



Graduate School of
Creative Approaches to Public Space (CAPS)

SUMMER SCHOOL - ECOLE D'ÉTÉ

RENNES, BRITTANY, FRANCE

"ATTENTION, PLEASE!"

High Stakes and Emergencies:
Interdisciplinary Methodologies
for Creative Research on Public Space

CALL FOR PAPERS for DOCTORAL STUDENTS
*(For national and international PhD candidates working
on themes related to public space)*

22-23 June 2023

- **Thursday 22nd June: "The Unexpected and the Overlooked"**
Presentations of doctoral works // 15 mins/student
- **Friday 23rd June : "Can You Hear Me?"**
Presentations of doctoral works // 15 mins/student



Whenever we hear 'Attention please!' or see a sign with this request in a public space, it is commonly understood that an authority demands our urgent attention. Depending on context – and if spoken, intonation – it can be a polite request or a downright command to immediately direct our attention in a certain way. Who has the authority to direct human attention in public spaces and how does this affect the ways in which we engage with our environment(s)? How do such interactions affect the creation and reception of art in public spaces? What are the implications for different approaches to social, cultural, political, and ethical issues?

John Locke (1632-1704) described God as the ultimate authority to direct human attention towards a 'concern with morality and control of nature' (Harris, p. 152). The reified expression 'paying attention' to something or someone implies a certain cost and suggests a sense of obligation whereas 'giving attention' to someone or something suggests an act of voluntary generosity. But paying attention also pays: It is pleasurable. According to Locke, in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), God encourages and rewards human attention with the sensation of pleasure arising from understanding (Locke, p. 161). According to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) in *Critique of Judgment* (1790), paying attention to the beautiful and judging its representation in art is rewarded with pleasure as he maintains '[...] that is beautiful which pleases in the mere act of judging it [...]' (Kant, p. 187).

In what other ways does attention generate pleasure? In *A Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Adam Smith (1723-1790) highlights the pleasure we derive from the attention(s) of others. He clarifies that we are predisposed to pay special attention to ourselves and that the more the attention of others paid to us mirrors our own regard for ourselves, the more pleasure we gain (Smith, p. 138).

Smith's concept of the relationship between a theatre director, performers, and their audience and that of real-life interactions is similar. He proposes that, if we wish to receive the favourable attention of an audience, be this an actual theatre audience or 'spectators' for any issues we stage for/present to them in real life, we must direct our own attention towards the spectators too. The spectators must feel seen in their own right in order for them to appreciate the performance. Smith calls this type of attention 'sympathy' and argues that in order to provoke sympathy from others, we have to demonstrate sympathy for our 'spectators' too. This means that our 'presentation' must be shaped in a manner that our audience can sympathise with because it is also sympathetic to them (p. 16-17). It is the mutual feeling of sympathy, once aroused, that according to Smith leads to careful attention being given to the other and to their respective situation. This amounts to an exchange of attention and perspectives: 'As their sympathy makes them look at it in some measure with his eyes, so his sympathy makes him look at it, in some measure, with their eyes, especially when in their presence, and acting under their observation [...]' (p. 16-17). From these considerations, several questions may arise :

- What is the relationship between attention and sympathy in how art and arts interventions in public spaces engage with the public?
- How do objects of art and architecture draw our attention?
- How does art in public places make us engage with one another?

Karen Barad claims there is a natural relationship between all matter (*Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter*

and Meaning, Duke University Press, 2007, p. 393). This 'entanglement' could also be described as mutual attraction, attention or sympathy that exists between all matter. Could the complex interactions that occur when we pay attention simultaneously to art and to others in public places be described metaphorically in terms of 'diffraction patterns'?

- How can such entanglements of 'diffracted' attention be said to influence a sense of community and solidarity?
- How does this impact collective creation and public interactions?
- Can such communal activities address inequalities of attention (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak; Richard Sennett...)?
- Can the creative practice of 'commoning' (Annette Baldauf et al) overcome the atomization of 'attention seekers' 'competing for attention' (Charles Derber) in public space/on social media?

According to Annette Baldauf et al. 'the concept of the **commons** has resurfaced as a key feature in the discussion on alternative societies, social movements, and urban transformation.' (p. 21) How do we pay attention to the common and to commoning when it comes to the collective creation of art and collective appreciation of art in public spaces?

CALENDAR FOR SUBMISSIONS

Doctoral students are invited to submit proposals (150-200 words) for 15-minute presentations on the following topics, before **15th April 2023**:

- > **#1** "The Unexpected and the Overlooked"
- > **#2** "Can You Hear Me?"

- Contributors will be notified by 30th April 2023.
- Papers are to be delivered on 22nd (#1) or 23rd (#2) June 2023, during the CAPS Summer School in Rennes.

Contact: creativepublicspace@univ-rennes.fr / taylor.still@univ-rennes2.fr

Location: The event will take place in-person, at the graduate school's 3rd-place site, "Le Bois Perrin" in Rennes, France.

Organising team: Dr. H el ene Bailleul, Dr. Ga elle Debeaux, Prof. Anne Goarzin, Dr. Marion Hohlfeldt, Marl ene Meslay, Taylor Still, Dr. Eva Urban-Devereux

Selected bibliography

- AGAMBEN, Giorgio. *What is an Apparatus?*, transl. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella, Stanford University Press, 2009; *Qu'est-ce qu'un dispositif ?*, trad. Martin Rueff, Paris, Payot & Rivages, 2007 (*Che cos'è un dispositivo?*, Roma, Nottetempo, 2006).
- BALDAUF, Annette et al. *Spaces of Commoning: Artistic Research and the Utopia of the Everyday*, Sternberg Press, 2016.
- BARAD, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, Duke UP, 2007.
- BAUDELAIRE, Charles. *Oeuvres Complètes*, Aventa Éditions, 2014.
- BENJAMIN, Walter. *Illuminations*, transl. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt, New York: Mariner Books, 2019 (*Illuminationen*, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1955); *The Arcades Project*, transl. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Harvard University Press, 1999 (*Das Passagen-Werk*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, Suhrkamp, 1982).
- BOEHME, GERNOT, Jean-Paul Thibaud. *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres*, Routledge, 2017.
- CITTON, Yves. *L'écologie de l'Attention: nouvel horizon du capitalisme?* Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2014.
- DEBORD, Guy. *La Société du Spectacle*, Buchet/Castel, 1967.
- DERBER, Charles. *The Pursuit of Attention: Power and Ego in Everyday Life*, Oxford University Press, 2000.
- DESPRETS, Vinciane. "Ceux qui insistent : les Nouveaux commanditaires", in *Faire art comme on fait société*, Les Presses du réel, 2013.
- FRANCK, Georg. *Ökonomie der Aufmerksamkeit: Ein Entwurf*, Hanser, 1998; *Vanity Fairs: Another View of the Economy of Attention*, Springer, 2020.
- HARAWAY, Donna J. *Staying with the Trouble*, Duke UP, 2011.
- HARRIS, Ian. *The Mind of John Locke: A Study of Political Theory in its Intellectual Setting*, Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- KANT Immanuel. *Kant's Kritik of Judgment (Kritik der Urteilskraft*, Berlin: Lagarde und Friederich, 1790), translated and edited by J. J. Bernard, London: Macmillan, 1892.
- LEFEBVRE, Henri. *Le droit à la ville* (1968); *La production de l'espace* (1974); *Writings on Cities*, Wiley, 1996.
- LOCKE, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Kay and Troutman, Philadelphia, 1847, originally published as *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, London, 1689.
- PELLUCHON, Corinne. *Éthique de la considération*, Paris, Seuil, coll. « L'Ordre philosophique », 2018.
- REVAULT D'ALLONNES, Myriam. *Ce que l'homme fait à l'homme. Essai sur le mal politique*, Seuil, 1995 (Champs-Flammarion, 1999 et 2010).
- RIGBY, KATE, GOODBODY, AXEL. *Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches*, University of Virginia Press, 2011.
- ROSA, Hartmut. *Resonance: A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019.
- SENNETT, Richard. *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (with Jonathan Cobb), Cambridge University Press, 1972; *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities*, Norton, 1992; *Buildings and Dwelling: Ethics for the City*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018; *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures, and Politics of Cooperation*, Yale, 2012.
- SMITH, Adam. *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, London: A. Millar, 1790, originally published by Millar and Kincaid in 1759.
- SPIVAK, Gayatri Chakravorty. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Laurence Grossberg, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988; *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, Harvard, 1999.
- WU, Wayne. *Attention*, New York: Routledge, 2014.
- ZHONG MENGUAL, Estelle. *Apprendre à voir. Le point de vue du vivant*, Arles, Actes Sud, coll. "Mondes sauvages", 2021.
- <http://www.nouveauxcommanditaires.eu/fr/home/accueil>