



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
PRESS



Cultures of the Face

Special issue of *Sign Systems Studies*

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Sign Systems Studies is the oldest journal in the history of semiotics, and one of the most prestigious ones. It is presently an open-access international journal devoted to semiotic research with a focus on the semiotics of culture (Tartu School) and living nature. It is published by the University of Tartu Press; it is listed in SCOPUS and Web of Science. It is edited by distinguished semioticians Kalevi Kull, Mihhail Lotman, Timo Maran, Silvi Salupere, Ene-Reet Soovik, and Peeter Torop.

The special issue, to be published late 2020, is devoted to “The Cultures of the Face”. The face is a complex phenomenon at the threshold of nature and culture. The face has been an important subject of research since C. Darwin’s investigation on emotions among animals and men. In semiotics, the study of the face has a long pedigree from the ancient physiognomy to the research on non-verbal communication, paralinguistic and kinesics. Today, this subject has seen a re-emergence through the widespread use of digital media.

Although approaches that study the biology of the face are useful, for they uncover the physiological substratum of the human usage of the face and its ties with similar phenomena in other species, the naturalization of the face must be nuanced through attention to cultural diversity. Faces change across time and space. Old photographs show faces that appear as “antique” today, for ancient is not only the manner of their representation, but also the faces themselves. The appearance of faces, indeed, changes across time, depending on as many factors as nutrition, dentistry, cosmetics, sport, hairstyle fashion, etc. But what people do with their faces, in personal and even more in mediated interactions, changes too. Old photographs evoke ancient faces as well as ancient ways of using them in front of a camera, with old-fashioned poses and facial expressions.

Variability across time intertwines and complicates through variability across space and, therefore, cultures: the traveler spontaneously realizes how different faces appear in the arts, everyday visual cultures, and quotidian interactions in societies around the globe. The phenomenon is striking in particular as these ‘local cultures of the face’ intermingle with global trends in technology, communication, and fashion.



The special issue is meant to attract contributions dealing with any aspect of the cultural variability of the face across time and space. A robust semiotic methodology is required, referring to any of the major branches of the disciplines. Theoretical approaches are welcome, if offering adequate examples and case studies. Focused contributions on specific 'face cultures' are also encouraged, provided that their comparative approach is emphasized. Articles bridging gaps among 'disciplines of the face', as well as concentrating on their interaction with new global and digital technologies of representation and communication are strongly encouraged. The issue accepts also illustrated essays, on condition that reproduction copyright is previously cleared.

The issue is published in the framework of ERC Consolidator Grant Project **ERC-2018-COG 816640**:

FACETS: Face Aesthetics in Contemporary E-Technological Societies

Further general information on the journal and submission guidelines are available at
<http://www.sss.ut.ee/index.php/sss/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>

1) Prospective authors should send abstracts to Remo GRAMIGNA and Massimo LEONE by **June 15, 2020**

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2) Authors of accepted abstracts will have to submit full papers by **December 15, 2020**

3) **After double-blind peer-reviewing, publication is expected in **June 15, 2021****