

Call for Abstracts
for an Essay Collection on the Topic of

Spaces of Appearance

Aesthetics and Politics After Analogy

Edited by Martin Renz and Julius Schwarzwälder

Topic and Aims of the Volume

How do things and people come to matter to people and things? What makes a thing or an action seem obvious, salient or evident? What, on the other hand, makes them seem obsolete, obscure or out of the question altogether? How are such relations of importance and insignificance produced and institutionalized, how do they get overturned and occluded? Or, to put it short: In what ways has the semblance of relevance been organized and disorganized?

The collection plans to assemble a variety of essays which, to reply to these far-reaching and general questions, take a concrete object as exemplary for the manner in which the perceptive standards of a given political situation may subtly change or consolidate. We are looking for essays that attempt to make palpable the real texture of their objects, while at the same time piercing through their tissue and into the space of the conditions of their effectivity, thus revealing their superficial impactfulness and their historico-political depth in the same stroke.

Exemplary objects could be drawn from (but are not limited to) literary works; architecture and art works; pop culture and fashion; forms of popular assembly in protests and political activism; institutions such as museums, courthouses, and parliaments; as well as older or more recent media formats and products.

For an initial orientation, we hold that the phenomenon of a ‘subtle change in the ways of perception’ is captured well in Hannah Arendt’s use of the notion of the ‘Space of Appearance’. This term designates a virtual aspect of the in-between, the interstices of the human world, which is different from, though always interwoven with, the physical or tangible aspects of the world. The collection is not disinclined towards analyses of the physical surroundings in which spaces of appearance are actualized. Yet, it invites for contributions that are sensitive towards the difference between changes in appearance and changes in material. It thus attempts to disclose the structures of relevance through which certain historical modes of articulation, conduct, and interpretation establish themselves as varyingly appealing or appalling within a specific political situation.

Therefore, the differences we are interested in are aesthetic, but their relevance and appeal, we suspect, concerns the specific political situations in which they occur. This means, incidentally, that we seek to diverge from a conception of aesthetics as an ‘autonomous sphere’ which stands disparate or even hostile towards politics – an assumption which posits a supposed ‘aestheticization’ of politics to always be inherently a- or anti-political. At the same time, we attempt to resist theorizing aesthetics as a mere structurally analogous model or mirror image to politics and to instead see their ways of working as imbued and mutually dependent on one another. For this endeavor, the notion of the space of appearance serves primarily as a first point of departure, which will be problematized, enriched and elaborated upon by the various case studies.

Submission Guidelines, Deadlines and Technicalities

Abstracts (of around 500 words) may be submitted until the **1st of June, 2024**.

We have received funding to ensure that the publication will be Open Access. Several contract offers by different publishers are already available, but negotiations with other publishers are ongoing. The publication will either be in English or in English/German.

We are going to organize two events relating to the publication: The first is the continuation of the discussion group ‘Aesthetics of Democratic Life-Forms’ at the Goethe Graduate Academy (s. [here](#)), for which we meet bi-weekly during the semester (April–July). This summer, we have decided to primarily discuss seminal texts (by authors such as Arendt, Kluge/Neg, Rancière), but are also open for further suggestions. The second is a workshop which is to be held on the 10th–11th of October in Frankfurt and on Zoom. Drafts of the essays are to be circulated at the very latest two weeks in advance, i.e. until the **30th of September**. To ensure that we can provide a confidential space of discussion for the contributors, the workshop will not be open to the public. For people who live in Europe, we will be able to provide funding for travel and accommodation costs.

The timeline looks as follows:

April–July 24	Discussion group (participation is recommended, yet optional).
01.06.24	Deadline: abstracts.
15.06.24	Feedback on submissions.
30.09.24	Deadline: workshop drafts.
10.–11.10.24	Workshop in Frankfurt and on Zoom.
15.11.24	Deadline: essays (for copy-editing).
15.12.24	Copy-edited essays are sent back for further editing.
15.01.25	Deadline: essays (for proofreading).
15.02.25	Proofread essays are sent back for final inspection.
29.02.25	The finished volume is sent to the publisher.

All submissions and enquiries to be sent to mr@martin-renz.net and ju.schwarzwaelder@gmail.com.