"THE DIGITAL IMAGE" – A TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CLUSTER

FOREWORD

Images have traditionally played a subordinate role in the context of the humanities. This is also true for the so-called Digital Humanities, which have so far focused on text studies using methods and tools from computer science. With the intention of remedying this situation, we applied to the German Research Foundation (DFG) for acceptance to a Priority Program on the topic of "The Digital Image", a funding format in which different disciplines at German universities dedicate themselves to a broader topic from a variety of perspectives. The goal of our program is not to limit ourselves to the development of tools for analyzing data – in this respect we go beyond the Digital Humanities remit from the outset – but to place the subject matter within a broader methodological and cultural horizon.

We want to address the digital image as a phenomenon that is increasingly shaping the present and the future, while at the same time bringing into focus the fact that digital images play a considerable, indeed an increasingly important role both as objects of research and as epistemic tools for that research, not only in the exceedingly diverse fields of the humanities, but also in the life and natural sciences, and that this role needs to be described and analyzed. In undertaking this task, it seemed to us particularly important to bridge possible traditional gaps between different cultures – for example, by using methodologies common in the field of the humanities to reach into the realm of the natural or life sciences, or by relating mathematical and computer-based technologies to the humanities. Out of a total of around 70 project proposals, 12 were ultimately approved by an independent DFG review panel. These proposals come from the fields of computer science, archaeology, architecture, European and Asian art history, media studies and ethnology. This booklet brings together all projects in the form of brief presentations of their goals and research questions.

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