

Metropolis: Visual Dynamic and Democratic Ideals

Part 1, Editorial

Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure that *Art Style Magazine* presents the following issue on *Metropolis: Visual Dynamic and Democratic Ideals*. Numerous recent events in major metropolitan centers have highlighted democratic ideals in the international arena through the media and the arts. These events have encouraged me to think about visual dynamics, as elaborated in this issue. In this consideration, the image analysis focuses on the visual aspects allusive to the metropolis' daily life, in the context of a social aesthetic (Berleant 2017). These images have appeared in cultural events, media, and the most diverse areas of public space. In addition, the visual phenomena give rise to discussions and present new elements that need to be analyzed and discussed concerning media image, artifacts, contemporary art, and the metropolis' daily rhythm. For this purpose, *Art Style Magazine* selected articles supporting the relationship between the image and urban life for this issue on *Metropolis: Visual Dynamic and Democratic Ideals*. Specifically, the theme focuses on the awareness of the representativeness of citizenship while respecting the international norms of human rights regarding the exercise of freedom of expression and communication. Therefore, the analysis is based on the elements that constitute democratic society, with common and reciprocal values for quality life and the politicization of the individuals who compose that society. A visual analysis of these elements in their social context, as aesthetic, political, and fundamental experiences of freedom by the social actors, has become essential. In these conditions, images produced as part of the urban culture and rhythm—art, photographs, films, videos, dance, theater, advertising, design, architecture, fashion—are part of the complex system of the visual dynamics of society and democratic ideals.

While using these theoretical fundamentals, this issue focuses on technical advances in visual arts, moving images, and other aesthetic and political experiences related to the rhythm of society. The visual dynamic offers narratives as an "image of reconciliation" and democratic ideals, which positively enables aesthetic experiences through the moving image or cinematography (Schoolman 2020). In this way, Schoolman's work is highlighted, with a focus on urban rhythms exploring the moving image and political-cultural aspects positively, in opposition to Adorno's aesthetic conceptions (1970). Therefore, I introduce this issue with my article on the structures of the metropolis by discussing public space and arriving at an interpretation of Schoolman's work, comparing private and public space on democratic enlightenment and aesthetic education. Following my article, I present an exclusive interview with Schoolman.

The primary purpose of this interview is to bring the reader closer to the subject of aesthetics and politics—that is, the correspondence of art images with public life regarding the ideals of organization of a city, state, or nation. In this sense, considering the object of aesthetics, art is to think about the reception of art forms and their subjects in contemporaneity interacting with the metropolis' everyday life and its democratic ideals. Thus, the meaning of the visual dynamics of society and democratic ideals would be social aesthetics, where the reflection on the arts is linked to political-cultural aspects. In that way, among the many forms in which art manifests itself, the experience and the effect of greater global perception have been seen in Schoolman's work through the moving image and, consequently, film. Specifically, concerning politics, the focus of this interview is on the arts—in this case, cinema, and the effects of politicization, citizen awareness of their cultural diversity, and differences. At this point, Schoolman's work becomes essential for democratic enlightenment. To discuss the essential values of democracy is also to understand the complexity of respect for difference. Therefore, the democratic ideal faces the central challenge of combating violence toward difference. In this way, Schoolman's theory has been built upon the challenge of "overcoming identity's construction of difference as otherness." One of the ways to overcome this identity construction is through reconciliation images by way of aesthetic education designed to meet democratic enlightenment. Schoolman developed his theory of the reconciliation image through the moving image and the cinematographic image. Hence, this interview aims to better understand political and aesthetic values, specifically through cinema, to enlighten visual dynamics and democratic ideals. Further, this issue presents topics related to images and social reality. These images portray the sociocultural context through human beings' capacity to create narratives that configure the collective consciousness and shape public opinion (Wagner 2014, 2017). Thus, this edition directly implies finding sensitive values with humanistic expectations still present in the traditional-innovation, real-digital, and true-false interfaces, which establish the dichotomies and polysemy in the visual representation of the metropolitan visual dynamics. Visual culture and studies on its iconography, history, cultural anthropology, and semiotics compose this edition through adoption of an interdisciplinary focus on human and social sciences, contributions with political-cultural approaches to the arts and communication, and proposals relating music to the visual arts, architecture, and design.

Along the approach of democratic ideals, this issue has the honor to present an essay on freedom of thought and speech by Marc Jimenez—philosopher, essayist, and professor emeritus at the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne upholding truth and democracy—"From Friedrich Nietzsche to Elon Musk." Jimenez leads us to a near future, conditioning us to see the consequences of the impoverishment of the use of language as a threat to the democratic ideal intrinsic to the dynamics of the public space, which results from the technological development of artificial intelligence and the forms of increasing control over individuals exercised by algorithms and the use of words designed to meet the common and superficial understanding of immediate communication for the efficiency of a pragmatic society.

Then, we have the article by Pamela C. Scorzin, "On the Contemporary Scenopolitics Urban Protest in Major Cities." The author starts from an analysis of Stéphane Hessel's *Indignez-vous!* as an axis of study on the current global culture in its democratic participation manifesting in the public space beyond words and writings, mainly through "significant scenographic scenes and creative actions" in the main metropolises of the world. The author uses the term "scenopolitics" for this phenomenon of manifestations in public space where visibility concerns political issues for a symbolic democracy as a form of empowerment of those who are not eligible to exercise power. Scorzin is an art, design, and media theorist and professor of art history and visual culture studies at Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Department of Design (Germany), and has been vice-dean since 2019.

Still in the scenario of manifestations in search of democratic ideals beyond words and writings, the focus extends to popular music compositions with one of the greatest sociologists of Brazilian culture, Waldenyr Caldas. Specifically, in the context of socio-political reality and Brazilian popular music, Caldas contributes to this issue with his essay "Music and Democracy: The Binomial Aesthetics and Politics." Next, situating music and visual arts through iconography, the artistic practices that involve the universe of music and society are analyzed in the essay, "The Intersection Between Art, Music, and Society: Musical Iconography's Social Dynamics Impact" by Edson Leite, which includes artworks from the Museum of Contemporary Art at the University of São Paulo (MAC USP)—one of the most significant collections of contemporary art in Latin America. Professor Leite has been the president of the Research Commission of MAC USP and focuses his research on arts, music, cultural heritage, and communication, concentrating mainly on Latin American cultures.

To finish the first part of this issue, focusing on manifestations, performances, and appropriation of public space, the essay "Singular-Plurals in Contemporary Choreography: From Aesthetics to Social Aesthetics" by Iris Julian conceives the democratization of the dance field as a form of creative collaboration. Julian emphasizes the inherent variations and sensory experience by bringing choreography closer to social reality. Her essay has been considered the conceptual analysis of how the democratization of dance is constructed while simultaneously examining the sociocultural context of choreographers concerning the receptivity of the representation of "singular and plural in collaboration." Nevertheless, these articles do not complete the complex theme of this issue, which continues with a second part.

Enjoy reading this first part,

Christiane Wagner
Editor-in-Chief