

## Call for Papers: Aesthetics of media in transition, *Montage AV* no. 1, 2025

Film history has often been shaped by complex transformational processes in which both film and cinema technology and the aesthetics and communicative aspects of the medium undergo changes. At certain times, these processes take the form of *transitions*, such as the change from silent to sound film around 1930. The metaphor of a transition separates two distinct phases, but at the same time indicates that there is something else, a third term, that lies between them and has both spatial and temporal dimensions: the (tentative) shift from one to the other, ‘bridging’ something, entering into new territories. Seen this way, film historical ‘phases’ or ‘periods’ are less strongly separated from one another, but are rather marked by gradual, often discontinuous, even merging changes. Sometimes this can be seen in contemporary statements, such as when Béla Balázs spoke in 1930 of the “crisis of transition” to sound movies, sometimes retrospectively in historiographic concepts such as that of the “transitional cinema” around 1910, which for many film historians was marked by the shift from the early “cinema of attractions” to the classical cinema of the 1920s. The currently still ongoing digital transformation of the media is also often seen as a form of transition, such as in Giovanna Fossati’s succinct formulation, “From Grain to Pixel,” which she uses to characterize the transformation in the context of archives.

Our issue on the aesthetics of media in transition will look at how such historical transitions in film become noticeable in concrete works, artefacts, and dispositifs. How have developments in technology and the medium affected film form? Is there such a thing as specific “aesthetics of transition,” as David Thorburn and Henry Jenkins suggested in 2003 in the anthology *Rethinking Media Change*. The focus will not be on technical changes in themselves, but how such processes – understood specifically as transitions – appear in films, their exhibition and reception, or specific forms of technology. The issue is intended to deal with various periods and include practices, technologies, and dispositifs such as hybrid forms like part-talkies around 1930 with their intentional use of silent and sound film segments, combinations of black-and-white and color film in the transitional period from the 1940s to 1960s, use of 35mm and digital material in the 2000s, or mixed forms of analogue and digital projection in live performances in recent experimental film exhibition. Further possible topics could include intermedial interactions, forms of the overlapping or simultaneity of older and newer aesthetic strategies or programs, for example in long-lasting conventions or conscious imitations of historical technology and practices such as in the return to analogue film or holding on to disc recording in the 1930s. Early sound film may be seen as a prime example, since it was characterized by close relationships to silent film forms as well as by intermedial links to the music industry (sheet music, records, and radio). To what extent it can be seen as paradigmatic for later transitions – the shift to widescreen projection in commercial cinema or the switch from Super-8 to video and digital recording in amateur film – is a further question that could be posed. The issue hopes to cover a wide spectrum of film historical issues.

We welcome submissions in German or English with a length of up to 35,000 characters (approx. 5800 words). Case studies or essays may also be considerably shorter. Please send your submissions to [montage@snafu.de](mailto:montage@snafu.de) by 10 November 2024. Our guest editor, Daniel Wiegand ([daniel.wiegand@fiwi.uzh.ch](mailto:daniel.wiegand@fiwi.uzh.ch)), or our editor Jörg Schweinitz ([joerg.schweinitz@fiwi.uzh.ch](mailto:joerg.schweinitz@fiwi.uzh.ch)) will be glad to answer any questions or provide further information.