

Editorial Necsus

NECSUS Editorial Board

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The editorial team at NECSUS is excited to embark on its 3rd year of publication. We continue to be dedicated to an open access model that makes the best work in the discipline of media studies freely available to all, and we are actively looking for additional institutional partners to join us and support this important effort. We will be present at NECS 2014 Milan to stage a workshop on journal editing. In the Autumn 2014 issue you can look forward to a special section on ‘War’ in commemoration of the centenary of the First World War. In Spring 2015 we will introduce a special section on ‘Animals’ guest edited by Barbara Creed and Maarten Reesink. For now, we begin the Spring 2014 issue with our features section, where we present a wide spectrum of articles that address current topics in media studies research.

Siegfried Kracauer has often been termed a realist and charged with a naïve understanding of film – a view which Thomas Elsaesser challenges in his 21st century re-reading of *Theory of Film*. Elsaesser takes us via Clement Greenberg, Rudolf Arnheim, and Gilles Deleuze all the way to Jacques Rancière and Jean-Luc Nancy, arguing for the radical contemporaneity of Kracauer’s ‘affinities’. Ginette Verstraete writes an in-depth historical investigation of the contexts and conditions of the rise of the iPhone, ending on a note of concern regarding the digital surveillance the apparatus enables through its navigational capabilities. The issue of space and navigation is taken up in a more historical perspective by Vicente Rodríguez Ortega, who looks at the city of Madrid in democratic transition in the late 20th century through a number of key Spanish films by Pedro Almodóvar, Fernando Trueba, and José Luis Garci. Dietmar Meinel offers a subversive reading of the Pixar film *Up* in the context of American imperialism. Continuing with a focus on animation and representations of the other, Perry Hinton

analyses Japanese manga and anime on British television, probing the nuances of cultural representation and misrepresentation.

Moving along to our special section and the concept of 'Traces'. As we live our mediatised lives we leave traces with every step we take. Traces are an inevitable (by-)product of all imaginable activities in a world permeated by digital networks. The concept of traces has also been put to use in other forms, particularly in connection to indexicality, visible evidence, and mapping. This special section on 'Traces' investigates variegated historical and contemporary meanings in relation to our everyday encounter with media and in relation to the dynamic and growing field of media studies.

The ubiquity of touchscreen interfaces on hand-held devices and countless public terminals has recently drawn the attention of media studies scholars (see our special section 'Tangibility'). In this context Nanna Verhoeff and Heidi Rae Cooley build on Lorenz Engell's article 'The tactile and the index', understanding the index not as a material trace but as a deictic marker of presence, spinning the semantic concept in a phenomenological direction. Miriam De Rosa deals with the poetics and politics of surveillance in Harun Farocki's artistic investigations of CCTV culture. Paula Albuquerque uses the example of her own artistic practice in postulating webcams as a cinematic medium tracking people in 'realtime'. In the case of net art, preservation and curatorial practices have profoundly changed. Annet Dekker describes how net art conservation demands the assemblage of traces that involve cultural, social, and technological processes. Lonneke van der Velden investigates web tracking and Dutch government surveillance. Andrea Mariani demonstrates that avant-garde documentary is a powerful tool for historical evidence of the ideology that can be re-traced in town plans and city maps of the 1930s. Saige Walton offers a take on the baroque and the figural in the film *Holy Motors*. Persuasive cartography and animated maps equally imply distinct ideological aims, as Giuseppe Fidotta shows in his case study on Fascist uses of the map and the trace in the 1940s. The notion of 'enhanced echoes' not only refocuses our attention from visible evidence to audible evidence but also bypasses the worn-out dichotomy of copy and representation, stressing instead the constructive transformations typical of the production process of mediated sounds that we recognise as typical for a place or historical period. As Jasper Aalbers suggests the echo is both the original sound and something else, displaced in time and space but nevertheless bound up with its origin in an ontological bond.

The NECSUS review sections continue to collect relevant coverage of contemporary events and publications in the film, television, and new

media world. The NECS Publication Committee (Alena Strohmaier and Lavinia Brydon) edits our book review section and presents a slate that gives an important cross-section of new publications in the wide-ranging field of media studies, including the following subjects: globalised television formats, soundscapes, digital distribution, Béla Tarr, and Europe and love in cinema. The Film Festival Research Network (Skadi Loist and Marijke de Valck) edits our film festival review section and once again offers incisive interviews along with short-form critical studies, including work on: Lars Henrik Gass and Oberhausen, Brazil's *Assim Vivemos*, Thessaloniki, Sarajevo, and Venice. In this issue we also present an exhibition review section devoted to the Fassbinder show in Frankfurt and the Athens Biennale. The exhibition review section will be expanded in the next issue by the NECS Publication Committee (Miriam De Rosa and Malin Wahlberg). We thank all of our section editors for their dedicated work.

NECSUS aims to cover a wide range of media studies because we are convinced that in a globalised and converged media culture it is only by bringing historically-informed, theoretically-inclined, and analytically-capable specialists together that we can trace a more complex and nuanced understanding of the possibilities and challenges of our contemporary world. We hope you will enjoy the articles in this issue and we welcome you to submit your own in the future.



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