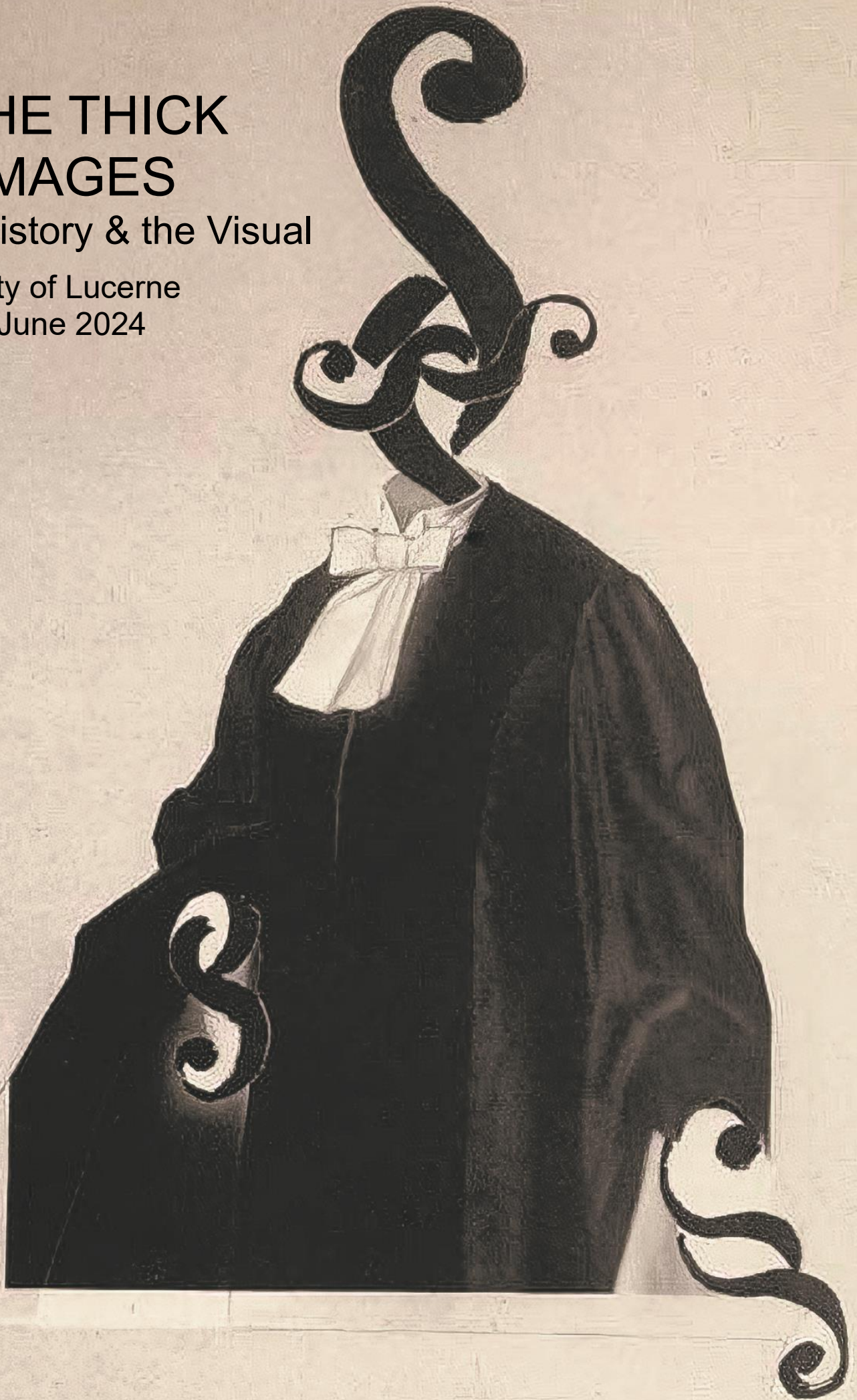


IN THE THICK OF IMAGES

Law, History & the Visual

University of Lucerne
10 & 11 June 2024



CALL FOR PAPERS

“Suppose that whatever we’ve done, felt, and thought
has always happened in the thick of images.”
(Anand Pandian, *Reel Word: An Anthropology of Creation*)

The ‘visual turn’ has long been turning in critical and cultural studies of law (see Douzinas & Nead 1999). In the past twenty-five years, a growing body of scholarship has evolved that emphasises law’s “constitutive imbrication” (Crawley 2020) with an array of visual forms and elaborates on the ways in which images “shape and transform legal life” (Sarat et al. 2005). Weaving together an eclectic set of theories, concepts, methods and materials, such studies refuse thin readings of images as merely illustrative of law and invite us to think more deeply about their ideological and visual operations – about the meanings they carry and make available, about their material presence and affective effects, and about the cultural-political and cultural-legal work they perform across their multiple contexts of production, circulation and reception.

Much of this scholarship focuses on the contemporary conjuncture of law and visual representation. Yet law’s imbrication with the visual is not exclusive to the present; law has always lived, happened and mattered “in the thick of images”. This is the starting point for our two-day conference, which seeks to explicitly foreground historical and historicist work on law and the visual. Situated at the disciplinary crossroads of law, history, visual cultural studies, art history, film and photography studies, *In the Thick of Images* invites multiple viewpoints and approaches to converge on ways of negotiating the entanglements of law, history and the visual – in various contexts, scales and timeframes.

From this broad perspective, we would like to set out three main lines of discussion. First, we welcome proposals that delve into ‘thick’ descriptions of visual images in their historical and discursive context(s). With W.J.T. Mitchell, we encourage contributors to think not only about what these images show and mean, but also what they ask of – or ‘want’ from – the viewer (Mitchell 2005). What prompts do they give? What emotions do they evoke? What acts of encounter and spectatorship do they enable? What “experience” (Manderson 2012) of law and justice do they provide? In short, we aim to gather a cross-section of situated case studies in order to develop a richer sense of the historical stakes of legal images, and of the nuanced vocabularies needed to appraise the cultural-legal work they do – both in the initial context of their production and reception, and across subsequent contexts of circulation, appropriation and display.

Second, we invite contributions that consider the traffic of legal images at specific sites and moments, and which locate these flows within the history of the visual. In particular, we ask for inquiries that connect the study of legal images with historical shifts in visual cultures. How do new visual technologies and practices transform conditions for the circulation of legal images, ideas and ideologies? What new spaces of representation and expression do they create? Which new publics do they bring into being? What are the perceptual changes wrought by new visual media and how do these alter how the law is seen? How do new visual practices and materials reinforce or disrupt the conventional limits of the visible and invisible?

Third, we want to open a space for reflecting on what it means to do scholarship on and in law using visual objects from the past. How might the study of images cultivate new routes into legal history? What stakes are involved when we think law with images, and to what extent does this require a “constant recalibration of the dialogue between law and society, history, visual studies, and theory” (Manderson 2018). Given the inescapability of our own historicity, and given that we too are always “in the thick of images”, we also challenge contributors to think critically about the images we use in our work, their mediums and materialities, and the effects and affects of bringing certain images into circulation in the present.

Across these main lines of inquiry, we hope to gather a diverse group of scholars for lively discussion and exchange. We welcome fully developed contributions but also works-in-progress, as well as more speculative soundings, interventions and provocations. The overarching aim is to prod convention and to suggest some new routes worth navigating as we continue to think and re-think the connections of law and the visual through history.

Submission Guidelines

We invite proposals for 20-minute papers on any aspect of the conference theme(s) and warmly encourage scholars of all backgrounds and career stages to apply.

We also welcome proposals for fully formed panels of 3 x 20-minute papers, roundtable sessions, workshops or other innovative formats. These will be allocated a 90-minute slot within the conference programme. Double sessions (e.g. a panel with six speakers over three hours) may be possible, but only at the discretion of the conference organisers. We encourage those interested in coordinating a session to get in touch as early as possible with any questions or queries.

For fully formed panels, roundtables or workshops, please submit an abstract of the proposed theme (250 words), titles of the papers, plus biographies of the speakers and chair.

For individual papers, please send an abstract of 250 words and a short biography.

All submissions should be sent to laura.petersen@unilu.ch by Friday 19 January 2024.

Registration

We are pleased to be able to offer free registration to all presenters.

Organisers

Steven Howe (steven.howe@unilu.ch)

Laura Petersen (laura.petersen@unilu.ch)

Nicole Schraner (nicole.schraner@unilu.ch)

Venue

The conference will be held at the main campus of the University of Lucerne, situated on the shore of the Vierwaldstättersee (Lake Lucerne).

The campus lies directly behind the main train station, which is well-connected to the European rail network and within easy reach of the international airports at Zurich and Basel.



The university campus is located centre right, immediately behind the Kultur- und Kongresszentrum Luzern (KKL) and just a short walk from the famous Kappellbrücke (chapel bridge).

Keynote Speakers



Valérie Hayaert is a classicist, historian and humanist researcher of the early modern European tradition. She studied Modern Literature and Art History in Lyon and Paris, and in 2005 earned her PhD in History and Civilization from the European University Institute Florence. In 2006, she received the EUI Alumni Prize for best interdisciplinary thesis, and her book *Mens emblematica et humanisme juridique*, went to press in 2008.

Valérie has published widely on the aesthetics of justice in courthouses from the early modern period to the present, and recently contributed to two exhibitions in Belgium on images of justice (*The Art of Law*, Groeningen Museum, Bruges, 2017 and *Call for Justice*, Hof Busleyden Museum, Mechelen, 2018). Her most recent book, *Lady Justice: An Anatomy of an Allegory*, has just appeared in the Edinburgh Studies in Law, Justice and the Visual series (2023).



Desmond Manderson is jointly appointed in the College of Law and College of Arts & Social Sciences at The Australian National University. He directs the Centre for Law, Arts and the Humanities, designing innovative interdisciplinary courses with English, philosophy, art theory and history, political and critical theory, and beyond. He has authored several books including *From Mr. Sin to Mr. Big* (1993); *Songs Without Music: Aesthetic Dimensions of Law and Justice* (2000); *Proximity, Levinas, and the Soul of Law* (2006); *Kangaroo Courts and the Rule of Law: The Legacy of Modernism* (2012). His most recent monograph *Danse Macabre: Temporalities of Law in the Visual Arts* (2019) received the 2019 Penny Pether Prize for research in law and the humanities, and the 2020 Australian Legal Research Award for best book. His co-written play *Twenty Minutes with the Devil* (with Luis Gomez Romero) premiered at The Street Theatre, Canberra in 2022.



Jolene Rickard is an Associate Professor at Cornell University in the departments of History of Art and Art. She is a visual historian, artist and curator interested in the intersection of Indigenous art, cultural theory and the forces of settler colonialism. Her research centres on the expression of multiple sovereignties within Indigenous art and culture globally.

Jolene has been at the forefront of comparative understandings of global Indigenous art with research projects in the Americas, Australia, and Aotearoa (New Zealand). Her work bridges the fields of Native American and Indigenous Studies, Settler Colonial Studies and the discipline of Art History. Focused on the complication of sovereignty as a political, theoretical and activist action, Jolene investigates anti-colonial artistic strategies, place-based knowledges and ontologies.



Frederic J. Schwartz is Emeritus Professor of History of Art and Architecture at University College London. He has written extensively on the German movements from the late 19th and early 20th century, including the relations between theory and the avant-garde. His major publications include *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture before the First World War* (1996) and *Blind Spots: Critical History and the History of Art in Twentieth Century Germany* (2005). His keynote will draw on material from his latest monograph *The Culture of the Case: Madness, Crime, and Justice in Modern German Art*, published with MIT Press in 2023.

The conference is organised by the Institute for Interdisciplinary Legal Studies – lucernauris as part of the SNSF-funded project Imagining Justice: Law, Politics and Popular Visual Culture in Weimar Germany.