

Creating and researching audiovisual spaces : interferences between production conditions, design processes and aesthetic choices

Call for papers

The LARA-SEPPIA research laboratory at the University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès will hold a Young Researchers Symposium on Monday 15th and Tuesday 16th November 2021, at the Maison de la recherche and the ENSAV, Toulouse

Spatium, Latin root of the word “space”, reveals the extent of interpretations this idea covers. *Spatium* is at once distance and stretch of time, path and measure, racecourse and arena. Space therefore emerges as a structuring principal, being defined by its limits, its position or its organisation – in short, by what surrounds it, that to which it is opposed – since we establish it as being relational. Spaces depend in this sense on the perspective from which they are observed.

The symposium’s aim is to question the audiovisual world’s interest in space. We will observe the ways in which different audiovisual spaces interfere with each other and their influence on the film-works’ creation-reception line. We will also study the links between the choices that operate throughout the creative process and the conception of these spaces, as well as their inscription in the larger space of society, real and theoretical. Thus, we will propose a critical look on different audiovisual spaces’ construction, be they physical (places of creation and distribution), filmic (spaces of representation) or imaginary (spaces of interpretation and conception). We will specifically rely on works from audiovisual studies as well as theories of space developed in other fields of study.

The proposals can address questions linked to the consideration of audiovisual spaces within a historiographical, practical or critical approach pertaining, but not limited to the areas hereafter developed. They will take care in clearly defining the spaces that they intend to examine. Placed under the auspices of creation-led or creation-based research, the symposium will also provide spaces dedicated to experimental proposals for spatial designs and artworks relevant to the subject.

1 – Conceptualising space

Here we propose to address the conceptualisation of space. Firstly, this can include questioning what makes up audiovisual space from a multidisciplinary perspective, identifying the different theories used and their link to the audiovisual world. Secondly, we will look at the definition and theorisation of audiovisual spaces, their typology, their limits and characterisation.

Are audiovisual spaces’ configurations influenced by the spatial approaches offered by the humanities (Rochefort, Lefebvre, Soja, Löw...)? Conversely, have the audiovisual technologies used for scientific observation accompanied certain conceptions of space, for example through the question of scale (VLT, Titan Krios, satellites...)? Additionally, how does philosophy of space (Bachelard, Koyré, Deleuze & Guattari, Foucault, Sloterdijk, Hache...) express, if it does, the ways in which we think

audiovisual space? Finally, fifty years after its surfacing, what traces of the “spatial turn” can be found in research on representation and audiovisual creation?

We will also look to determine what audiovisual spaces are and define the different stances from which it is possible to approach and define them (Gardiès, Gaudin). These contributions will more specifically concentrate on the interpretation of audiovisual spaces’ conceptual systems, their terminology and semiology. This includes filmic spaces (scenery, editing, narrative courses, image, sound) but also the space of the screen, fundamental to the medium, as well as the physical spaces in which film-works take shape, are distributed and preserved, in a historical or contemporary perspective. Finally, we will also take an interest in the imaginary spaces that the audiovisual world calls together as well as those opened by the digital turn.

2 – Creating space

This area will be about examining the links between the techniques chosen to create space and the film, the final result. This reflection cannot be made without thinking a specific social, economic and historical context. In their respective books, Rick Altman and James Lastra examine creative choices and technical evolution as resulting from complex interactions between technical possibilities, economic motivations, norms of representation and cultural demand anchored in a specific context (Altman, 1992 and Lastra, 2000). These dynamics can be illustrated through concrete examples.

Cinematographic space consistently refers to other spaces that influence its conception and that are incorporated into its aesthetics. Consequently, we will study the creative process, the realisation of space and the technicians relation to the film-work: procedures of representation, technical choices and aesthetic meanings. This can also allow us to reflect on the team’s role in setting up space and its afferent imaginary. Cinematographic space then becomes a place for meeting and for implementing collaboration.

3 – Representing space

Here we will question how space is built in audiovisual works, on the basis of a study of their production context, from a political, social and historical viewpoint. How does this viewpoint influence, model – or control – representations of space inside audiovisual works? Three perspectives in particular can be developed.

By its influence on the masses, film is a choice art for political regimes: film sets and stories are modelled on new codes of representation in order to serve the spreading of ideals. In this first approach we can thus question processes inherent to scenography (set design), but also technical processes (editing) and narrative processes (interaction between characters, their movements, territories for encounters).

We also need to study the possibility of filmic spaces that manifest some kind of resistance to their day and age. We shall then look at how spaces of dissent are constructed. These proposals can adopt a mapping approach of the explored spaces, and drift through territories whose main characteristics should be identified.

One last trail could be to question spaces as dialectical images, as in Walter Benjamin’s concept. Re-emergences of the past, dialectical images recall a fragment of history in the present, thus holding it accountable. In this sense we can question the transformations these emergences – that generate images containing multiple layers of time – necessarily have on space. What do they tell us about the importance of collective imagination, the past’s persistence, to reinvent codes of representation?

4 – Receiving and perceiving space

Resonating with the previous axes, here we will focus on the different ways in which intra-diegetic spaces are received and, more broadly, the existing relations between source and receiver. The proposals can address correspondences between filmic spaces and the ways in which spectators receive them as seen through cognitive sciences in order to explore the relations between representation and interpretation, screening and perception, or individual reception and its collective echo.

The first approach, concerned with hermeneutics, will study the relations between heterotopian representations and spectatorial interpretation. We wish to discover to what extent the identities and aesthetics of these narrative spaces influence the ways in which audiences receive films and, conversely, in which ways reception can affect the specificity of the adopted spatial language.

The second approach will explore how screening conditions (classical, immersive...) affect our perception of narrative and diegetic spaces. The aim of these proposals will be to consider the physical body inside the screening apparatus, bringing the spectator into a heterotopian space.

Lastly, we can adopt a sociological approach in order to include works looking at social and cultural reappropriation (myths, legends, folklore) in the interpretation of the filmic spaces offered to the viewer. By focussing on the bond that exists between the collective imaginary and individual interpretation, this part will be about questioning the reception mechanisms of this imaginary space inside a specific socio-cultural context.

Whichever the chosen approach, special attention will be paid to how these proposals consider notions of reception (passive activity) and perception (subjective and constructive activity) in relation to the filmic space that is observed or experienced.

General bibliography

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Schedule

Deadline for submitting proposals: 30th June 2021

Committee's response : beginning of July 2021

Symposium: 15th & 16th November 2021

Written presentations are expected for 30th November 2021

Taking part

The presentations will last 20 minutes, including excerpts and clips.

Installations and experimental set-ups will be accepted as far as our means allow.

Proposals can be written in French, English or Spanish.

Proposals are to be sent to: **colloque.espaces.audiovisuels@gmail.com**

Please include the following elements in your proposal:

- The presentation's title
- An abstract (400 to 500 words)
- 3 to 5 keywords
- A short bibliography pertaining to your proposal
- A short biography (up to 300 words) containing your name, areas of research, laboratory and/or institutional affiliation, publications

General information

- The symposium will be held at the Maison de la Recherche de l'Université de Toulouse Jean Jaurès and at the ENSAV (Toulouse).
- The enrolment fee for presentations is 40€ and 20€ for PhD candidates and young researchers.
- Selected presentations will be published.

Scientific committee

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