

European Regional Congress 2011

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Semiotics of Space | Spaces of Semiotics

The European Regional Congress of the AISV-IAVS – International Association of Visual Semiotics – will be held in Lisbon– at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and at the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisbon, 26, 27 & 28 September 2011

Official languages of the Congress: Portuguese, English, French and Spanish

CALL FOR PAPERS

Contributors | Contextuality | Subjects for Reflection | Conditions of Submission | Deadlines

A. Contributors: semiotic and interdisciplinary methods

The semiotics of space intends to contribute to the understanding of the effects of meaning that the notion of space incorporates, in order to render more operational its instruments of analysis set up for this purpose. The European Regional Congress of the International Association of Visual Semiotics (IAVS-AISV) concerns all those who work and reflect on the signification of the spatial phenomena linked to architecture, geography, urbanism, communications, design, plastic arts, cyber culture, performance, television and cinema, literature, and to marketing. The Congress will endeavour to federate the Semioticians of all the affiliations: Barthian, Cognitivist, Peircian, Pragmatist, Rhetoric-argumentative, Greimassian... Around a same theme, the different affiliations of thought will privilege a thorough comparative study of the tools and interdisciplinary methods which characterise the semiotic theory. As stated by Norbert Wiener “*the future of the world will be a tighter and tighter struggle against the limits of our intelligence*”.

B. Contextuality : The visual and spatial fields in the face of the acceleration of history

During the last centuries the spatial phenomena underwent major changes due to the *acceleration of history* (Virilio): in the 19th century, it was the *multiplication of travels* with the railways; in the 20th century it was the *supersonic speed* of planes and rockets; and the 21st century is immersed in the *culture of the instantaneous* made possible thanks to new technologies, which created through the Web, a “*world in the World*”. The consequences of this acceleration of history are numerous, but we can see two great lines of strength taking shape:

- *The urbanisation of real time* – The time of *masses and machines* (Ernst Jünger), which is ours, it is also the time of *generalised communications* (Gianni Vattimo), it installs a space of visualities assisted and formulated by technique, and finally, an environment of electronic networking. The information technologies have mobilised our epoch, and by this have determined other contours for the world market and accelerated the historical times, linking the individuals to real time. In turn, biotechnology merges the organic with the inorganic, making possible the creation of hybrids, which corresponds to surpassing human life itself, a life enriched par the imaginary and biotechnologically improved. The Web enables the creation *ex novo* of a new space and a new reality a “*world in the World*”. We have started to speak about numeric space, of global space, of space for social networks, of global public space and of cyberspace. Numerics, cyberculture and the movement of electronic networks are constituted as an alternative space which welcomes us and the world, where it is necessary to navigate to attain the new America of a new cultural paradigm.

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- *The disurbanisation of the real space* – This cyberspace has provoked a displacement of the notion of space: the individual no longer sees himself only in a concrete and territorialised space, but he also enters the interactive space of communications. According to *Virilio* the new technologies induce a “telepresence” but enable also absolute speed and absolute control. The forms of use of this “telepresence” by the world market engender the urbanisation of real time just as the disurbanisation of real space, and the consequence is a global and mutant city. As *Rem Koolhaas* illustrates by the *Harvard Project on the City*, these “mutant cities” are jointly run by the dynamics of the market value and regroup a population of more than 10 million inhabitants. According to Koolhaas these “mutant cities” function on the basis of mechanisms of spatialisation, which enable the constitution of a new paradigm of a contemporary city. *The contemporary spatial condition, mobile reality, fluctuating from Asia to America, from Africa to Europe, is the melting pot of great energies which travel throughout the world and the product of a society the scale of which has radically changed:*

The two tendencies presented all along this topic about visual and spatial fields in the face of the acceleration of history affect particularly the visual productions. The power of the visual channel already authorised an apparently immediate apperception of the phenomena and their spatialised treatment. The acceleration of the processes of exchange undoubtedly reinforce this fundamental trait.

C. Subjects for Reflection and Debate

1. Semiotics and systems of value : new spaces and new modalities of seeing.

How does “the urbanisation of real time and the disurbanisation of real space” become visually explicit in each of our domains (architecture, geography, urbanism, communications, design, plastic arts, cyber culture, performance, television, cinema, literature, marketing, etc.)? The management of these new spaces and of these new visualities, do they not suppose a questioning of the systems of values on a planetary scale?

2. Semiotics and structuration of visual productions

The new paradigm of the contemporary city, does it ask for new grammars of space? As soon as chronological staggering —past, present, future—, a necessary condition for progressive structuration of space, is diluted in instantaneity, must we not reinvent, for this new city, new modalities of structuration? “Real” space is it not brought back from now on to a structure of surface, without memory, without social stratification, without biodiversity?

3. Semiotics and cyberspace. New spatial parameters, new modalities of seeing ?

The *media* who exploit the interconnected computer network create new types of space: spaces of communication, of projection, of staging, of constituting current events... It is therefore about studying the way a given culture is more and more shaped by mediatic spaces. Does the cyberspace introduce different parameters from those which organise real space, and is it from now on pertinent to elaborate semiotics of cyberspace? Can we associate cyberspatial objects with objects of the world, like the clouds and the climate, to make of it the theme of artistic performances?

4. New Spaces and Morphologies

If we consider the founding works of morphology (Goethe, Saint-Hillaire, d'Arcy Thompson, Warburg, Gombrich, Thom) the impact of the morphological approach in such diverse fields as in biology, mathematics, urbanism, analysis of the dynamics in the systems of social science, history or the philosophy of art and if we consider also the impact of other innovative currents, like morphodynamic semiotics and neurosciences, which take as an aim the perceptive interaction between the subject and

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its environment,... How will the look upon morphodynamic semiotics enable us to approach the questions linked to urbanism of real time and to the disurbanisation of real space?

5. *Spaces of actual experiences*

The greater part of our social, intellectual and sensitive experiences, from the most elementary to the most elaborated, are linked to *locative* space: where to meet the other, flee the danger, seize an object, feed oneself, to observe a phenomenon? ... How do these different *locative* and event filled spaces become the *epistemic* support of knowledge and experience? Does the physical space, notably in what is perceived visually, the same structure as the social and territorial space or that of our abstractions? The “*built*” spaces — theatrical, fictional, pictorial, sculptural, architectural, etc. — are they the expression of our *imaginary* cognition, of our mental representations themselves? What is the contribution of cognitive semiotics to the comprehension of the spatial meaning and of its visual changes? How could the experience, the spatial phenomenology, and the new modalities of seeing have given rise to the evolution of semiotic functions? And what is their relationship with the phenomenology of time?

Conditions of Submission

The abstracts must be written in English or in French, with a maximum of 500 words. There will be a blind evaluation by a committee of experts, on the basis of the following criteria: originality, pertinence and a relationship with the theme.

In order to facilitate the evaluation procedure, the organising committee requests contributors to present their résumés in the following way: the proposal is to be sent in the form of an e-mail including the following elements within the body of the message:

- THEMATIC CHOISE proposed and form adopted (communication or poster), Arial 11 characters, in italics, centred.
- HEADLINE: Arial 14 characters, Bold type, centred.
- AUTHOR, INSTITUTION AND COUNTRY: Arial 11 characters, in italics, centred.
- ABSTRACT TEXT LAYOUT: Arial 12 characters, 1,5 line spacing, no tabs, left aligned or justified.
- All this information will also appear on an attached pdf document, but which will not bear the name of the author. Please record the pdf document under a name code with 3 letters and 6 aleatory numerals. (Example: CHT359619.pdf).

Deadlines

Proposals for papers should be made before **31st March 2011**, at the following e-mail address: aisv2011@gmail.com. You will receive an acknowledgement by e-mail. The notification of acceptance will be sent for the **30th April 2011**. Integral texts must be submitted for the **15th July 2011** (the format of this text will be specified later). An electronic book containing the integrality of the texts received will be published. It is planned to publish in print a selection of texts in reviews of reference. The organising committee will supply further details on this point in due course. For more information please consult the Congress web site: <http://aisv2011-en.yolasite.com/call-programme.php>

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