

“Malaise in representation”

This fourth issue of the online journal *HYBRID* aims at questioning how a major and possibly unseen crisis is emerging/rising in the field of representation, as understood both as a way to apprehend the world, as a model for illustrated figuration/portrayal and as a condition to conceptualize the relation between the human and his environment. Betting on reinstating a term just as misused as criticized, this issue considers “representation” with its multiple meanings, including political¹ ones, and sets as an objective to chart its ideological and aesthetic issues by calling for papers from numerous disciplinary backgrounds, in order to highlight the political, social, cultural and artistic impact of this word in our time.

Contextual elements

Long gone are the days when the art world was celebrating a non-representative radical abstraction, where choosing conceptual art meant scorning mimesis, where Bernard Dort was conversely singing in *La Représentation émancipée* (1988) “a happy utopia : the one of theater as a place for an ideal coexistence between various artistic approaches, even various conceptions of the world”. Our time is more about denigration, even about accusation, of any form of representation, to such an extent that we can mention a new “iconoclast” sequence in the future of our contemporary societies: more and more lawsuits against fictions on the grounds that sometimes they allude to events, news items or persons “that really existed” and perfectly recognizable, or sometimes they influence mimetic behaviors of “moving into action”, looking for imaginary narrative episodes to occur; revival of pressures from the civil society as well as the media and political power to forbid, censor, or modify artworks (and not only political cartoons of the prophet exemplified by the public debate) supposedly injuring a belief, a population or a social category; conflicts of interpretation when mentioning historical facts and the way they are presented (*Exhibit B* by Brett Bailey)...

Have we consequently entered an era considered by the sociologist Bruno Latour as an “Iconoclash¹”? Do we suffer, on the contrary, from a lack of “visibility²” resulting from a “misrepresentation” phenomenon? The “Great national history” becomes impoverished and narrative practices such as “life tales” of literature and sociology seem gone, as a consequence of the crisis in democratic representation. Then, this would explain not a distrust towards representation but

¹B. Latour, *Petite Réflexion sur le culte moderne des dieux faitiches* [1996], followed by *Iconoclash*, Paris, Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond-La Découverte, 2009.

²N. Heinrich, *De la visibilité. Excellence et singularité en régime médiatique*, Paris, Gallimard, 2012. Et A. Mubi Brighenti, *Visibility in Social Theory and Social Research*, Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.

in the contrary, a new initiative of staging to create, through other means than democratic delegation, a “Parlement des invisibles³” (Parliament of the invisible) destined for overcoming the inadequate common forms of media visibility.

Conditions of production and reception of representation are roughly questioned and configures sharing lines that only partially match the common political and ideological divisions. Art, culture and creation become the parade ground for new or renewed confrontations sometimes weakening the free exercise of freedom of speech, opinion of invention and limiting room for maneuver in creation, thus questioning the artist of the intellectual’s sovereignty in the founding principles of modern democratic space as sharing the sensitive.

Elements to address the issue

In a paradox that is only apparent, the unprecedented sophistication of techno-scientific means of representation at the touch of a culture of innovation (3D cinema even multisensory, augmented reality, avatars, etc.), but also the extension of new information and communication technologies within an attentional economy that reached saturation, or the unprecedented crisis of the traditional system of democratic representation, tend to weaken the joint construction of the symbolic field and to place representation at the heart of a civilizational malaise or even a true anthropological break. From the system of perception and understanding of the world around us, representation now tends to become a clouding filter on identification, classification and prioritization systems – sometimes incidentally, sometimes deliberately –, but also on forms of recognition, legitimacy and identity.

Assuming that representation, far from being reduced to a mere imitation of reality (mimesis), allows a fantasy projection – either in the past, as reenactment, or in a possible potential future (agency) – in the contemporary world, often relayed by powerful individual or collective mythologies (storytelling), through utopian or exploratory fiction, we are able to address a certain number of issues in our time.

Articles and creative proposals can address all fields of arts (performance arts, visual arts, digital arts, literature, and music), as well as the vast field of social sciences, preferably in a cross perspective, around the following questions:

- Factory of representation

Is representation characterized by congruence, redundancy, dissonance or a dissimilarity regarding facts it evokes or summons?

The idea is to question the production of representation, according to identifiable figurative terms, in time and space. And more widely to question, through the “image factory” (Philippe Descola), the great fundamental taxonomies supporting different worldviews, and the axiological systems to which they are connected.

- Aesthetics of representation

All fields of contemporary art, in the broadest sense, can be explored here, with a critical prospect (crisis or questioning of the representation) or otherwise in the context of a reorganization of representation (new sensory approaches, new techniques, new languages, new rhetoric, new poetic ...).

³P. Rosenvallon, *Le Parlement des invisibles. Raconter la vie*, Paris, Seuil, 2014. The sociologist takes over the great editorial project of the 19th century *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, « moral encyclopaedia » of the 19th century by Leon Curmer.

- *Anthropological perspectives*

What tensions, which new links develop between art, representation and the world, when in a now globalized space and shared by belief systems that differ on the status of representation, the images circulate, hybridize and recompose widely?

- *Reception and reappropriation of representation*

The opening of the range of representation possibilities generated by the development of digital technology, but also the proliferation of immersive devices with direct involvement of the viewer, listener or the reader questions the reception of representation devices increasingly complex, sometimes referred to as "perverse mechanisms" to the extent that such procedures place the audience in a position to participate in what they are supposed to report⁴. The idea is to identify reception phenomenon through a number of reading or context effects likely to trigger a symbolic confrontation or even a conflict of interpretation within the scope of representation, weakening the "interpretative communities" established (Stanley Fish).

- *Performative efficiency of representation*

Having observed the self-fulfilling dimension of credibility systems, the idea will be to examine again the performative dimension of representation. That is to say its impact on the world of perception: therapeutic effect of representation created as an outlet, in line with Aristotelian catharsis, motivational exhortation to action; impact of representation on the social and political space.

- *The representation policy*

Is representing the same as reiterating a redundant connection to a reality likely to participate in the phenomenon it purports to condemn or question? On the contrary, is representing proposing a sublimation form of reality likely to introduce a dissonant, critical and distanced relation to this phenomenon – source of empowerment? Is exhibiting, and even "exposing" the humiliated ones of History the same as giving them a full and entire legitimacy within the symbolic order from which they have been excluded for so long, or in the contrary, reactivating the conditions of their subordination? Does projecting ourselves in a fictional and fantasmatic vision of reality enable to ward off the ghosts of the past or the demons of time, to invent new possible worlds, to reconfigure the sharing of perceptions or, in the contrary, to exacerbate tensions?

Every article submitted to HYBRID undergoes a **double-blind assessment**.

Every article shall be submitted **in the strictest anonymity**.

Every article shall be written in either **French or English**.

The author shall attach a short bio-bibliography (max. 15 lines) in a separate document

The article shall not exceed **35,000 characters** (including spaces).

All articles shall be submitted in Word format (.doc or .docx). Images shall be presented both inserted into the text and in a separate file. Every copy of an existing work shall be clearly identified.

⁴N. Heinich, *Libération*, 27-28/12/2014, p. 27.

Concerning the research-creation proposals (which can be submitted in non-textual formats, i.e. sound files, film files, etc.), we will be unable to ensure their hosting and maintenance. Therefore, the author shall submit an Internet “link” to their work available for consultation and/or download. Authors shall also include an introduction to their project (max. 5,000 characters).

Timetable for the submission of proposals

- Start of the call for proposals: March 1st, 2016
- Reception of the complete articles (max. 35,000 characters including spaces) and research-creation proposals: **July, 15th, 2016** at the following address: **artsh2h@univ-paris8.fr**
- **Uploading on February 2017**