

**37th German Congress for Art History
Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg
13–17 March 2024**

Call for Papers

IMAGE AND SPACE

Our present world is shaped by the ubiquity and constant availability of images. Images impinge on our reality more than ever insofar as they occupy space and even create new spaces. The most advanced technological innovations are geared towards improving the technologies of representing space and imbuing space with images (for instance, by means of CAD concepts, 3D scanners and printers, holograms, gaming, augmented reality, immersive rooms, etc.). The enormous popularity of immersive settings points up the great affective potential of space. While images encounter us two-dimensionally, space demands our involvement with all senses. Art participates in this development insofar as it is no longer differentiated into spatial or visual art, but rather interweaves visual and spatial aspects together and thus creates, for its part, new hybrid spaces. In museums as well, the notion of a neutral room – a white cube – functioning solely as a backdrop for the images displayed there – has long been abandoned.

Against this backdrop, the 2024 German Congress for Art History will interrogate the relationship between image and space, considered at once in a historical and in a transcultural perspective. The congress is eager to welcome recent methodological developments from the discipline, to bring together new ideas from the visual and spatial turns, and to explore the possibilities that present themselves.

The art historical significance of the development toward the flood of images that dominates our reality has been profoundly reflected in the discipline's theorization of the visual turn. On the other hand, the spatial turn, as it has unfolded in the humanities, has ushered in a paradigm shift, possessing central significance for art history, through its understanding of "space" as a result of a social interaction and through its examination of the perception and construction of space. Since space conditions our perception, the investigation of interrelationships between image and space possesses a high degree of relevance. Our discipline's convention of specializing either in visual art or in architecture has led, to be sure, to a paucity of studies engaging with the interaction between architecture and the visual arts. This congress will provide then a platform for connecting methods from architectural, cultural and visual studies.

This theme can be approached in many directions. Secular and sacral image-space ensembles from various epochs and cultures can be investigated for their respective impact strategies, reception mechanisms and performative uses. It will also offer a chance to analyze ensembles from European and extra-European contexts and thus to consider processes of cultural transfer and hybridization. The handling of such ensembles in historical preservation and their graphic reproduction and documentation will offer further topics of inquiry. Alongside photographic documentation, panels will also consider three-dimensional CAD spatial visualizations

and 3D reconstructions of destroyed ensembles. Gender-specific spatial designs as well as the cultural encoding of space and image can also be addressed. Reflection on space-image interactions has also assumed a central significance in presenting and communicating about art (in museums, media, and all pedagogical domains).

The Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU) is an ideal location for this encounter of themes. The Institute for Art History at FAU has already pushed the discussion over the concept of an image-space science markedly forward and cooperated closely with museums in the Nuremberg region, in particular the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, whose name and history at once raise the question of the construction of cultural spaces and national ideas. Nuremberg's varied history, with its striking highs and lows across the Middle Ages, in the period of Dürer and in the National Socialist period, will encourage us to interrogate sacral and secular image-space ensembles from various periods, not least for their political statements and their current redefinition.

Together with the Institute of Art History at the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, the board of the Deutscher Verband für Kunstgeschichte e.V. (German Association for Art History) would like to welcome colleagues for an intensive conversation on these topics.

Interested colleagues from all specialties in art history are welcome to submit proposals for individual papers in the sessions described below.

An application is **only possible through the online application portal of the congress website** (www.kunstgeschichte-kongress.de).

Abstracts should not exceed **2,500 characters** (incl. spaces). We will also request a short biography in tabular form. In addition, you can enter up to five research focuses and five publication titles.

The selection of proposals for each session (comprising four papers each at thirty minutes) will be conducted by the session chairs together with the association board and the local committee. It is expected that selected speakers – provided that their training is in art history and they are resident in Germany – should be members of the German Association for Art History at the latest by the beginning of the congress year.

The gatherings and network meetings featured in the supporting program (forums for professional groups and experts, working groups, workshops) are not part of this year's call for papers and will be organized separately. The day before the congress, the Arbeitskreis Digitale Kunstgeschichte will again organize an online BarCamp.

Inquiries about submitting proposals can be made with the office of the German Association for Art History in Bonn (info@kunstgeschichte.org).

The deadline for submitting proposals is 2 June 2023 (18:00 CET).

Sessions

1. Caves, Grottoes, and Immersive Spaces. Towards a Transcultural Study of Spatially Embedded Art

Immersive settings are now in vogue: from the light spaces of a James Turrell to commercialized exhibition events promising a “plunge” into the art of Vincent van Gogh or Frida Kahlo. Ultimately, the origins of such image-space ensembles lie far in the past. The evocative power of cave presentations, which was already the basis of Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, gave rise to a plethora of secular “art caves,” such as the artificial grottoes of the Renaissance and Baroque. Moreover, caves hold a firm place in Christian religious practice. Sometimes, natural caves were marked as sacred places through installations and sculptures or were expanded into cave-churches and cave-monasteries, but sometimes artificial replicas of Christ’s birth or burial cave as well as “Sacri Monti” were created that possessed a high degree of illusionary power. Similarly in Buddhist and Hindu religious worship, artistically decorated caves play an important role, for example as replicas of the divine cosmos.

The fascination with caves can be regarded as an anthropological constant spanning cultures and epochs. The aim of this session is to bring together case-studies from various cultural domains in order to stimulate ideas for a transcultural science of image and space. The interplay of natural and/or artificial cave-spaces with their visually artistic furnishings will be examined in terms of their modes of effect, reception mechanisms and performative functions. How and for what purposes were natural and artificial design elements linked to each other? How were users guided, instructed and influenced? When comparing the sacred cave spaces of different religions, do similar or distinctive forms of presentation predominate?

Papers may focus on the aesthetic aspects of immersive settings, as well as on the worship functions of caves in different religious contexts, whether treating individual image-space ensembles or several objects in comparison. Of particular interest are case-studies that reveal the dynamics of intercultural or interreligious contact, processes of cultural transfer, or hybridization.

Christina Strunck, Erlangen-Nuremberg / Ines Konczak-Nagel, Leipzig

2. Saving Hope, Healing Power. Presenting Images Publicly in the Late Middle Ages

The session will consider the public presentation of images and objects that were believed in the late Middle Ages to possess healing power. Taking up the conference’s *genius loci*, we will focus chiefly on the area of Nuremberg, while case studies from other regions are also welcome. The imperial city Nuremberg was a spider in the web of cultural transfer by virtue of its contact with all of Europe. There more than anywhere, basic studies can be conducted that build on a large number of relevant objects (e.g., the imperial jewels, the shrine of St. Sebaldus, the icon of Constantine and Helena) and that can be contextualized, moreover, through contemporary sources. Even the spatial localization of phenomena is facilitated by the superbly documented topography of Nuremberg.

Medieval sculptures were more than aesthetic artifacts: they demanded an immediately tangible staging in a public space. Reliquaries were scarcely conceivable without a public ready to venerate them and to make a contribution in the hope of salvation. The same is true of the thaumaturgical sculptures and miscellaneous objects of worship carried in processions through the cities. A lasting culture of remembrance developed: not only do pilgrim badges attest to it, but also the attempts to capture the saving power of relics with mirrors. At the same time, displays were utilized for self-representation, commonly in competition with neighboring sites, such as Bamberg or Eichstätt, but also Altötting or Mariazzell.

In recent years, research on this complex of themes has steadily intensified, and so it is now time to reflect on the results and to sound out new approaches. This session aims to stimulate inquiry into the aesthetic and magical power as well as the social contexts. What did owners and visitors associate with the presentations? What dynamic was created by static or by moving presentations? What kind of ephemeral or lasting effects did these presentations have in the surrounding city space? Was there a specific iconography of saving power? This and more will be examined through selected case studies as well as primarily theoretical contributions.

Manuel Teget-Welz, Erlangen-Nuremberg / Gerhard Weilandt, Greifswald

3. City Plans and Vedute as Objects and Means of Art Historical Research

Historical city plans and vedute are, in the best sense, pictures of concrete (urban) spaces. They have long been an established medium of urbanism and architectural history, used in order to reconstruct the lost states of cities or individual monuments and to interpret the urban body. Alongside this, cartographic history employs historic measuring methods, forms of projection and the medium itself. Historical maps undergoing digitization at ever increasing rates and – not least – are being used by art historians to better research urban spatial relations, to link metadata with maps, and to virtually roam through cities.

This session proposes to take a closer look at art history's use of city plans (be they maps, bird's-eye views or vedute) and to expand its methodological potential. In other words, how can, and how should, art historical research consider maps more strongly as objects or images in their own right, not only giving us a glimpse of a historical reality, but also making their own statement through their mediality, their selection of monuments, streets, etc., and their concrete representation strategies?

In this context, we seek paper proposals that treat the following themes:

- the methodological confrontation with the medium of map or vedute (from an art historical point of view)
- case-studies of historical maps or vedute, which are examined for their aesthetic and power of expression
- the presentation of digital projects for further processing work on historical maps, in con-

- nection with reflection on the digital image's heuristic potential
- intermedial aspects of painted map cycles and printed maps

Amrei Buchholz, Berlin / Tanja Michalsky, Rome

4. Space – Museum – Gender. Material and Immaterial Manifestations of Female (Art) Collectors (1750–2024)

During their lives, many women distinguished themselves as collectors and art patrons. Early examples like Isabella D'Este and Eleanor of Naples influence the collecting practices as well as artistic production of their times, promoted the arts as they did the sciences, and were reputed for their humanistic learning. Since that time significant female collectors have appeared over the centuries in all European countries. Up to today, many collections by women like Helene Kröller-Müller have contributed considerably to the cultural landscape, yet knowledge about the collectors' significance is often lacking.

This session proposes to map the significance of female collectors in European art museums from a diachronic perspective. On the one hand, the material manifestations of female (art-)collectors in museum spaces will be considered:

- What roles did – and do – female collectors occupy in these spaces (also in relation to male collectors) and if so, how are they represented (dedications, portraits, busts, etc.)?
- When were the collections of female collectors made over to museums? What stipulations were made with regard to exhibiting the collections? How did people comment on the works they donated?
- Do patterns emerge in regard to the behavior or extent of collecting or to the collections' objects or journeys?

On the other hand, immaterial spaces, social spaces, networks and contexts that facilitated art collecting by women will be overarchingly examined:

- What were the social, legal and social preconditions for women to be collectors?
- What kinds of mechanisms of exclusion prevented women from collecting?
- How did collecting activity take place when women acted as part of a couple? How did it take place when they acted alone?

In this way, this session aims to describe women's collecting practices and to draw attention to the vital function they had for museums.

Marina Beck, Erlangen-Nuremberg / Anna Frasca-Rath, Erlangen-Nuremberg

5. Paris. Cityscape Histories and City Space Histories

In the wake of the French Revolution, the new design of the Paris cityscape unfolded, on the one hand, in the unabating alternation of revolutions and restorations and, on the other, under the banner of a constant rebuilding and expansion of urban and infrastructure spaces. The necessity arose of marking public space with new signs, monuments and conspicuous spatial ensembles in accordance with the shifting motives of political legitimacy. After eradicating the signs of the Ancien Régime, the French Revolution undertook to effect a comprehensive “new order of things” on this *tabula rasa*. Its initiatives for remodeling public space and establishing institutions for the care of the national cultural patrimony (museums) represent a genuine cultural revolution.

The subsequent creation of sites for preserving and communicating knowledge (libraries, industrial shows, world exhibitions), the construction of novel spaces for leisure and consumption (parks, amusement parks, arcades), and period-specific infrastructure (train stations, metro), can all be seen in the wake. Conforming to ideas of free access, interaction, and circulation, these examples are indicative of the space revolution that this session proposes to investigate. The end point for the period under exploration is Le Corbusier’s 1925 “Plan Voisin,” whose radical departure from nineteenth-century conceptions of the urban picked up on revolutionary attitudes going back to 1789.

Building on recent approaches that go beyond static concepts of cityscape and representation, this session invites papers that place image and space into a critical relationship with the aim of assessing their political and urban potential for a renaissance of art historical research on cities and their buildings. It aims, furthermore, to revitalize discussions on the relationships of (static) image and (dynamic) space, of viewing and using, and of permanence and change in the urban sphere. Paper proposals treating other metropolises in a comparative perspective are also welcome.

Salvatore Pisani, Mainz / Christine Tauber, Munich

6. The Sites of National Socialism in Democracy: To Repurpose or to Appropriate? From Voids to Sites of Learning?

How do we deal with the jarring legacy, the disintegrating buildings and the unsettling sites left from the National Socialist period? This session does not so much aim to recapitulate the history of displacing, repurposing and adapting these structures – not only past attempts but those still taking place – but rather to assess the *status quaestionis* in addressing these challenges from the perspectives of art history and architectural history. Thus, the complex inter-relationship between professional expertise, political stances and notions of civil society will assume an acute urgency.

Which images and which discourses about space have recent and ongoing discussions most prominently invoked? What contribution can social and cultural theory make? What possibilities are offered – and what risks are contained – by the visual worlds created by media and by

digital models? Above all, what form of confrontation at the level of content is adequate for the spatially complex sites of propaganda aimed at mass impact?

One of the session's focuses will be the Nazi Party Rally Grounds (the former Reichsparteitagsgelände) in Nuremberg. Despite numerous demolitions, transformations and interventions, it represents the only "authentic" site of self-representation by party and state that is preserved in its main structures. In this example, cultural and political decision-makers face a multi-faceted landscape of concern and complex problems of conservation. Thus, it requires an open, self-critical exploration: how does one proceed in a way that is adequate for an increasingly pluralistic and diverse society? Going beyond this example, we will address these questions in other monumental spatial structures belonging to National Socialism with the goal of provoking a ranging reflection on issues related to the theory and practice of preserving and protecting historic monuments.

Christian Fuhrmeister, Munich / Kai Kappel, Berlin

7. Presentations with Textile and Dramatizations with Space

Textiles structure a given space and effect a transition from two-dimensional space to three-dimensional body. They can fill a space, order it, design it, and confer on it a sense of (haptic) purpose. Clothing also manifests the interplay of visual representations and offers orientation in social interactions. The history of textile and clothing has already been analyzed from a multidisciplinary perspective, yet the conceptual design of space using textiles has so far received only marginal attention.

Placing the semantics of textile and clothing space at the center of inquiry, this session proposes to sound out the spatial-dramaturgical effect of textile and clothing as two- and three-dimensional objects as well as their interaction. The timespan will stretch from historical expressions forward to contemporary trends. In this context, we envisage topics describing the interaction of space and textile in art: from image-filling voluminous textiles in paintings, e.g., in Rubens, to space-demanding fashion phenomena such as nineteenth-century crinolines, up to concepts like the textile designs by Sonia Delaunay or coverings of space and architecture by Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Worlds of textile experience and novel dramatizations through textile are currently being created in virtual spaces. We should also mention recent exhibitions on textile art that integrate space and movement of visitors as a dynamic medium, as in works by, e.g., Chiharu Shiota, Louisa Bourgeois, or Erick Hock and Kyungah Ham.

Against this backdrop, this session is intended to contribute to a renewed and overarching look at textile art, design and clothing in their interaction with space and spatiality.

Sabine de Günther, Potsdam / Katrin Lindemann, Berlin

8. Wall Labels. Exhibition Captions between Image, Text and Space

In current art displays, an enormous significance is granted to captions. If, traditionally, written signs internal to the work – with their monograms, signatures, dates and titles – and, later on, object signs external to the work – wall labels properly speaking – formed the elements that identified and explained art, today there are room titles and entire wall texts that additionally structure and contribute to the physical exhibition structure. Focusing on these spatial configurations of image and text, this session will jointly investigate curatorial practices and theories of writing as part of the work. In this framework, debates about Arnold Gehlen's "need for commentary," Gérard Genette's "paratext," and Jacques Derrida's "parergon," which have been repeatedly conducted since the 1990s in art historical scholarship, play just as important a role as arts communication in contemporary exhibition spaces. The spectrum of possibilities runs from in-depth information concerning political or social contexts – themselves increasingly important for understanding recent artworks – to the intentional avoidance of any additional writing whatsoever, which supposedly conforms to a pure vision in the White Cube.

This session proposes to discuss selected models, theories or practices as examples of these issues. We will pay particular attention to questions posed about exhibition design with regard to the experimental interplay of image, text, and space against the backdrop of digitizing, strategies of ecological sustainability, and approaches for sensitively incorporating group and individual difference. We welcome contributions examining these themes from the standpoint of interdisciplinary research on text-image relations, interior architecture, art education, curatorial scholarship or museum studies.

Nina Schallenberg, Berlin / Tobias Vogt, Oldenburg

9. Image and Seduction. Approaches of Historical Preservation to Digitally Generated Spaces and their Images of History

Combining perspectives from architectural studies, cultural studies and visual studies, this session will reflect on the opportunities and pitfalls of digitally generated, virtual and hybrid realities, and their images of history for the disciplines of historical monument protection and preservation. What kind of technological and scientific opportunities and potentials are there? At the same time, what dangers lie in the interpenetration of physical space and virtual historical pictures, especially when the historical monument is conceived as an accumulation of history and as a source for ever renewed interrogation?

Indeed, new digital opportunities for generating virtual realities, for visualizing and reconstructing historical structures and their building stages in *Heritage/Historic Building Information Models*, or, finally, for the hybrid interpenetration of physical and historical space through Augmented Reality have created new questions, scarcely broached up to now vis-à-vis physical reconstructions. In virtual space, the corresponding material substance is (seemingly) untouched. Various, mutually exclusive historical layers, processes and ruptures can be virtually superimposed and turned on and off. In museums and in historical city tours or urban exploration, such strategies of representation often serve to convey and popularize historical knowledge. In this respect they can significantly contribute to strengthening the un-

derstanding of historical monuments. They also serve as sites of confrontation between the perspectives of building archeology, building history and historic preservation.

Yet these techniques often draw on well-known historical visual sources, select and order the historical images anew, and do not invariably disclose their motives and practices. They also expand images with interpretations that are not always clearly recognizable for the viewer, and they fill in transmission gaps, so that the augmented image is suitable for and consistent with a particular end. One common characteristic is the focus on representing a homogenous or closed-off temporal period. Yet is there a danger of reduction in visually projecting a prescribed historical understanding of a situation – and how does one succeed in maintaining a critical consideration of affective and affirmative historical images and their ubiquitous dissemination in discussing the theory and practice of historical monuments?

Martin Bredenbeck, Brauweiler/Koblenz / Andreas Putz, Munich

10. Images and Structures as Transcultural Negotiation Spaces

In debates on visual theory, a space-specific understanding of the image has strongly asserted itself in recent times and has productively managed to expand approaches from reception aesthetics: emphasis was laid on the emersive character of images, and the act of viewing the image was described as the experience of an essentially spatial character brought into being in an aesthetic “in-between.” Yet the spatial paradigm is not only experiencing a remarkable vogue in the field of visual theory at present, but is also turning out to be a decisive concept for transcultural and post- or decolonial cultural theory: spaces are seen in this context as relationally structured frameworks, which, far from being static, are generated through movements and transformations. Thus, they emerge from plots and from the agency of performers and objects, and they are constituted as consummately performative.

The panel pursues the idea of productively bringing these two hitherto separated discourses together in art historical analyses. Thus, methodological reflections should be linked to concrete case studies. How can cultural differences be performed in spaces (including image spaces)? And, in so doing, how can markers of alterity – even in hegemonic contexts – be shifted and renegotiated?

The concrete question of this session is, how are the spatial dimensions of images and architecture employed as structures of transcultural negotiations? For instance, how is the topology of an image surface, though its ordering of spatial juxtaposition, rendered serviceable as a transcultural negotiation space, insofar as differences and connections are enacted and thus the ambiguities of cultural identities find representation? How are images, which are conceived as multimedia arrangements across space, employed for transcultural negotiations, perhaps by acting as stages for performative acts, by offering a frame for liturgical or ritual practices and, in so doing, by facilitating distinctive forms of cultural encoding that can be brought out either simultaneously or in alternation?

Julia Kloss-Weber, Hamburg / Valérie Kobi, Neuchâtel

11. Image as Space / Space as Image – Paradigmatic Interrelations and Transitions starting from VR

This session deals with overcoming the separation between image and space as it is done especially in the realization of virtual experiences and is created by “virtualizing” the eye-hand field. The abstract workspace of VR-artworks is not protected by any ceiling, while the view falls first on a shallow, monochromatic ground. In this way, this space promises an act of *creatio ex nihilo*. Yet it does not function without self-restraints: boundaries are drawn in, interactivity is regulated, and an artificial physics is set up, so that ultimately even in imagined visual worlds the familiar habits of everyday life lead into the images and back out again. How do artists currently negotiate virtual and physical spaces, and what role does the visual play therein? This will be paradigmatically discussed in terms of virtual reality, since here image and space are entangled qua technology.

A point of departure will be offered by paradoxes of visual space in artistic VR-experiences, such as images without a back or scenery without frames. How are these self-reflexively played out? What kind of visual spaces are generated, if both the modellable polygon mesh and the point cloud derived from LiDAR scanning are clad in images? How can collision boxes conflicting with real wall surfaces productively destabilize the inner-outer difference? The problem saliently emerges when, for instance, artists set up their spatialized VR-works on head-mounted displays in exhibition structures that are, for their part too, spatial. In this context, there are revealing short circuits between spatial construction and visual curation, as well as hybrid attitudes of receptivity towards space and image – for instance, through the overhead view, as on a model or a map, a navigable POV and immersion into the image. It is worth pursuing these questions from perspectives afforded by art, image, space, design and architecture theory. Contributions concerning predigital visual spaces, game environments and digital reconstruction will be considered just as illuminating.

Stephan Günzel, Berlin / Annette Urban, Bochum

12. Guest Session from Czechia: Baroque Ceiling Painting as an Early Modern Virtual World

We are delighted that the Czech Association for Art History [Uměleckohistorická společnost \(UHS\)](#) has accepted our invitation to host a guest session. Martin Mádl, board member of the UHS, will be responsible for the session’s conception, selection and execution. This guest session, therefore, is not part of the present call for papers.