

INVISIBLE CULTURE

“Opacity” - Issue 22

For its twenty-second issue, *InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture* invites scholarly articles and creative works that address the multiple meanings of *opacity*.

In the spring of 2013, former US intelligence contractor Edward Snowden began releasing documents pertaining to the wide-ranging data collection methods of the National Security Agency. Alternately hailed as hero and traitor, Snowden’s actions have fueled intense public debate regarding issues of privacy and transparency. For Issue 22, we would like contributors to consider the tension between transparency and opacity and reflect on the cultural and political contexts that gave rise to their connotations of openness and secrecy. What does it mean to claim either as a right? The late writer, poet, and critic Édouard Glissant (1928-2011) developed a model of opacity as a means of creating ethical relationships, writing in *Poetics of Relation*, “Transparency no longer seems like the bottom of the mirror in which Western humanity reflected the world in its own image. There is opacity now at the bottom of the mirror, a whole alluvium deposited by populations.” How could opacity be used as a tool of resistance? What stakes are involved in the revelation or obscuring of artworks’ racial, cultural, or gendered origins? How might we imagine opacity to be useful or limiting to the work of visual culture?

We also seek to address optical properties of opacity more broadly as a conceptual tool for approaching medium specificity, innovations in color theory, and other subjects. Does our understanding of opacity shift in regard to digital technologies as it may between cultural spheres and political territories? How might visual culture be invested in the theoretical and physical properties of opacity and transparency?

We welcome papers and artworks that further the various understandings of *opacity*. Possible topics of exploration include, but are not limited to:

- Aesthetic and political dimensions of transparency and opacity
- Identity politics, “the right to opacity”
- Privacy and visibility, surveillance
- The “transparent society” and digital panopticism
- Scientific and medical visualization, the body, big data
- Opacity of architectural traditions
- Liminal spaces, borders, zones of conflict
- Transparency and globalization, geopolitics
- Emerging, established, and decaying democracies
- Politics of clothing, fabric, screens, interstitial space and material

- Camera obscura/lucida, properties of darkness and light, color, pigmentation
- Transparency and opacity in the plastic arts (painting, film, sculpture)
- Penetration and resistance

Please send completed papers (with references following the guidelines from the Chicago Manual of Style) of between 4,000 and 10,000 words to [ivc\[dot\]rochester\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:ivc[dot]rochester[at]gmail[dot]com) by May 1, 2014. Inquiries should be sent to the same address.

Creative/Artistic Works

In addition to written materials, *InVisible Culture* is accepting work in other media (video, photography, drawing, code) that reflect upon the theme as it is outlined above. For questions or more details concerning acceptable formats, go to <http://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/contribute> or contact [ivc\[dot\]rochester\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:ivc[dot]rochester[at]gmail[dot]com).

Reviews

InVisible Culture is also currently seeking submissions for book, exhibition, and film reviews (600-1,000 words). To submit a review proposal, go to <http://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/contribute> or contact [ivc\[dot\]rochester\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:ivc[dot]rochester[at]gmail[dot]com).

Blog

The journal also invites submissions to its blog feature, which will accommodate more immediate responses to the topic of the current issue. For further details, please contact us at [ivc\[dot\]rochester\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:ivc[dot]rochester[at]gmail[dot]com) with the subject heading "blog submission."

* *InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture* (IVC) is a student run interdisciplinary journal published online twice a year in an open access format. Through peer reviewed articles, creative works, and reviews of books, films, and exhibitions, our issues explore changing themes in visual culture. Fostering a global and current dialog across fields, IVC investigates the power and limits of vision.