

[CFP Decolonial Visualities: Indigenizing Visual Culture Studies](#)

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Decolonial Visualities: Indigenizing Visual Culture Studies

Edited by: Nasheli Jiménez del Val

The editors of *Archivo Papers Journal* are pleased to announce the Call for Papers for Volume 3, Issue 2: “Decolonial Visualities: Indigenizing Visual Culture Studies”. This issue aims to contribute to ongoing discussions in decolonial thought and visual culture studies regarding the potentialities of othered approaches to image-making beyond Western-centred conceptualizations of the image and its visualities. Drawing upon the ideas of decolonial aestheSis, the right to look, and Indigenous visual sovereignty, this issue welcomes submissions addressing the Indigenization of visual culture as a means for decolonizing the fields of visual culture studies and contemporary art studies. Papers discussing Indigenous aesthetic practices, Indigenous theorizations of the image, and Indigenous epistemologies for image-making as applied to diverse visual media (photography, filmmaking, video art, digital art, graphic arts, installations, landscape interventions, performances, etc.) are particularly welcome.

Walter D. Mignolo (2010) has argued that Western-European philosophy has appropriated for itself the category of the “Aesthetic”, thereby claiming the idea of sensory pleasure and creative appreciation as a purely Occidental phenomenon. He terms this process the colonization of aestheSis through Aesthetics. That is, from the 17th century onwards Western-European notions of the beautiful were presented as a universal, naturalized conception of beauty that excluded myriad other expressions of image and symbol-making beyond the Western world. In this framework, images and rituals produced by othered peoples were consistently devalued as “idolatry”, “fetishes”, “primitive arts”, and “*artesanía*”. Given this problematic, Mignolo, along with Rolando Vázquez (2013), and Pedro Pablo Gómez (2012), has reclaimed the possibility of a decolonial aestheSis as the body of ongoing artistic projects responding to, and delinking from, modernity/coloniality. For his part, Nicholas Mirzoeff (2011) has also engaged in the debate for the decolonization of visual culture studies. He suggests that visibility is the product of a historically determined, geographically situated idea of power as the capacity of the “Hero” to visualize (Western) History. In other words, visibility is *the* visual regime of

coloniality insofar as it legitimizes and authorizes the colonial/imperial enterprise of the West. Faced with this, Mirzoeff vindicates the importance of what he calls “the right to look”, that is, the mutual capacity of two people looking into each other’s eyes as a claim to a political subjectivity and collectivity. Because the “right to look” is also a claim for the right to be seen, looking and being seen is the starting point for the production of a commons. In a similar vein, Jolene Rickard (2017) has argued for an Indigenous visual sovereignty. In her work, she has maintained that there is an urgent need to take into account Indigenous epistemologies in contemporary visual culture and art studies in order to exercise a decolonial intervention on modernity/coloniality’s framing of Indigenous cultures within a metanarrative of the West. Drawing a parallel with economic and political forms of dispossession of Indigenous peoples, and ensuing claims to Indigenous sovereignty, Rickard theorizes visual sovereignty as a dominant expression of self-determination in an intellectual, cultural, and visual expansion of the concept of sovereignty. On the one hand, it is about Indigenous peoples’ fundamental right to represent themselves (to look and be seen, in Mirzoeff’s words). On the other, visual sovereignty is a central strategy for decolonization that can “serve as an overarching concept for interpreting Indigeneity, the interconnected space of the colonial gaze, and deconstruction of the colonizing image or text.”

Within this theoretical framework for the CFP, some guiding questions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What categories and/or paradigms in visual culture studies perpetuate and affirm modern/colonial understandings of the image and its visualities? What Indigenous image-making practices can put into question these paradigms?
- Can an/other (visual) representation serve to decolonize the Western-European modern/colonial imaginary and, if so, how? How can Indigenous visual practices participate in representation without falling prey to the asymmetrical power dynamics therein inscribed?
- What Indigenous visual practices, image-making knowledges, and cultural traditions reaffirm a right to look and to be seen in the production of a collectivity? What techniques, abilities, practices, and rituals are put into play?

Editors welcome submissions of proposals for articles, visual essays, reviews, and interviews. Proposals must be unpublished complete essays, which have not been published in whole or in part in another publication. The proposals received should not be submitted to another journal while the submission process at *Archivo Papers Journal* lasts.

Interested parties should submit their proposals online by registering at www.archivopapersjournal.com. Submitted proposals must follow the journal’s [guidelines for authors](#).

Archivo Papers Journal is committed to peer-review integrity. After an initial assessment of suitability by the editor(s), your paper will be double-blind peer-reviewed by independent, anonymous expert referees.

Suggested Bibliography

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