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The Politics of Pictures: Approaching a Difficult Concept

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Abstract

The article takes Cornelius Castoriadis' concept of the 'political imaginary' as an invitation to reflect on the role of pictures in politics and in facilitating alternative policies. For this purpose, pictures are not understood as merely rhetorical or propagandistic representations of political statements, which are actually to be thought of independently of the particular picture. Instead, by means of their specific pictorial qualities, pictures also influence the ways politics are negotiated or pursued and, moreover, they can stimulate alternative forms of political thinking. In order to argue for this understanding of the politics of pictures, the article proceeds in three steps: a brief review of the research on political iconography is followed by thoughts on Jacques Rancière and his concept of the 'distribution of the sensible'. On this basis, an understanding of pictorial politics is finally sketched that asks for genuinely political potentials that are directly linked to the specific qualities of the image: its duality, its vagueness, and its temporality.

The Political Imaginary and the Status of Pictures

The discipline of art history seems not to be particularly well equipped to think about the political imaginary. When art historians come across this concept it is difficult for them to do justice to the notion in its full scope of meaning. Instead, they – and I am one of them – can't help but have in mind materially bound pictures that can be experienced by the senses and that have always accompanied political communication and actions. By doing so, art history tends to focus on the representational and symbolic functions that pictures can have in political communication.

However, the notion of the political imaginary, as Cornelius Castoriadis (1987) conceived it, is of much more general and fundamental relevance. Castoriadis went far beyond the symbolic as well as linguistic and pictorial representations, introducing the imaginary as a fundamental concept that allows us to understand why sociality and society are possible at all. As this imaginary proves to be an unavoidable precondition of society, and at the same time, is conceived of as radically historical and mutable, it becomes necessary to conceptualize the

imaginary in a dynamic way, and not merely analogous to the persistent, static representations of written language or pictorially materialized images. Therefore, it is not the single specific symbol or the individual, historically contingent representation, which makes both the (temporary) stability of society and social change comprehensible, but the unrelenting processes and practices of generating, transforming, suspending and dissolving symbols and concepts. These practices and processes are not based on stable structures or static reference systems, but on an indefinite, fluid ‘mass’ of potential references and meanings for which Castoriadis has coined the metaphorical notion of ‘magma’. The ‘magma’ precedes representation and discourse like an ‘unmarked space’.¹ Consequently, Castoriadis’ concept of the imaginary is not confined to what he calls the ‘actual imaginary’, that is, the concretized imaginary which has emerged in a particular society at a given time. Instead, his notion also includes the vague ‘radical imaginary’ that may be comprehended as the ‘elementary and irreducible capacity of evoking images’ (Castoriadis 1987, 127).

This understanding of the ‘radical imaginary’ implies that images and pictures, though by no means the paradigm of the imaginary, still play a more than marginal role in the processes and practices of the imaginary. As far as I can see, Castoriadis himself has not systematically thought about the relationship between the imaginary and images or pictures in the sense of materialized pictorial artefacts that address the sense of sight (Caumières 2014; Pechriggl 2011, 98). In view of the importance Castoriadis attaches to the fluidity of the still unformed ‘magma’, pictures may at first appear as solidified sediments, lacking precisely the dynamics that characterize the radical imaginary. At best, they would then be of interest as a quiet echo of the creativity and productivity of the imaginary, which only becomes available and tangible in these sediments. But pictures have nevertheless to be considered as part of the ‘actual imaginary’, because they contribute considerably to new imaginations and symbols, ideas and phantasms that shape society. In material pictures images are manifested and they, in turn, inspire new imaginings. Therefore, they cannot be ignored when we try to understand the ‘political imaginary.’

In the following, I would like to focus on the political implications and potentials of materially bound pictures without, however, being able to systematically determine their place within the concept of the ‘political imaginary’. Before such an attempt will be possible, it is important to clarify the relation between pictures on the one hand and the political on the other hand in a broader sense. By doing so my thoughts will inevitably veer away from the framework of Castoriadis’ thinking and refer to other conceptualizations of the ‘politics of images’. However, I will try to stick to at least one main idea of Castoriadis’, the fluid, mutable and dynamic nature of the imaginary. Keeping this in mind, I will consider whether pictures, in spite of their static, materialized nature, can dispose similar qualities and contribute to the development of creative political practices and processes.

The concept of the ‘politics of images’ to which I’m referring is only rather vaguely defined,² and its vagueness might be a symptom of the fact that current research is strangely undecided concerning the relationship between pictures and politics. On the one hand, there are tendencies to deliberately and closely tie politics to aesthetics or visual culture. On the other hand, there are developments that seem to entail a slow depoliticisation of thinking about

pictures. Some elements of aesthetic discourse – for instance, Jacques Rancière’s works – describe the political use of the aesthetic in an almost emphatic way. Anglo-American visual culture studies highlight the links between pictures or visibility and social as well as political issues. However, German art history, in particular, seems to neglect political issues and implications due to its focus on picture theory and what has been called ‘iconic criticism’.³ To a large degree, art history has gradually moved away from active discussions about the social role of the discipline, its potential for creating awareness, and its contribution to political issues. This applies, in particular, to the fundamental reflections of picture theory that have provided the discipline with a new basis in the German-speaking world, opening up new perspectives for it. We still have to explore how insights from recent discourses on picture theory can be productive or even instrumental in reflecting on the ‘politics of images’. I will try to outline such an approach and, for this purpose, will proceed in three steps. First, I will briefly draw on established political iconography and its insights. Then I will take a look at the well-known recent suggestion that we should think about politics and aesthetics in a close interrelation. On this basis, I will finally think about possible political implications and potentials of picture-theoretical considerations.

Political Iconography

There is no doubt that pictures are, to a large degree, influenced by the political contexts in which they are created or viewed. At the same time, pictures can considerably influence political discussions, decisions, and developments. This mutual relationship is directly evident with respect to pictures in which something political – such as a controversial political issue or a relevant stakeholder – is depicted. It is not uncommon for political visions and utopias to be expressed in effective pictures. We are also used to inquiring whether a picture is being employed as a means of political propaganda or manipulation.

All of these questions have become the subject of extensive and many-voiced research. Let me choose one of the relevant discussions as an example. The relationship between art, or pictures, and the political has been investigated on a broad basis and in long-term studies in projects on political iconography. They mainly took place – and still do – at the Warburg Haus in Hamburg, stimulated by Martin Warnke.⁴ However, there are other contexts, such as Reinhart Koselleck’s studies on political iconography and the former Collaborative Research Centre on The political as Communicative Space in Bielefeld.⁵ The Handbook of Political Iconography, published in 2011, marks an important step in the development of this research area and documents its self-understanding. According to the three editors, Fleckner, Warnke, and Ziegler (2011, 7), political iconography investigates the ‘concepts, topics, and motives of political visibility’ as well as their ‘historical continuities and disruptions’. By exposing the ‘use of picture production in the political space’, it also raises ‘a new attention to what is made and orchestrated in political representation’ (9). For this purpose, political iconography asks about the ‘mechanism of visual political efforts at persuasion’ and the ‘pictorial formulas’ (11) that have been effective across the borders of epochs, cultures, and systems. This approach does not only mean working on art-historical reconstructions, it also has an

awareness-raising intention. For good reasons, political iconography focuses on making the persuasive – and sometimes manipulative – instrumentalisation of pictures understandable, so that it can be criticized.

Research on political iconography has long since transcended a narrow understanding of iconography that primarily focused on a methodologically safe interpretation of individual pictures. The practical implementation of this research approach has often shown that the analysis of political pictures cannot be restricted to correctly identifying and deciphering pictorial motifs and investigating their use for making certain statements. Even if the main interest is in an individual picture, it is inevitable to also examine the related pictorial practices and thus the ‘complex interplay of visibility, apparatus, institutions, discourse, bodies and figurality’ (Mitchell 1994, 16). The latter is also the subject of, among others, visual culture studies.

More recent research results – in particular, I’m thinking of an illuminating paper by Christian Joschke (2012) – can therefore be read as the implicit description of a development in which political iconography has, in a very productive way, reached its own limits, and has then partially crossed them. It examines representations of politics, political statements articulated in pictures, political uses of pictures and, in particular, social practices in visual culture. In this way, it has been shown, among other things, that pictures do not only offer representations of political problems, positions, and programmes, but that they also influence reality and that they can intervene in actual conditions. The disputes about the publication of Kurt Westergaard’s Mohammed caricatures or pictures of acts of violence show how capable pictures are of having effects that go beyond their producers’ intentions. In this sense, political iconography is not limited to developing a vocabulary or grammar of political picture motifs. It also covers questions of representation, pictorial rhetoric, the affective and psychological qualities of pictures and their reality changing potential. The latter is currently receiving special attention in the context of investigating the ‘power’ of pictures, their ‘agency’ or ‘image acts’ (Bredenkamp 2017). In this respect, political iconography has been inspired by, among others, Aby Warburg’s works, especially by the key concept of the ‘pathos formula’. It offers a model for conceptualizing the effects of visual phenomena that transcend media, epochs, and systems (Joschke 2012, 189–190).

But, at the same time, such references to Warburg also illustrate that the questions political iconography is interested in go beyond the methods of iconography alone. In its rigorous research on the various links between the political on the one hand and pictures or visual phenomena on the other hand, political iconography has increasingly pointed out that pictures are not only political when they feature political contents. They are more than – and different from – cleverly dressed political statements in a pictorial form of representation that is primarily rhetorical and serves persuasive ends. Many studies that started off with the questions and methods of political iconography have also shown that political pictures are not at all at the sole disposal of their creators, commissioners, addressees, and recipients. This, however, indicates that our interest in political pictures should not be limited to contents, messages, and programmes alone. We also must not prematurely assume a cause and effect

relation, for instance, between the intention of the seemingly sovereign producer of the image or picture and the seemingly passive reception by the viewer (Rancière 2009, 17).

All of this is by no means new or an insight from recent research. In the context of his socio-historical approach, T. J. Clark has previously warned against understanding pictures as simple depictions of 'ideologies, social relations, or history' (Clark 1999, 10). In this sense, he opposed 'intuitive analogies between form and ideological content' (10). According to Clark, pictures cannot be reduced to a merely instrumental function like propaganda. It would be a reduction to only investigate the picture producers or commissioners and their social situation or political agenda.

This short, and therefore necessarily incomplete and abridged overview of political iconography provides the initial outline of questions and challenges that a fundamental reflection on the concept of 'politics of image' must address; it must start off with the specifics of pictures and investigate their fundamental properties with respect to political implications. Can we find uniquely pictorial characteristics and qualities that are particularly relevant for their political use? What is the specific political contribution, the specific effect of a picture if it cannot be reduced to primarily visualizing contents, ideas, or statements?

The 'Distribution of the Sensible' and the 'Politics of Images'

The specific suitability of pictures for political ends is often regarded as based on their ability to evoke evidence by means of their visible and material presence. Pictures count as particularly effective rhetorical 'machines' that can make, for instance, individual opinions and particular constructions seem obvious and natural. However, prior to having such effects, pictures contribute to decisions about what can be seen, and what remains hidden, invisible and thus irrelevant. The 'politics of images' therefore means more than the visual mediation of political positions. It also negotiates and determines the limits of what is visible. What are the stakeholders, states of affairs, and questions that visually appear and can be articulated this way – or can articulate themselves? Who or what is empowered by a visually mediated visibility, and what is made available by the means of pictures as a merely passive object?

Questions like this are the centre of Jacques Rancière's philosophical reflections on the relationship between art and politics. He only started to approach the issue of aesthetic phenomena in the 1990s, from the perspective of a political philosopher. After having worked closely with Louis Althusser, he broke with his former teacher and also with the conception of the engaged intellectual who speaks for the suppressed. In distancing himself from Althusser and by working on the history of workers in the 19th century, Rancière developed a deep mistrust of the self-understanding of intellectual elites who – as the avant-garde – want to contribute to the emancipation of those who do not seem to have a voice. Rancière's scepticism about such a conception can still be seen in his more recent works on the relationship between art and politics. He emphasizes:

... that the effectiveness of art does not consist in conveying messages, in dictating models or counter-models of behaviour, or in teaching how to decipher

representations. It primarily consists in arrangements of bodies, in separations of singular spaces and times that determine the ways of being together or being separated, of being opposed to each other or amidst each other, of being outside or inside, of being close or far away. (Rancière 2008a, 61)⁶

Prior to any questions about particular statements and messages, fundamental, politically relevant decisions have already been taken, because – as Rancière calls it – a ‘distribution of the sensible’ (2009, esp., 85) was carried out, affirmed, or revised. With this interest in very basic, seemingly trivial, and at the same time effective arrangements that influence and classify any concrete utterance, Rancière’s approach resembles Michel Foucault’s discourse analysis and its focus on the question of what can be said, and made visible, in a given context.⁷ For Rancière, dividing and ordering what can sensually appear, be perceived, and be articulated is decisive for which considerations and expectations can be concretely uttered.

When such a ‘distribution of the sensible’ has been established in a stable way – so that it is clear who participates in the political discourse and which questions and opinions can be articulated – Rancière does not talk about politics in a strict sense (*‘la politique’*). Instead, he calls such situations *‘la police’*, that is, police in the sense of the premodern concept describing a well-ordered community. In contrast to *police*, *politique* only happens if the existing order – that anticipates ‘the power relations in the obviousness of the sensually given’ – is broken.⁸ It is only then that dissent can arise and be carried out:

Politics is, first of all, the activity of rearranging the sensual framework conditions within which the common objects are determined. It breaks with the sensual obviousness of the ‘natural’ order that determines individuals and groups as having to command and to obey, to public life, or to private life.⁹

Against this background, it becomes clear why Rancière – with a sometimes surprising emphasis – highlights the special value of art for politics. He even does not shy away from a rather affirmative update of Friedrich Schiller’s idea of ‘aesthetic education’. Since it is a feature of the arts to challenge the existing order of the visible, and to make visible or sayable things that have so far been hidden, they are highly significant when it comes to breaking up the established police in favour of the open dissent of *politique*.¹⁰

Art and politics are related as forms of dissent, as operations of redesigning the common experience of the sensual. [. . .] The effect of the museum, the book, and the theatre is much rather the distribution of space and time and the ways of sensual presentations that they establish, than the content of this or that work (Rancière 2008a, 70–71).¹¹

The ‘new formations of the visible, the sayable, and the thinkable’ that Rancière thinks pictures, among other things, are capable of creating, can open up new perspectives. ‘But they do so on condition that their meaning or effect is not anticipated’; Rancière (2009, 103) argues against any instrumental use that would turn practices of dealing with pictures into acts of ordered and predetermined *police*.

Rancière combines these thoughts on art as the instance that facilitates politics by revising the sensual order with a historical thesis. According to Rancière, this political use of art is only possible under the conditions of a genuinely aesthetic thinking that has characterized our dealing with art since approximately 200 years ago. Antiquity and pre-modernity were informed by an ethical regime that strongly attributed a pedagogical or therapeutic function to art and by a representative regime that took art to be a rule-governed practice with stable internal hierarchies of genres and styles. The aesthetic regime that grew more prominent in the theory and practice of the 18th century underlined the idea of the autonomy of art. This meant that the aesthetic production and reception could combine various ‘distributions of the sensible’, showing them to be contingent and negotiable, because there were no external obstacles or internal rules to obstruct this. The aesthetic regime does not count on artworks evoking certain predetermined effects: ‘The aesthetic efficacy means the effect of suspending any direct relationship between the creation of forms of art and the evocation of a certain effect on a certain audience’ (Rancière 2008a, 64).¹² In the centre of this conception of art is a ‘decoupling, a break of the relationship between the products of artistic ability and certain social ends; between the sensual forms, the meanings one can read in them, and the effects they can cause’ (Rancière 2008a, 65–66).¹³ Rancière thinks that art can – in the context of the aesthetic regime – change the distribution of the sensible and open up a space in which this distribution can be reflected, negotiated, and made into the object of dissent.

Rancière’s conception of the aesthetic regime has been met with great interest, but it is obviously also problematic. Rancière’s own, sometimes exaggerated dissociation from Pierre Bourdieu’s sociology of art indicates the objections against the concept of an aesthetic regime. Its relationship to the classic aesthetics of autonomy would need to be determined more clearly. Rancière’s suggestion tends to underestimate the political potential of older works of art, because their production and reception situation seems to be determined too much by the standards of the ethical or representative regime. In what follows, I will therefore focus only on Rancière’s suggestion not to see the political use of art and pictures in messages and intended effects, but in an occupation with the ‘distribution of the sensible’. However, I will support this idea with arguments from picture theory that are systematic rather than historical.¹⁴

Pictures as Spaces of Political Reflection?

Since the concept of the ‘politics of images’ does not only refer to the instrumental use of pictorial forms of representation for political ends, the specific features and potentials of pictures that can trigger a revision of the existing ‘distribution of the sensible’ must be described in more detail. In order to do so, I want to begin with three basic assumptions from picture theory. In the context of this paper, I can, of course, only briefly outline them.

(1) One specific feature of pictures is that they always make themselves visible (as a physical thing), together with what is represented in them (the image object). In picture theory, this fundamental ‘duality’¹⁵ of the picture has been described as a tension between transparency and opacity, or as between showing something and showing itself. At first glance, pictures

seem to resemble other signs in this respect. But whereas signs usually refer away from themselves to what is meant, pictures confront us with the fact that a pure visual object ('Sichtbarkeitsgebilde', Fiedler 1991, 192) seems to be presently given in them. The 'artificial presence' (Wiesing 2005) of the image object – to use concepts from picture phenomenology – entails that the viewers' gaze on this purely visible object goes along with a 'sensual awareness of the present' ('sinnliche[s] Gegenwartsbewußtsein von etwas', Wiesing 2005, 34).¹⁶ In contrast to – and more strongly than – other signs pictures can therefore inspire contradictory perceptions when causing the viewer to switch between focussing on what is represented and perceiving the picture as a thing in its physical and material constitution.

(2) Pictures are, to a particularly large extent and in a specific way, undetermined (Boehm 2007, 199–212). Since they are not composed of distinct and disjunctive signs, but are based on a continuum of marks, traces, lines, and colours, potentially any square millimetre of the picture surface can be significant (Elkins 1995). At the same time, we as viewers have to assume that there are parts and phenomena in a picture that hardly contribute to its originally intended meaning – or not at all. Whether the fraying of a line in an etching is just a side effect of the technical process and can therefore be neglected, or whether it is an element of the picture that constitutes its meaning, cannot be determined with certainty (Goodman 1976, 116). Neither can the question be settled of how deeply the viewer's gaze is supposed to penetrate details of the picture. Pictures are also undetermined because viewing them is different from seeing everyday surroundings (Kebeck 2006, esp. 71–80). In our common viewing of objects, by moving and changing our location we can gain additional information in order to arrive at a more unambiguous perception. A picture prohibits such strategies. If we try to look behind a house shown in a picture, we will probably only see the back of the canvas. What is behind the picture object of the house therefore remains constitutively undetermined. This indeterminacy of the picture, however, goes along with a high degree of determinability. Pictures, as it were, prompt us to try to determine them. They often inspire their viewers to try out competing, sometimes even contradictory, perceptions.

(3) The duality and indeterminacy of pictures explains one of its features that is still being underestimated, with serious consequences: its reception–aesthetic temporality (Grave 2014, 2016). Seeing a picture is not just a matter of a mere moment; it is only conceivable as a temporally extended process. Any seemingly singular, momentary glance at the picture takes time. When pictures deliberately employ their duality and indeterminacy, they can entrap the viewer in sophisticated processes of perception in which various attempts at determination compete with each other – or where a tension arises between the focus on what is represented and the deliberate look at the picture carrier and the means of representation. When we experience pictures in this way, they are not limited to currently showing something and making it evident. To put it pointedly: if our thinking about pictures is still influenced by the concern that they function as simulacra and that they put themselves in lieu of reality, this is due to historically and culturally rooted conventions. It is not caused by fundamental properties of the picture. Our fear of pictures and an alleged flood of images is the expression of misguided practices in dealing with pictures.

If they are not limited in their effects by their viewers' practices, pictures do offer the possibility of opening up spaces of reflection and revising premature, seemingly evident decisions. By specifically pictorial means, they make alternatives appear. In this, the reception–aesthetic temporality of pictures is particularly significant. Due to the duality and indeterminacy of pictures, the temporality of perceiving them can neither be regulated nor precisely predetermined. It evades any instrumentalisation towards an end of mediating certain messages. However, the picture's design can greatly contribute to highlighting those phenomena that inspire contradictory attempts at determination, or to a shift of focus from what is represented to the picture in its physical appearance. These phenomena tend to weaken the picture's ability to let the represented object appear present. There is not only the 'sensual awareness of being in the present' that is directed at the object appearing in the picture, but also the experience that this object's specifically pictorial way of being given goes along with it not being fully available to the viewer. No later than at this point, the viewer vividly realizes that the experience of something being present in the picture is only possible at the price of its simultaneous withdrawal. The tree appearing in the picture is sensually present to the viewer, but it can only be seen from one side. It is 'artificially' present, but not physically available and tangible. Moreover, the transparent look through the picture (as a physical thing) onto the image object is not possible without the possibility that the picture's physicality becomes noticeable (and hence the picture itself becomes opaque).

By entrapping the viewer in a temporally extended process of looking and thinking and by productively employing their indeterminacy, pictures can also make viewers experience when and where representations reach their limits. One example of how this potential can be used is Christian painting. Here it is employed to show the unportrayable, like God or Christ in his divine nature, precisely in its unportrayable nature in the picture (Didi-Huberman 1995; Marin 2006; Grave 2015). By providing experiences of something unportrayable, pictures do not only react to their own flaws. They can also sharpen our awareness that reality is not exhausted by what is visually and obviously given.

The practical engagement with the indeterminacy of pictures in the viewing process also offers the opportunity to practice thinking on multiple alternatives and to expose the contingency of what seems to be without alternatives. The viewers, to be sure, cannot avoid attempting to determine the visual phenomena in the picture in order to gain a sense that is as coherent as possible. However, they can equally notice that any attempt at determination only realizes one variant of an infinite potential of the picture. Pictures can thus make the path dependence of our thinking understandable. At the same time, they can inspire viewers to revise their own attempts at determination, in order to try out alternatives.

These potentials of pictures can be felt particularly effectively in situations of social interaction. The fact that pictures can be determined in numerous ways can be best experienced in a conversation with other viewers. As long as this conversation does not follow narrowing established traditions, like the bourgeois keenness for reliable art–historical knowledge, the exchange among several recipients can yield different, and also contradictory, perceptions and interpretations. Arguments about the right perspective do not have to be random. At the same time, participants who converse about pictures become familiar with

situations in which they must tolerate the fact that there is no way to decide between various interpretations; such exchanges take place within the undecidable coexistence of justified and legitimate views that will nevertheless diverge in practice (Grave 2011; Bader and Grave 2014). Since every attempt at determination must prove itself by a reference to the picture itself, such situations can show that apparent insights that were beyond any doubt are in fact questionable.

By triggering such processes of viewing, thinking, arguing, and negotiating, pictures transcend the narrow possibilities of a purely instrumental use for political ends. They have the potential to make the ‘division of the sensible’ and the order of the visible in its contingency and revisability become the subject of reflection. However, it is no coincidence that I have used the verb ‘can’ to an almost inflationary degree in my considerations. What I have outlined is only supposed to – and intended to – point out potentials of pictures that are by no means always, or even regularly, used. Especially in the field of politics, our visual culture has often preferred other possibilities and effects of pictures. However, if we think about the political in Jacques Rancière’s sense of an essential interconnection with the aesthetic, the specific features of pictures become obvious and allow for thinking about ‘politics of images’ in a fundamentally different way.

This new way of conceptualizing the potential political impact of pictures suggests a re-evaluation of their relevance for the political imaginary. If we understand pictures in the way I briefly outlined, then we cannot limit their function to the representation and ‘sedimentation’ of antecedent processes of the political imaginary. Rather, by their duality, indeterminacy and specific temporality, they are able to substantially contribute to the incessant mutability and creativity of the imaginary. The very same artefacts that temporarily give form and stability to the ‘actual imaginary’ also have the potential to trigger significant change by which the ‘radical imaginary’ comes into effect.

Translated by Michael Weh

Notes

1. See Gertenbach (2011). In a somehow unorthodox, but productive manner Gertenbach picked up the notion coined by George Spencer Brown and Niklas Luhmann to explain Castoriadis’ concept.
2. For an overview over the recent use of the term ‘politics of images’, see Bernhardt and Drechsel (2014).
3. See Bonnet (2008). Of course, such (presumed) neglecting of political aspects can itself be taken as a political practice in itself; see von Falkenhausen (2007).
4. See Warnke (1992), Warnke (2003), and Krass (2011).
5. See Locher und Markantonatos (2013), Brandt (2007), Holert (2016), and Diers (2016).

6. '[. . .] l'efficacité de l'art ne consiste pas à transmettre des messages, donner des modèles ou des contremodèles de comportement ou apprendre à déchiffrer les représentations. Elle consiste d'abord en dispositions des corps, en découpage d'espaces et de temps singuliers qui définissent des manières d'être ensemble ou séparés, en face de ou au milieu de, dedans ou dehors, proches ou distants' (translated by Michael Weh). These sentences seem to be missing in the English translation (Rancière 2009).

7. Rancière (2008b, 71–73) himself has addressed this resemblance to Foucault's approach. See also Muhle (2011).

8. 'La politique est la pratique qui rompt cet ordre de la police qui anticipe les relations de pouvoir dans l'évidence même des données sensibles.' (Rancière 2008a, 66; translated by Michael Weh). This sentence seems to be missing in the English translation (Rancière 2009).

9. 'La politique est l'activité qui reconfigure les cadres sensibles au sein desquels se définissent des objets communs. Elle rompt l'évidence sensible de l'ordre "naturel" qui destine les individus et les groupes au commandement ou à l'obéissance, à la vie publique ou à la vie privée [. . .].' (Rancière 2008a, 66; transl. by Michael Weh). These sentences seem to be missing in the English translation (Rancière 2009). See also Rancière (2008a, 67): 'Elle [la politique] commence quand des êtres destinés à demeurer dans l'espace invisible du travail qui ne laisse pas le temps de faire autre chose prennent ce temps qu'ils n'ont pas pour s'affirmer copartageants d'un monde commun, pour y faire voir ce qui ne se voyait pas, ou entendre comme de la parole discutant sur le commun ce qui n'était entendu que comme le bruit des corps.' (Politics 'begins with people, who are determined to remain in their invisible space of work, which leaves them no time to do anything but mind their business, taking this time – which they do not have – in order to make visible in it what was not visible before, or to make audible as speech what could only be perceived as noise of bodies.').

10. With this, Rancière clearly opposes Bourdieu who thinks that art – or the individual artwork – is generally shaped by previous orders and structures. See Rancière (2016, esp. 35–38) and Sonderegger (2010).

11. 'Art et politique tiennent l'un a l'autre comme formes de dissensus, opérations de reconfiguration de l'expérience commune du sensible. [. . .] L'effet du musée, du livre ou du théâtre tient aux partages d'espace et de temps et aux modes de présentation sensible qu'ils instituent, avant de tenir au contenu de telle ou telle oeuvre' (translated by Michael Weh). These sentences seem to be missing in the English translation (Rancière 2009).

12. 'L'efficacité esthétique signifie en propre l'efficacité de la suspension de tout rapport direct entre la production des formes de l'art et la production d'un effet déterminé sur un public déterminé' (translated by Michael Weh). These sentences seem to be missing in the English translation (Rancière 2009).

13. 'La rupture esthétique a ainsi installé une singulière forme d'efficacité: l'efficacité d'une déconnexion, d'une rupture du rapport entre les productions des savoir-faire artistiques et des fins sociales définies, entre des formes sensibles, les significations qu'on peut y lire et les

effets qu'elles peuvent produire' (translated by Michael Weh). These sentences seem to be missing in the English translation (Rancière 2009).

14. See Rancière's similar arguments, especially his concept of the 'pensive image', which he explains as 'the latent presence of one regime of expression in another' (Rancière 2009, 124; see also 125 and 131).

15. See Pichler and Ubl (2014, 116: 'zwiespältige Einheit von Bildvehikel und Bildobjekt', 'ambiguous unity of picture vehicle and picture object'); and Gregory (1970, 32: 'double reality'); as well as Kulvicki (2014, 13: 'duality').

16. Wiesing's understanding corresponds to Richard Wollheim's claim that only seeing a picture allows for a 'seeing-in'; see Wollheim (1980); and Wollheim (1987, esp. 43–100).

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