

The famous quote by Dan Graham got it right: “*All artists are alike. They dream of doing something that’s more social, more collaborative, and more real than art.*” “All artists” here could be substituted with “editors”, “curators”, and even “funders” — the same holds true.

In my work as a curator and critic, I am no different: I have been trying to rewire the social and economic effects of art, instead of taking the visible realm itself as a primary field of interest.

But then, in October 2017, something became clear to me. During the panel discussion *Mallification*<sup>1</sup> (the proliferation of the shopping mall in new guises), one of the participants bluntly spelled out the requirements of a shopping mall today: it should 1) be accessible, 2) have an interesting mix of shops, and 3) be Instagrammable. The term “Instagrammable”, here, applies to the architecture itself, not to its image. It doesn’t simply mean that an image is adjusted to circulate online — rather, reality itself is reformatted to better circulate as image.

I understood then that art can be a prism to gauge a murky visual field, and that there is no need to spice this up with unrelated political issues (of course there *is*, but perhaps not in the name of art). The visual realm in which art figures and positions itself already constitutes a political domain. And art theory and visual studies — if anything — are equipped to identify what’s at stake in this field.

An example: the selfie-view camera has been noted to prompt people to consider nose jobs, in an effort to correct the lens distortion occurring at close range — selfie range — that makes their nose appear bigger than it actually is. Another: the guidelines for AirBnB photos (neat, spacious and bright, with a minor personal touch) have resulted in a sprawl of indistinguishable interior designs not only in bars and restaurants but also in personal homes. What we see here is that the visual realm does not translate into social, political, and economic ramifications — it is itself always already an economic battlefield.

To approach this realm, RESOLUTION focuses on “images in their online circulation”. This scope inevitably extends to the visual economies in which these images function: the distribution chains, the infrastructural conditions, the instruments that make them, and their limitations and possibilities. Since any instrument that produces or reads images can be of importance here, we open our scope to the visual

1 Mallification, Het Nieuwe Instituut, 5 October 2017, with Natascha Meuser, Mark Pimlott, and Gesina Roters, moderated by Janno Martens and Laurens Otto.

field at large, beyond what is produced by professional and consumer cameras alone: from webcams to scanners to satellite imaging. It is from this multiverse of images that each issue will address our guiding question: how do digital images format reality?

In order to examine digital images in their online presence, RESOLUTION wagers the implausible attempt to trap them in printed form. The magazine is a table upon which to dissect these images by cutting them loose from the screen and taking them out of their “native” circulation. This has proven challenging. As with digital images in general, the artistic propositions that the magazine features do not have a “proper” medium or format: by nature, they are accessible on a variety of devices, screens and sometimes prints, and are reformatted and consumed differently with each appearance. Rather than immersing the reader in the image as “image”, and suspending disbelief through a self-effacing frame, RESOLUTION presses “ESC” to exit fullscreen mode. We have enlisted visual artist Jochem van Laarhoven as our in-house image editor. He has restaged all featured artistic contributions, visually foregrounding the tangible, instrumental aspects of these artworks, and the logistics of their circulation. We aim to show you more of the image, not less.

And lastly, speaking of circulation, the internet is fast. We have decided to take it slow. RESOLUTION will come out once a year. Next year’s issue will look at the relation between photography and pollution. This first issue focuses on the elementary building block of the digital image: the pixel.

Laurens Otto, Editor-in-chief