

# IMAGINING IMAGES

## SEVEN PROBLEMS

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## KEYNOTE ESSAY 01/01

VISUAL STUDIES  
BILDWISSENSCHAFT  
IMAGES  
IMAGINATION

The following text is the transcript of the keynote held at the IMG2017 conference at the Faculty of Education of the Free University of Bozen, on November 27, 2017 in Brixen campus, on a video plenary session. Seven problems are presented to define some stable points and some perspective to outline a theory of images. The seven problems are:

1. Why it may be a good thing that few people know what image is.
2. What is not an image?
3. Aesthetics and politics.
4. Do images have a nature?
5. The madness of classifying images.
6. The limits of scholars' attention to detail.
7. The materiality of image.



Out of the infinite field of image and imagination I have just chosen seven problems. I hope they fit the conference; I have read through the really interesting list of sessions and papers that you're all about to have and I picked out seven topics and I hope will have some resonance with what you say. First of all, I am going to talk a bit about the fact that very few people have theories about what images are. It is puzzling and interesting that so many people can get along without thinking about what an image is but that might be a good thing in the end.

Then couple of slides on the question of what might count as something that is not an image because when you start studying images you tend to want to include all sorts of things especially mental images. But then things that do not seem very visual, like pages of text for example. So, there is this very fundamental text of what might have count at any given instance as something that is not an image. Then couple of slides on the very next question of the relation between images as static objects and images as objects of political meaning, or political action, or action in the world. This is the same thing as aesthetics, or anti-aesthetics, or political art or aesthetic art, or modernism and postmodernism. It is a big problem and I just have couple of things to say about it that I hope are pertinent to the conference. And then the question about the nature of images it is a question of anthology, it is a philosophic question which I think many people will prefer not to engage because there is pragmatic, or a performative, or a practical way of dealing with images in different disciplines that allows most of us to avoid the question of whether or not images have a nature. But that question is very far reaching so I think it is important to keep it on the table. Then a little bit on my favourite topics which I think it is fundamentally odd or perhaps even crazy to try to classify images in a way that other objects like mathematical objects, for example, can be classified. But classification in the name of the archive, for example, is an absolutely essential part of most research programs. So images are subjected to this

kind of bureaucratisation and administration in the name of many different projects. So it seems to me important also to think about the psychological violence and institutional consequences of trying to classify your images.

The last two sections have to do with a special interest of mine about the limits of this course in especially art history in my field but in neighbouring fields. The limits of this course of the detail of the image and that includes the materiality, so I have separated this but they are actually combinable. I am going to conclude with just one screen with very tentative answer to some of this question.

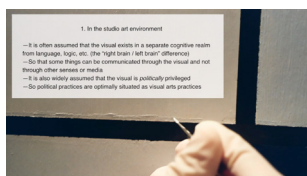
## 1. WHY IT MAY BE A GOOD THING THAT FEW PEOPLE KNOW WHAT IMAGE IS



Maybe it is a good thing that only a few people actually know what images are, they think they have a theory of images.

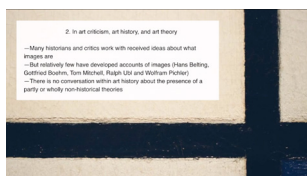
I am going to take example of this conference called *What is an image?* (which is now a book) and when we first started the conference, which was held in Chicago back in 2008, we began with the question “Why ask, what is an image?”. I have three slides to suggest the kind of questions, that three different disciplines ask about images. This time my background images are pictures of a student of mine copying a Montreal painting in the art institute. I am going to come back to this question when I talk about the last two topics about detail materiality. Now that is rubber gloved student’s hand trying to recreate a very, very particular kinds borders, of stripes in the Montreal paintings. They are not simple when you start looking at them closer, they are quite complicated objects.

First of all, from the point of view of studio art, art students, young artists, art makers it is often assumed that the visual arts exist separate cognitive realm from language, logic. That is the whole “right brain/left brain” difference which is largely disproved by contemporary neurology. Anyway it is sill very common in the art world.



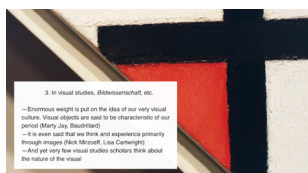
That leads the assumption that some things can be communicated through the visual and not through other senses or media. And, also, in studio art environment it is widely assumed that the visual is politically privileged. There are a lot of politically active art practices and they can sometimes imply that political practice in general are optimally visual art practices, which is a really interesting and radical claim that under rights fair matter of what happens in the art world. These are reasons why people who are practicing artists might want to ask the question “What is an image?”

I will take away this, so you can compare more easily my students copy to the original. It has this very complicated three-dimensional relief structure. Montreals in 1920s do it very narrow, simple two-dimensional optical objects that are hard to copy.



Second. From the point of view of art criticism, art history, and art theory, many historians and critics work with other peoples' ideas about what images are. There are relatively few theories that exist, that are used and made by art historians and art critics about images. Hans Belting has a theory of images, Gottfried Boehm, W.J. Thomas Mitchell, Ralph Ubl and Wolfram Pichler and I can make the list longer but it is not a very long list. It is maybe not more than a dozen people who are currently working in and around art criticism, history and theory and actually have theory about images. And there is no conversation within art history about the presence of these partly or wholly non-historical theories. In other words there are theories and general notion of images out of play do and all the way up to people like Belting, Boehm and Mitchell. Those theories proper to be able to describe images in general for our experience and understanding but there is no conversation within the discipline of art history, about the presence of those non- or trans-historical theories in a historical discipline. They are themselves anomalies and also quite uncommon.

Third. In the field of visual study, visual culture studies, Bildwissenschaft-the German version of visual studies, there



is an enormous weight on the idea that we live in a very visual culture. Perhaps the most visual culture ever, so it has been claimed. Marty Jay said that it is associated with Baudrillard. And it has been even said we have come to think and experience primarily through images. That is a claim you can find by Nick Mirzoeff and Lisa Cartwright. They both write visual culture studies and texts. That is another really radical and interesting claim and as far as I know no one has tried to explore exactly what the consequences of such claim might be that we actually think through images. But very few visual studies scholars think about these issues directly, or talk about them directly, and there is very little talk about the nature of the visual.

In all three of these areas: art production, art history, visual culture, images are central but they are often taken as a given. In the event that we had in Chicago *What is an image?*, that led us to this question that I think was a very curious one. I am going to leave it open until the last screen of this talk. “What is enabled by not pressing the question, What is an image?”. In other words, how is it that not perusing, not answering, not engaging this question “What is an image?”, how is it that it is a productive strategy for so many fields and so many disciplines?

## 2. WHAT IS NOT AN IMAGE?

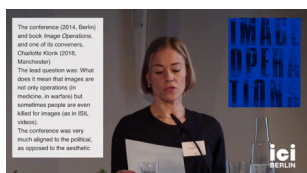
Here is another poster for another conference, this one was in Berlin in 2014 and I co-workedized this, as you can see at the lower left, with several other people. This was a conference which was intended as critic for visualization and infographic. Because we had this idea that we live in a period of visualization euphoria where people assume that visual forms of the display of the information are optimal for understanding and analysis in any discipline. We invited a very wide range of people to talk about what they thought could not be, or should not be, or was not helpful to be imagined

as a picture in their field. Here is our line of speakers, you can see if you look over the page. They vary from physicists, to people in literature, we also had a couple of literate critics, who did not normally write about images at all. I just want to say a little bit about the two that are in the red box. We had an economist, Werner Reichmann, who works in Konstanz, as one of our speaker and also Mary Morgan, who is an expert on eco-visualizations in economics. Mary Morgan gave a paper on those very simple-looking economist's graphs, the one that just show the first quadrant and a line that just goes straight up and down. Reichmann reported on graphs like these one-financial advisor graphs, that show anticipated forecasts of earnings into the future. You can see that from the moment of the present on to the future, the forecast has a certain error built into it. Werner noted that, quote: "for some reason the future is always blue in these graphs", that was enough all of a sudden to make most of us to think of them as images.

The most interesting of the graphs, slides that Werner showed was this one. This is similar to the one he showed, it is not the exact one. He was talking about working on the German bond market and he said that there is one spreadsheet that people who watch the German bond market always have on the computer screen. It has a continuously updating list of German bond prices and especially there was one column or one row at the bottom of that chart that he showed, which gave a crucial number for the exact value of German bond prices at that moment. He was speaking about this as an image and a problem that he raised for us was that it was very difficult for us to say to him that is not an image. If anything is not an image, that is not an image. It is not even a page of formatted text, the formatting does not matter, the colour does not matter and all the rest of that. But we could not easily say that because the terms of his analysis were very closely related to the terms of our own analysis of what we thought of his visual material. It has a lot to do with forms of attention, in the particular form of attention that he said that

bond traders brought to that one last row. Maybe it was just that one last cell of the spreadsheet was very much like forms of attention that we were theorizing using theories of the gaze and other tools like that. This is the way that the question “What is not an image?” came at that visualization conference in Berlin. There are many other ways of talking about this, there are even theological ways. But this one seemed to me particularly pertinent I hope to your conference because you have a lot of examples (as I can guess from the titles of your papers) of analysis that could be applied to things like these that are perhaps not obviously to be thought primarily as images. They might be thought of as something else—graphs, or charts, or notation and so on.

### 3. AESTHETICS AND POLITICS



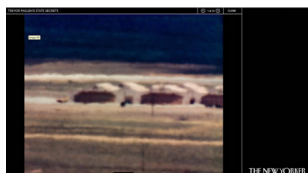
This topic is another enormous topic but I just want to approach it as one isolated example. If you move the street view car just a little bit, you see the seal a little bit more from the front. Then Google realizes that it is not a face. This time I want to report on a conference, now also a book, called *Image Operations*, which was held in Berlin, and that is a photo of one of the two conveners Charlotte Klönk. The book is now published by the Manchester university press.

Her question for the conference, the lead question there was: “What does it mean that images are not only operations (for example in medicine, in things like the Da Vinci machine, which allows doctors to operate on a patient without actually touching, they just operate on a computer console, and in warfare where you have for example missiles with video cameras in the nose of the missile, images are operations in various contexts) but also sometimes people are killed for images”. And this is Charlotte Klönk’s exam as in ISIL videos where prisoners are executed. Images kill, images can prompt people to kill, and sometimes people are even killed for images.



The idea of the conference was to push the question of performativity and the action of images in the world as far as it could be pushed. Not just to say that images are performative, not just to say that they are something more than framed objects on a wall, or architectural environments. But to say that they can actually cause deaths in a direct way. The conference was very much aligned toward the political and very much disengaged from the aesthetic history of fine arts and aesthetics of images.

I think that this question in its general form about politics and aesthetics is one of the principal unresolved issues in art theory. The problem keeps coming back in waves. There was conceptualism, there was Hal Foster's anti-aesthetics starting in 1980, there is Nicolas Bourriaud's relational aesthetics (his book with that title "Relational aesthetics"). There is a lot to be said about each one of those moments and others. There are moments in which the relation between the aesthetic content of an image and its political or social meaning appears as a kind as if it was a vinaigrette, as if in an image you have to keep quipping the oil and the vinegar together to keep them emulsified. If you let it go, or if you sit and watch, they keep coming apart again. The aesthetic does not detach itself from the anti-aesthetic.



In a 2014 conference the most intricate example of this was worked by the artist Trevor Paglen. He has in his work a politics, a political action which he proposes as an aesthetics, and he has an aesthetics that he proposes as politics. I am just going to give a screen about each of them and that is all I am going to say about this topic here. Here, is an example of an image by Trevor Paglen. He had a series of works in which he got as close as he could to military sights and then he would get a telescope and take pictures of things that he did not actually trans pass of this military sights.

Like the *Area 52*, where the US military supposedly keeps aliens and all the rest of that. He did not trans pass on them but he would stand sometimes miles away at the fence and he would take these photographs. And then he would title

them with the exact position he was in and the name of the military installation, as much information as he could find in the public. Very specific titles he chose, but the pictures themselves were very blurry. You are looking at something you can go and find online, it is a portfolio that the New Yorker put together.

Trevor says that his idea is to create “a tension” between the image itself which “means absolutely nothing” (it is just blurry buildings) and the title, which can lead or contain “very specific information”. “Knowledge and beauty” he thinks are in an “interesting tension”. And that tension is the work’s aesthetics. He wrote me this in an email back in 2009, quote: “A successful image for me is one that makes a statement and simultaneously undermines any possibility of a traditional truth claim based on that image. It is a sense of seeing/not seeing that I’m trying to capture”. So that is politics as aesthetics. And then there is aesthetics as politics, in the same email he says: “There is also a performative gesture I’m interested in—what are the politics of photographing some of these things, even though the photographs themselves don’t show anything?”. The picture becomes an operation in the terms of the conference, it becomes something performative.

There is a book I edited you can see on the right: *Theorizing Visual Studies, writing though the discipline* and in it I put this diagram when I was thinking about Trevor, I thought it would be fun to make a diagram. That book is full diagrams. So on the left that is the Paglen-Diagram in which I am imagining in an unquantifiable way that Trevor’s work is animated by the way it is pushed back and forth between politics and aesthetic. It is never clearly political, it is never entirely aesthetic. It is the vinaigrette metaphor you might say. Keeps the two things stirred together. But what I want to emphasize in this context for your conference is that I think that this is an unsolved problem and no one has a good account on how to describe social-political-ethical meanings of images and aesthetic meanings and qualities in the same sentence as part of the same thought, so there is always attention.



## 4. DO IMAGES HAVE A NATURE?

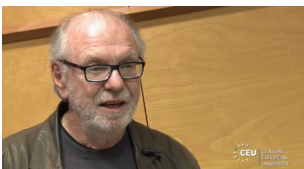


This is one of my favourite signs: “Caution! Dust storms may exist”.

There are scholars, like the German Gottfried Boehm, who do want to understand the nature of images-their ontology. And then there are other scholars like Tom Mitchell, for whom ontology is really something that other people believe in. This is another very profound, not adequately theorized issue in image study. So, I will have just one screen on of each of the two of them.



That is Gottfried Boehm. In the summer of 2006, the two of them-Boehm and Mitchell exchange letters. In one of the letters, Boehm redirects a question that he says guided him for number of years “How do images create meaning?”. This question he articulates though a series of concepts that he invented, including an expression that he invented the “iconic logos”. You can see in that expression “iconic logos”, there is a contradiction of terms and he noticed this and he has spent a whole life time thinking about what it might mean. He says that the recurrent idea is to ask how meaning “can articulate itself without borrowing from linguistic model or from rhetorical devices”-in other words outside some language. Nothing corresponds to this kind of ontological in Mitchell’s work.



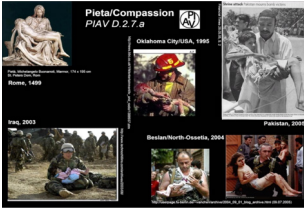
There is Tom Mitchell. He is a good deconstructionist; he is interested in deconstruction. For him, what matters is what you can say and do with images, not their nature. In the *What is an image?* event I suggested that Nelson Goodman’s semiotics might appear as a kind of ontological ground in Tom’s writing. Because Tom takes semiotics like Nelson Goodman as kind of natural, unproblematic description of images. Therefore, it might be ontology images kind of the nature of images. He said, quote: “No, it’s just that Goodman has provided one of the most powerful, systematic, and wide-reaching answers to the question. But it’s a question everybody has an answer to. The answer can be made intelligible, more coordinated, more systematic, by reference to Goodman.

That is what I think is the great virtue of his generality.” This is a pragmatic or deconstructive approach to images in which what matters is how they make their way through the world, what people think of them, how they make people act, what kind of desires they set in motion. From that perspective images do not have an ontology, except in a fictive sense, except in the sense that other people like Gottfried Boehm might have believes about that.

But I think that this question, which you could say is a question, is made between ontology and deconstruction, or ontology and pismotality is one of those fundamental issues in the discussion of images. It is untheorized in the sense that a large number of us who work on images, spend their lives studying them, really do believe that there is something about an image that sets it apart from other things. We do have an incipient ontology, we do not usually develop that and in fact what we do as historians in particular we behave as if we were pragmatic, if not deconstructive, we look only at the effects of these things.

## 5. MADNESS OF CLASSIFICATION

Aby Warburg’s *Mnemosyne* is still the model of most art historians for classifying images even though it was a very eccentric project. But classification in some way is crucial and universal because classification is what produces our archive and every researcher’s archive, their evidence, their legible evidence or their image knowledge. Classification is often referred back to *Mnemosyne* project but that project is not a model is just that classificatory necessity, the need to classify in order to create knowledge is something that needs to be anchored somehow. Art history tends to anchor it this way, to Warburg. I think that Horst Bredekamp is right when he says that the administration of images is not well understood and that includes things like their curation, their labelling and all the rest, there all sorts of administration.



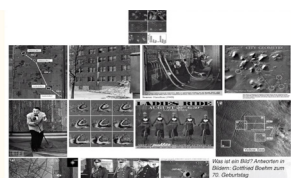
I just want to take 3-4 slides to suggest that there is a physiological dimension here. There is this hopeless desire that we have to control images. Here is one page from a really remarkable image archive that is currently being curated by Marion Müller (see her name in the middle). She is at the Jacobs University, which is near Bremen. She calls it: “Political-iconographic Archive of Vision”- this is the page for PIAV, the PIAV motive. You can see it is all very indexed and computerized. There is a lineax that leads from from this spect of Wargburg because Marion took over Martin Warnke’s *Bildindex* which in turn inherited Wargburg’s project.

This kind of classification has gone far beyond anything Wargburg could have imagined and it has reached the point in Jacobs University where there are people in the Computer Science department involved in classifying images for example from television. No one actually needs to watch these images, the computer does the watching and classifying. Two other examples of the madness of classification I might say. This is a selection of a piece by Lev Manovich, which he calls: *4.4 Vertov\_Eleven\_Montage*, in which he took each of the 654 shots in the film “The Eleventh Year”-Vertov’s film, and represented it by its second frame, the second frame of each one of the shots. It ends up with a kind of chaos that is half way between you might say a Dada collage and a piece of pop-art. But it is also part of Lev Manovich’s computer aided massive database analysis projects which he applies to things like Instagram as well.

Third and last example I want to give is this one.



This a Google *search by image* instead of results. The “search by image” function in Google at least up a few years did not use any textual or meta-data to help it find any similar images. I put in the image you see small on the top. It is an image of four scenes microscopic live. I put that one in and the Google *search by image* came by these crazy list of images. The second one in the first row there is a one of the worlds longest icicles, and then you can see down at the bottom is Hitler.



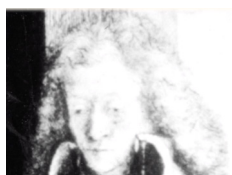
There is all sorts of odd things. The *search by image* function when it was working without the help of any text that surrounded the images and it was looking at the images themselves, provided a new kind of image arrays. Something with a logic that really could not be read. It has been read as surrealist but it is not surrealist because these are computer algorithms and they have nothing to do with surrealism. You can of course read it as poetic but all the available readings are readings into it. What it really is, is a new kind of sequence that so far at least cannot be interpreted partly because Google algorithms are secret.

These are just three examples, I am just telegraphing them, saying them more briefly than I should. But they are three examples of the kind of illogic that all classification results in, the classificatory impulse in relation to images is an odd one because the classification was something that was developed outside of images and now it is being applied to them.

## 6. THE LIMIT OF SCHOLARS' ATTENTION TO DETAIL

There are art historians who write a lot about detail, Daniel Arasse has written a book, Friedrich Teja Bach also has. But most of the time art history does not deal with detail past a certain point. I am going to illustrate that with some details of this Rembrandt's etching of his friend *Jan Six*.

This is actually nineteenth century photoetching, so is very close to the original. Here is the head in detail of that photoetching. The next picture I am going to show you is the most detailed image of this "Rembrandt's etching" in a book. And then the next picture is going to be the best slide of this image at the University of Chicago projected onscreen as it would be seen by a student, so the best view that a student can get of this. The last image is currently the best available image on the Internet, not including paywalls. The point I want to make here is very simple and that is that there is nothing in the literature on this etching, or on the painting



of Jan Six, that is more famous, that requires anything more than this level of detail: a pensive face, a thoughtful person, a friend of Rembrandt's. Art history does not tend to go any further than these images, it tends to read them at this level of generality. I know this is not an ordinary kind of critique of art history which does have its moments of attention to detail but this is what I just want to suggest here.

#### 6a LIMITS OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL LANGUAGE

Phenomenology plays a part in this because I think because it is a default, theoretical position for a lot of art history and theory. That is a night time scene of Borobudur in Indonesia. Of many examples I could have taken I am just going to name two. Two major books that are in this sense phenomenological because they rely on phenomenological terms: David Summers's *Real Spaces*, which is a huge attempt to rewrite the entire history of art using new conceptualizations. And Hans Belting's *ild Anthropologie* and his attempt to bring anthropological ideas into art history. They are both phenomenological in a sense that they both have difficulty and find a limit case anyway and when it comes to details that are finer, smaller details than standard phenomenological terms from Merleau-Ponty like horizon, body, orientation, symmetry, space, surface, above and below.

Borobudur for example is in David Summers's book because you are meant to experience Borobudur by certain navigation, you walk around and there is path that goes around and around in a spiral. It is the simple geometry of the spiral that counts for David and not the very, very intrigued series of experiences that you have with sculptures as you go up. David Summers also writes about Teotihuacan ruined outside of Mexico City and its main features is an enormous long avenue surrounded by pyramids. It has a central, linear symmetry and that is

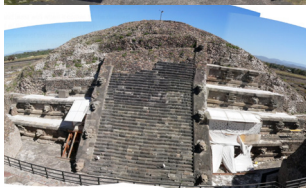


what he writes about. When the symmetry starts to break down - for example the *Pyramid of the Sun* on the left is not symmetrical -, then phenomenological counts that have to do with things like symmetry, pattern, body and horizon have a little bit more difficulty. But they have more difficulty when it comes to the details on the pyramids, for example this is a small pyramid called the “Feathered Serpent Pyramid”, which has these amazing faces of Gods *Tlaloc* and *Quetzalcoatl*, they are called, even though that is not their original names.

But these Gods stare right at you from the various levels and from the sides of the staircase. But a generalized vocabulary has to stop and does not have much power over things that are truly asymmetrical and too intensively detailed.

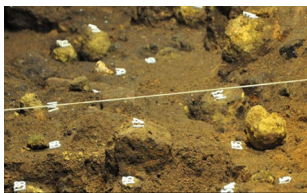
My last example here is the tunnel that was recently discovered under the *Temple of the Feathered Serpent*, so right in the middle you see the same temple from the previous photograph. They discovered a tunnel underneath it and they are still excavating it. There are tunnels under each of the major pyramids in Teotihuacan, some artificial, some natural caves. In this particular tunnel they have been finding amazing things-finds: sculpture, pottery, shells, but also rubber balls, pyrite mirrors, clay balls covered with something that looks like gold (it is actually a mineral jarosite).

The last report that I have heard from this excavation, that the excavation is slowed because they have reached a place that was filled with pools of Mercury. The atmosphere is toxic and they have built a small robot to go over these surface in that area. What I am suggesting here is that books like Summers’s and Belting’s and by extension I mean large parts of art history and criticism that depend on the vocabulary phenomenology have a point of difficulty when it comes to details. How to attach the discourse of details to the discourse of phenomenology and phenomenological criticism.





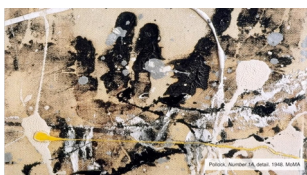
## 7. MATERIALITY OF IMAGES



I want to make two observations. First of all, that materiality is a big concern in art history these days. Like affect theory, which is often associated with a polyvalent theory. There is a wide spread interest in paying attention to art works materiality. Attention to its support, to its material, to its thingness and so on. I am going to give an example from the book *What is an image?*.

There is a detail of a Pollock painting, where you see couple of his hand prints. Jacqueline Lichtenstein, the French philosopher and art historian, who was at the conference said that art historians seldom speak about paintings. She wanted us at our seminar to pay attention to examples from the 19th century, especially Zola and Huysmans, who she said really knew how to write about images in detail.

She said: “In the distinction between image and painting, I would like to stress the painting’s physicality. Today, in the age of the Internet and the digital image, it is important to recall that the painting has physical and material properties.”



Marie-Jose Mondzain, who was also there, mentioned Daniel Arasse. There was the beginning of this conversation about how to think about materiality of images, in particular paintings and not just images. Beyond the materiality described by Huysmans, Zola, and others there are details which seem to be difficult to write about as history. Or to put it in another way, an art historian would have difficulty writing about things like you see in this slide because they seem to be just formal or just material, brute material. There seemed to be barrier, natural barrier, beyond which things do not signify historically and perhaps even not theoretically in a couching way but they belong to something like formalism or a close reading.

In other words there is a discursive boundary there.

I think it is actually possible to go further than these examples like Zola and and Huysmans and there is a more radical position. In the book *What painting is?* I set myself the task

of spending several pages on very tiny details, like this one, just one inch by one inch, to see if I could write about what was happening in a way that it will make contact with some other themes, potentially even historical themes.

These is much more detailed than what Jacqueline Lichtenstein was talking about.



I think that there a lot of problems with that book *What painting is?* and one of its main difficulties is that well enough grounded in history itself. But I would like to draw moral from this that it is probably not a discursive boundary, the problem of looking at, thinking about, writing about the smallest details and the most specific materiality's of art objects is not that those details are outside history, is that the interpretation at this level happens very slowly, takes a lot of time to figure out how to speak. I think that this could be extended to contemporary art as well. I had a student couple of years ago-Boris Osterov, who was trying to outdo every other artist that he knew by using more goopy paint in his paintings than anyone else did. I think that these questions about how detailed you can be when you write about something like this, like any image, is an open question. There is for many art historians the counter-example of Tim Clark's books, especially his book *Sight of Death*, which is about puissant painting. This is a detail of a tiny part of a puissant painting and Clark writes about that green stripe that runs across the middle and that is a very small detail about an art historian to write about. He talks about how it represents a field but I think he could have gone even further, because it is not even a single green stripe, it is many green stripes. There is a lot more in the book *What is an image?*.



## CONCLUSIONS

I know I am running over time here, so I am going to conclude quickly with one screen. Here are the seven topics that I mentioned at the beginning with some abbreviated responses:

1. *Why it may be a good thing that few people know what images are.* Because a lot of art history, theory, and criticism is enabled by remaining agnostic or vague about the nature of the visual. Something in what most of us do, many of us do, is made possible by not thinking about the nature of images as you are all going to be doing in this conference.

2. *What is not an image?* Well, nothing is not an image, if the visual is conceived as a quality or form attention, rather than as some formally specifiable properties.

3. *Aesthetics and politics:* I do not think there is a good way of understanding how they work together. I think it can be helpful in many cases to acknowledge the incompatibility of aesthetic in political discourse. Or of the political in an aesthetic discourse. A little bit aesthetic judgement often come in unexpectedly into very politically engaged discourses and vice-versa.

4. *Do images have a nature?* Yes, if you have a stake in kinds of knowledge or expression that are only possible with images. No, if you are more interested in what images do in the world.

5. *The madness of classifying images:* it is something many of us lose sight of (Maybe we have to, maybe that kind of madness is built into the study of images).

6. *The limits of scholars' attention to detail,* and

7. *The materiality of images:* there is a tremendous amount waiting to be written on the detailed moment-by-moment and inch-by-inch production, existence, and meaning of images.

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