

POINTED OR POINTLESS? Recalibrating the Index Part II

**A conference and forum on the index in contemporary
photography and image-based practice, theory and culture**

ended
London 30 June 2017



Day 2
Potsdam: 4 November 2017

Organised by Coventry University,
Fachhochschule Potsdam and Middlesex University

Brandenburg Center for Media Studies, Potsdam 4 November 2017

The symposium "Pointed or Pointless? Recalibrating the Index" aims to reconsider the notion of the index, its history and present-day applicability. Some recent debates – which abandon strict definitions of analogue/digital and scrutinize fixed notions of truth and medium – are taken as an opportunity to readdress the notion in the 21st century. The event in Potsdam will continue the discussion, which was started in London earlier this year.

Deriving from the semiotic theory of American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, the index has enjoyed a wide-reaching career. It has dominated photography's definition as a medium for decades, justifying its specific "truth-claim". With the rise of digital technologies the notion – in terms of a trace left behind by the photographed object on a material surface – has been challenged. Today, it serves as the distinguishing feature, which divides two states of the world (the real and the mediated) while at the same time connecting them. However this connection is not as linear as the media-ontological approach suggests, and has been recently discussed in terms of the "messy state of media", "post-digital", or "habitual media".

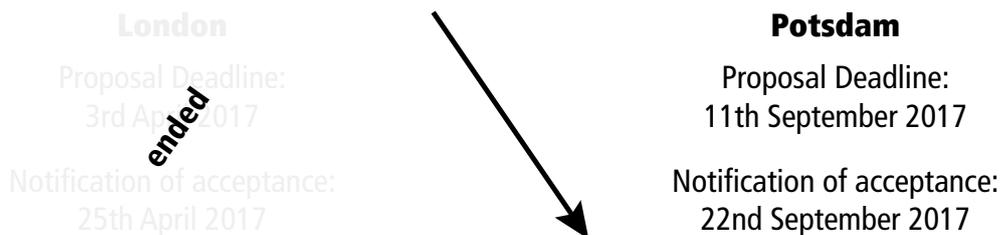
This complex situation asks for a re-evaluation of the notion of index – taking into account its complex historical existence; challenging it as an ontological tool by tackling the asserted gap between the "analogue" and the "digital"; and shifting the focus to an epistemological understanding.

The first event in London was dedicated to the re-evaluation of the index, focussing on its historical re-assessment, as well as on the steps of "stylization" of the term, following the trace from Peirce to visual theory. Following up on the papers presented during the symposium in London, in Potsdam we will concentrate on the updating of the index. We will take a closer look at the use of the notion in debates on the networked image, as well as discuss gestures of authentication, which emphasize concepts of authenticity and objectivity and can be registered as indexical.

We invite submissions that address:

- Politics of indexicality (including institutionalization of the notion in visual studies and photography theory);
- The deictic/performative qualities of the index, and challenges by artists/artworks to the theoretical tenets of indexicality;
- Employments of the index in digital/networked image debates;
- Readings of the index that allow for a shift from an ontological to an epistemological understanding;
- Metadata and indexicality (in social media, digital forensics, search engines, etc.);
- Indexical notions of real-time effects (as generated with apps like Snapchat, etc.).

500-word abstracts for 20-minute presentations
should be sent to andergassen@fh-potsdam.de



The first event in London was audio recorded and can be accessed here:

<http://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/research-directories/research-news/2017/pointed-or-pointless-re-calibrating-the-index>

Priority for Potsdam papers will be given to abstracts that build on or respond to papers from the London event as part of their research.

Organizing Committee:

Lisa Andergassen (Fachhochschule Postdam)

Paulius Petraitis (Middlesex University)

Damian Sutton (Coventry University)

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the Department of Visual Culture at Berlin University of the Arts.