CFP: Media Spaces of Gender and Sexuality

Media Fields Journal

University of California, Santa Barbara

This issue of Media Fields investigates the connections between media, space, gender, and sexuality, seeking conversations that center on these interrelations and negotiations. We invite papers that raise questions of how media spaces construct gender, and how gender, in turn, constructs media spaces; how spaces condition and are conditioned by gender performances and sexual practices; and how gender legibility limits (or allows) access to various media spaces.

Film and media scholarship historically came of age through its study of the relationship between gender, sexuality, and media. Much has been written about the status of women as objects of the cinematic gaze, as well as about the status of female and queer-identified subjects as media producers. Yet in more recent times, issues of gender and sexuality have once again become marginalized in academic discourse, revealing the need for new explorations that coincide with the impact of the "spatial turn." In this age of conflict, dissent, surveillance, and migration—when the study of media is often also the study of the precariousness and dynamism of the spatial—it is particularly important to trace the interconnections between space, media, and gender.

We are inspired by the work of those film and media scholars who have explored such interconnections. Lynn Spigel's seminal book on the gendered discourse surrounding domestic television viewing provides us with one useful example, as does Lucas Hilderbrand's forthcoming work on the culture of gay bars after Stonewall. While some scholars like Spigel and Hilderbrand have studied the connections between gender, space, and media in their own work, fewer media studies journals have made this topic a primary focus. As a result, we seek scholarship that deals with space in a range of ways: essays might discuss online spaces that allow for specific negotiations of gender or sexuality, or with gender embodiment in physical spaces of various scales, from the very local (the living room, for example) to the global.

Essays might also draw upon feminist interventions into Marxist/historical materialist theories of space, as well as engaging the intersections between gender, race, and class. These important intersections exceed the label, "identity politics"—a label that we feel is now often deployed in order to debunk the continued relevance of gender and sexuality to any scholarly conversation. While we do indeed call for political approaches to gender and space—essays informed by the agendas of feminist and queer activism—we stress that gender and sexuality are not merely areas of special interest, but are instead structuring principles of discrimination that permeate our lives on a number of registers.

Thus, our approach is multivalent. We invite submissions that consider this complexity, possibly addressing the following topics:

--Transnational Queer and Feminist Media: How are flows of bodies, labor, capital, and images gendered and sexualized?

--Queering Questions of Scale: How does heterosexism delimit notions of nation, state, and the transnational?

--Gendered Spaces of Conflict and Dissent: How do media contribute to the gendering of the different spaces of war and dissent as well as of the subjects who are involved?

--Gender, Sexuality, and Online Spaces: How are social media practices and spaces gendered and sexualized?

--Queer/Feminist Gaming: representations of gendered and sexualized spaces in mainstream video games, gendered geographies of video game production, gendered spaces of gaming culture
--Spaces of Surveillance: How is surveillance fundamentally gendered, sexualized, and spatialized? How does voyeurism continue to bolster certain experiences of space and place?

--Gendered Infrastructures: How are media infrastructures gendered, and why does this matter?

--Gender, Sexuality and Access: How do gender and its legibility (e.g., normativity) result in certain types of access to particular spaces?

We are looking for essays of 1500-2500 words, digital art projects, and audio or video interviews exploring the relationship between gender, sexuality, and space. We encourage approaches to this topic from scholars in cinema and media studies, anthropology, architecture, art and art history, communication, ecology, geography, literature, musicology, sociology, and other relevant fields.

Feel free to contact issue co-editors, Hannah Goodwin and Lindsay Palmer, with proposals and inquiries.

Email submissions, proposals, and inquiries to submissions@mediafieldsjournal.org by May 30th, 2013.