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Niels Albertsen

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Presencing Atmospheres

Session 10 – Introduction

Niels ALBERTSEN¹

For this thematic session contributions that have been invited interrogate and exemplify different ways of ‘presencing’ atmospheric experiences to different others in other spaces and times. ‘Presencing’ here indicates that original ‘in-situ’ - present - atmospheric experiences can and should somehow be made sensibly recognizable for outside others *as atmospheric*. The presencing of atmospheres should, one could say, *itself be atmospheric*. Another dimension of this problematic is the idea that the presencing of atmosphere can take place in-situ *itself* by enhancing people’s attentiveness to atmosphere through atmospheric intervention.

There are many ways of presencing atmospheres atmospherically. They may include poetry, literature, ‘thought pictures’ and other forms of verbal gestures, visual, auditory, haptic and olfactory arts, sculpture and architecture, exhibitions, and a host of new electronic media. They may include combinations among these as well as with more traditionally research oriented modes of representation, the point being that in case of atmosphere there does not seem to be such a thing as pure representation without expression or pure expression without representation; these are idealised poles between which we have only intermediaries of both, more or less oriented toward one or the other (‘rerepresentations’ or ‘reexpressions’!).

The idea then is that this issue calls for different approaches from different arts and sciences as well as the interaction between them. Contributions have been asked to exemplify atmospheric ways of presencing atmospheres, but were also allowed to interrogate more principled theoretical, philosophical and conceptual questions.

The outcome of the call is the exciting collection of papers to be read on the following pages. A quick overview runs like this:

All together the papers present different modes of presencing atmospheres. Two papers are focalised on sound. **Højlund and Udsen** report on the presencing of the aura of a shitstorm through a sound installation, which allows listeners to be affected by an atmosphere that was earlier only felt by the exposed individual. **Georganzi and Mantzou** explore how sound in video-games can evoke “a nostalgic atmosphere of a lost future.”

¹. Aarhus School of Architecture, Denmark.

Three papers investigate different ways in which the presenting of atmosphere occur through (other) artistic forms. **Sioli** demonstrates how literature can enable the presenting of atmosphere through the example of narrations of monuments of architectural heritage. Architectural heritage is also on the agenda in **Pais and Baptista's** paper. Against the background of Merleau-Ponty's distinction between the visible and the invisible and his insistence on the intertwining of both - and hence also their entanglement in atmospheric experience - the authors interrogate different artistic experiments occupied with architectural heritage. In **Mrad's** paper the artistic medium is film, more precisely the horror film. Through the example of Steven Soderbergh's *Contagion* (2011) the author discusses how epidemic horror film can serve as an investigative tool for the emotional understanding of the sensitive world of urban atmospheres in pandemic times.

Atmospheres presented by *the actors themselves* turn up in two papers. **Sancovschi and Duarte** present a case-study of the presenting of atmosphere through sensitive listening to testimonies, in casu a Congolese refugee sharing her life story with students from a public school in Rio de Janeiro. **Thomaz and Queiroz** approach the presenting-issue as a question of intensifying attention to atmosphere in-situ (re-sensitizing as presenting in actu/situ) by asking passers-by in the streets of Rio de Janeiro to take photographs. They also show how the observing researchers themselves are affected by such re-sensitizing.

The urban has been present as context in some of the above papers. Two papers address urban atmosphere more directly. **Morselli and De Matteis** investigate how atmospheric situations in post-earthquake cities in Italy can be presented through the variety of media utilized in *phenomenographical* mapping. **Loi** reports on how walking and photography through (situationist) drifting into the sprawling urban landscape of Cagliari together help to explore, capture and interpret the divergent atmospheres of the differing urban spaces of the landscape.