

Call for Papers: AFFECTIVE WITNESSING



Rabih Mroué: The Pixelated Revolution, 2012, Part 1 of the Series The Fall of a Hair, 2012, detail of video still recorded by unknown Syrian protester in 2010 (video, colour, sound, 21:58 min) ©Rabih Mroué

Stream S4 of
CAPACIOUS: AFFECT INQUIRY / MAKING SPACE
August 08-11, 2018
Millersville University's Ware Center, Lancaster PA
<http://capaciousjournal.com/conference/>

**Stream Organizers: Dr Michael Richardson (School of the Arts & Media, UNSW) and
Dr Kerstin Schankweiler (SFB Affective Societies, Freie Universität Berlin)**

Deadline for proposals: March 15, 2018

This stream responds to the vitality and inescapable affectivity of witnessing today. We live in “an era of becoming a witness” (Givoni 2011), one in which the modes, forms, capacities and potentials of bearing witness are rapidly changing. New devices, cameras and sensors make possible the transmission and circulation of testimony, setting veracities of experience on a collision course with post-truth culture. Police body cameras, smartphones, live streaming platforms, social media’s democratisation of voices and lethal drone strike footage uploaded to YouTube: these and countless other new sites and techniques of witnessing feed into the resurgent activism of Black Lives Matter, the street protests of Morocco and the #MeToo movement. Yet older forms of witnessing also remain vibrant and find new avenues for expression and circulation. Now more than ever, corporeal and technological practices, tools and techniques of witnessing are increasingly co-composed: entangling, converging and diverging in unexpected ways to make space – potentially – for change.

Witnessing is always affective: it insists on the intensive relationality of the witness and the witnessed. To bear witness means not only giving an account of experience, event or happening, but making it accessible to others: of affecting and being affected. Witnessing is always on the brink of becoming political, of shifting from the moment of the event to its proliferation through the body politic (Massumi 2015). To bear witness is to be brought within the intersection of the political and the ethical, yet it is also to be affectively entangled in webs of relations, materialities and matterings (Gregg & Seigworth 2010). The capacity of media to generate, circulate and modulate affect (Gibbs 2001, Dean 2010, Papacharissi 2014) means that the economies of meaning within which witnessing takes place are also increasingly affective, transitory and contested. All this has consequences for what witnessing does, for the production of veracity and the formation of witnessing communities.

Affective witnessing makes space for change, for bodies and politics and possibilities that are otherwise obscured, for voices and stories and cultures that might be silenced or oppressed or simply unheard. Bearing witness means becoming responsible to an event (Peters 2001). Witnessing can be mediated and immediate, intimate and distant, commonplace and extraordinary, but it also entails an intensity that can be contagious, or change in time, or take on a life of its own. Unfolding on social media, witnessing is an escapably collective and relational practice of space-making: forming communities, provoking further testimonies, producing co-witnesses.

This stream seeks proposals that address the intersection of affect and witnessing. Possible topics include but are not limited to:

Politics | Activism | Change

- Race and witnessing
- Affect, witnessing and the making of spaces for activism
- Affect, testimony and political conflict
- Affective witnessing as a response to post-truth politics

Communities | Transmissions | Mediations

- Viral testimonies and affective contagion
- Image testimonies
- Making spaces for affective communities of witnessing
- Non- and posthuman witnessing

Temporality | Milieu | Everyday

- Affective textures of everyday witnessing
- Witnessing affective atmospheres and ephemeral events
- Temporalities of affective witnessing
- Witnessing's intensive milieus

Please submit your paper abstracts (250 words) until Thursday, March 15, 2018 to capacious@millersville.edu. To aid with proper routing, please include the STREAM (S04) and/or the name of the stream ("Affective Witnessing") in the subject-line of your emailed paper-abstract submission. The email attachment of your abstract should be in Word. Abstracts can be single-authored or co-authored.

For more details, visit the conference website: <http://capaciousjournal.com/conference/>