

Suggested texts (to be read in comparison)

Rogoff, Irit: *Terra infirma: geography's visual culture*. Routledge, London 2000

Excerpts from chapter 1 Subjects/places/spaces: sub-chapters „Geography and spatialization as epistemic structures“ (p.20 ff) and „Visual culture - vision as critique“ (p. 28 ff)

Massey, Doreen: *For Space*. SAGE Publications, London 2005.

Chapter 8: „aspatial globalisation“ (p. 81-89)

Irit Rogoff's „Terra Infirma“ (2000) has been very influential for the establishment of Visual Culture as a then new field of interdisciplinary research, largely because of its introduction of spatial metaphors such as „geography“ and „field“ into the context of art and cultural critique. Since then the book has been criticised for not taking into account the accelerating speed of globalization and its effects on our understanding and use of „geography“ as metaphor. It is thought that it does not yet acknowledge the dynamic, fluid and time-based reading of „geography“ with which we operate today.

Rogoff describes „geography“ as „a body of knowledge and an order of knowledge“, with an overall power regime steering, choosing and naming the components of its structure. She also speaks of Visual Culture as a „field“ made of images, apparatuses, and subjective viewpoints. Both definitions appear spatially and temporally controlled, compared to Massey's „aspatial“ geographies.

For the laboratory session „Metaphors in Aesthetic Theory“ I propose two short extracts from „Terra Infirma“, and one from Doreen Massey's „For Space“ (2005), to look at recent changes in the reading and utilisation of „geography“ metaphors, and at their significance for artistic theory, practice and the interart phenomenon today.

Questions

What is the difference between geography, field and landscape as metaphors, and context?

Are spatial metaphors supportive of the generation of new knowledge through interdisciplinary practice or are they limiting and pre-supposing in any way?

Is a field or geography dependent on an epicentre, or an individual subject inhabiting it, gradually creating and claiming territory? Or does it exist independently?

How important are borders – fixed or fluid - for the individual structure, identity and general usefulness of any spatial metaphor? If there are no borders, does it need other constraints?