter – Melville's readers, often get the nagging sensation that there is an element in the image which eludes perception; that a blind spot of some sort is preventing them/us from noticing a crucial detail in what presents itself. In my talk I would like to consider some of these Melvillean blinds pots and try to define their nature.

Wojciechowski, Patryk
University of Warsaw

Pornography as an Image of Power: Dworkin's Radical Critique

This essay re-examines Andrea Dworkin's radical critique of pornography as a visual mythology of patriarchal dominance. Building upon her seminal works, Pornography: Men Possessing Women and Intercourse, as she presents a critique of pornography that has stood the test of time and provides a much-needed radical perspective. Dworkin argued that pornography transcends mere sexual representation, functioning as a potent mechanism that actively constructs and reinforces sexist power structures by portraying women as objects of domination and violence.

Drawing a parallel to Ronald Barthes's exploration of myth in Mythologies, Dworkin posited that pornography presents a distorted, enforcing unjust power dynamics, image of female sexuality as natural and desirable within a patriarchal framework. The repetitive visual tropes of female submission and male dominance, she argued, create a "myth" of inherent gender roles and sexual dynamics. Rae Langton's concept of sexual solipsism, introduced in her essay Sexual Solipsism, is the idea that pornography cultivates a male perspective that fails to genuinely recognize the subjectivity and independent sexual agency of women – provides a crucial lens through which to understand the impact of this visual mythology. Pornography, from this perspective, doesn't just depict power imbalances; it actively fosters a solipsistic viewpoint in consumers, blinding them to the lived experiences and desires of women, reducing them to mere instruments of male pleasure.

This paper argues that Dworkin's critique, amplified by the concept of sexual solipsism, is alarmingly relevant in the age of ubiquitous internet pornography. The unprecedented accessibility and normalization of explicit content in everyday digital spaces intensifies the risk of internalizing this solipsistic perspective, further entrenching gender inequality. The constant exposure to violent and extreme imagery risks normalizing the dehumanization of women, validating Dworkin's warnings with renewed urgency. By analysing Dworkin's work through the critical lens of sexual solipsism, this paper explores how contemporary pornography not only upholds male dominance but also actively cultivates a profound failure of perspective, hindering the recognition of women as fully autonomous sexual subjects. Ultimately, this analysis underscores the critical role of visual representation in perpetuating gender inequality and interrogates the damaging implications of

pornography as an image not just of male power and control, but of a self-imposed perceptual prison.

Zyzik, Grzegorz
University of Opole

Corona Astralis and the Sisters. Poetry as the source of world-building in Tension

My speech will focus on the relationship between poems of Maximilian Voloshin and computer game Tension. It is my belief that Voloshin's Corona Astralis cycle represents the earliest germination of the ideas that would eventually become Tension. I think that a critical analysis of the poem will reveal that developers from Ice-Pick Lodge almost certainly were inspired to create the game based on the contents of the poem, and returned to text many times for guidance during the creation of the game. The plot, the characters, the tone, even the mechanics of the game can be found in a foetal state in Voloshin's poem. It's my belief that the poem is best interpreted as a whole, and as reflective of the beginning of the game- not the start of the narrative, but the very inception of Tension. To that end my speech, I will be taking the poem's utilized verses and be attempting to suss out how they manifest themselves in the finished version of the story and game. My central thesis is that Tension reflects the identity of the player. Each player's actions are related to how the game text is read. In the conclusion of my speech I am going to outline the possibilities of using Computer games in discovering identity.