

**The 16th international Congress 2020 of the German Semiotic Association “Transformations of Signs and their Objects“ (Chemnitz, 28.09.–02.10.2021)**

**Panel: “Cultural Evolution and Visual Perception“**

To achieve its goals, the German Semiotic Association organizes conferences, colloquia, workshops, courses, lecture series on core areas of its research fields. Moreover, every three years the association organizes an international congress. Within the 16<sup>th</sup> international congress, the section Cultural Studies (Kulturwissenschaft) organizes the following panel:

**“Cultural Evolution and Visual Perception“**

The approach to images as cultural documents and testimonies of collective history, as well as instruments of social shaping, formed a central feature of early cultural theories. Aby Warburg, the founder of the Cultural Studies Library, referred to the fundamental role of images in cultural history and cultural studies very early on; in particular, he analyzed images not only as symbolic representations of cultures, but also as carriers and storages of affective expression. Warburg, like most members of the Warburg Circle, established a new form of cultural history and cultural study based primarily on pictorial theories. They all understood images as cultural testimonies and studied their potentials to transform societies and cultures along “Migration Routes” through space and time. It should be noted that this perspective, in turn, mobilized a paradigm shift within the humanities, which eventually led to the development of the modern interdisciplinary Cultural Studies.

The interdisciplinary panel revisits the tradition mentioned above and focuses on studying the dynamic relationships between images and cultures.

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