

Adhoc-Group: Illustrated Science(s) – Exploring the visual landscapes of Covid-19 and future perspectives of art/science cooperation

In January 2020, two medical illustrators at the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* in Atlanta were asked to create an 'identity of the Corona virus'. The result of this task became an iconic image of the pandemic: the ball with spikes. This illustration soon got used for all kinds of health communications, memes and comics, as well as numerous artwork projects. The illustrator's design decisions widely influenced the public imagination of the Corona virus. However, the spiky ball is only one example in a wide range of efforts to make the 'invisible' visible and feed the viral imaginary.

While the pandemic exposes the relevance and omnipresence of visualizations and their part in coping with epistemic uncertainties, translating knowledge or creating acceptance, their virtue as design objects have been widely ignored. Actual social scientific activities during the pandemic have been focusing mostly on other (not less important) aspects (e.g., risk, compliance, social inequality, changes in every-day life, the meaning of scientifically crafted numbers and figures, etc.). Nevertheless, an important field has hardly been systematically considered and analyzed so far: The numerous liaisons of (visual) arts and science.

Against the backdrop of actual pandemic picture landscapes, and the lack of research in that area we would like to discuss the potential of illustrated sciences by two approaches. We are going to:

- 1) Reflect on the practices, coordinating tasks and ethical challenges of artistically crafted visual representations in health communication, biomedical emergencies and epistemic uncertainties from a sociological perspective. This perspective refers to a long tradition of translating (medical) expert knowledge into compelling, often persuasive images. While this has repeatedly been the focus of critical analyses, especially from Medical Ethics/History, STS or Cultural Studies, corresponding research has not been conducted systematically during the pandemic.
- 2) Explore the potentials and (im)possibilities of interdisciplinary cooperation with professional, artistic illustration for social sciences. This perspective also refers to the various new resources, side projects and creative potentials that came up and got mobilized with the pandemic and provide the basis for alternative formats of writing and presenting scientific data.

The call for abstracts is directed, but not limited to:

- Cooperative projects of science and (visual) arts, especially those who formed during and through the Corona-Crisis or deal with (bio-)medical issues.
- Reflections on empirical potentials and problems in art/science-cooperation.
- Research from Science and Technology Studies, dealing critically with modes of representation and visualization of health care data (especially with focus on figurative illustration, but also more general views are welcome).
- Theoretical and empirical takes on links of visual arts/illustration and (social) sciences.
- (Social scientifically based) medical-ethical considerations about potentials and troubles of visual representation and simplification of scientific data.
- Historical perspectives on the nexus of graphic art and science as well as contemporary studies on digital communication.

The panel will be composed of several inputs of a wide range of these topics and completed with an open discussion.

Abstracts can be submitted in **English or German** until **April 1st**. We encourage the applicants to enrich their short abstract (**300 words**) with visual material that can be included to the PDF-file in a link or on not more than one page (like sketches, illustrations, picture documentation). However, visuals are not obligatory. Depending on the submissions, we consider a visual documentation of the panel.

Contact:

Annerose Böhrer anne.boehrer@fau.de

Marie-Kristin Döbler marie-kristin.doebler@fau.de