

News item. Retrieved from <http://www.commens.org/news/item/special-issue-punctum-art-concept-and-institution>, 12.03.2025.

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**Category:** Publication

**Title:** Special issue of Punctum on Art as Concept and Institution

**Description:** Art as Concept and Institution: History and Semiotics of an evolving category  
Special issue of Punctum, the International Journal of Semiotics of the Hellenic Semiotic Society

While semiotic thinking is already implicit in the foundational works of Alois Riegl and Erwin Panofsky, a number of art historians and philosophers of art have also explicitly drawn on Peirce and Saussure for the analysis of painting and visual art in general. From the work of Meyer Shapiro to that of Stephen Bann, Rosalind Krauss and Mieke Bal, semiotics has been employed to shift analytical focus from the author to the internal structure of a work, to the contextual parameters of its interpretation and, more broadly, to its meaning-making processes. At the same time, semiotic studies in picture theory, image analysis and visual culture have developed in fruitful ways, although in often diverging directions. In recent years, the works of Umberto Eco, Roland Posner, Klaus Sachs-Hombach and Göran Sonesson, informed by semiotic theory, offer different definitions of visual signification, image, and picture, and on occasions, a critique of categorical inconsistencies within such definitions. In a nutshell, it is also thanks to the contribution of semiotics that art, both as an institutional category and an intellectual concept, has greatly evolved since it was established in early European modernity, becoming broader in certain of its aspects and perhaps more limited in others.

This special issue of Punctum seeks to address the ways historical and semiotic approaches understand and define the very category of art, with an emphasis on visual arts. The editors invite the submission of articles that inquire into the meanings, histories, genealogies of and critical approaches to notions of art, asking for instance (but not exclusively):

- What has constituted art in relation to religion, science, politics and commerce?
- How and under what circumstances has the category of (mainly visual) art been formulated in philosophy, aesthetics and connoisseurship?
- How does it change in the light of informational, immersive and nonrepresentational qualities of the image?
- What is the status of the artwork in the museum, the collection, the academy, the archive and in the culture of memorialization?
- What is an 'artistic medium' and how does the term relate to terms like

picture, intersemiosis, imagetext and visuality?

- What are the possible links between semiotics as it is employed by art history and philosophy of art on the one hand and the political,
- anthropological, ethnographic and pedagogical turns of contemporary art on the other?
- In what ways is a re-semiotization of art as a concept and as a category possible today?

Prospective authors should submit an abstract of approximately 300 words by mail to Lia Yoka (liayoka [at] arch.auth.gr) and Hans-Peter Söder (hans.soeder [at] lrz.uni-muenchen.de), including affiliation and contact information. Acceptance of the abstract does not guarantee publication, given that all research articles will be put through the journal's peer review process.

Timeline:

- Deadline for abstracts: December 31, 2015
- Notification of acceptance of the abstract: January 15, 2016
- Deadline for submission of full papers: May 15, 2016
- Final revised papers due: June 30, 2016
- Publication: Volume 2, Number 1: July 31, 2016

**Deadline:** 31/12/2015

**Keywords:** Art History, Semiotics