

Call for Abstracts for Issue 2:

The Nonhuman
Concepts, Concerns, and Challenges in the Study of Culture

The second issue of *On_Culture* focusses on scholarship that draws attention to matter, networks, affect, objects, and media to show how nonhuman entities act and shape our world.¹ Making such entities visible enables better engagement with contemporary matters and 21st century problems such as global climate change, the collapse of financial markets, and nonhuman internet traffic.

Turning towards the nonhuman in the study of culture, however, is not just about contemporary subject matters. Rather, it is about politics, knowledge, and embodied experience both in the present and throughout history. A nonhuman turn in the study of culture can also just as well be described as a re/turn of the nonhuman, as research on the cultural and social relations of human and nonhuman actors can be traced to a variety of different intellectual and theoretical developments moving back through the 20th century and well before it. Approaches to the nonhuman have included such diverse fields as actor-network theory, affect theory, animal studies, assemblage theory, new media theory, new materialism, speculative and object-oriented realism and systems theory.

While this second issue of *On_Culture* acknowledges the discourse on a *posthuman* turn, the nonhuman is a distinct concept that differs from posthumanism in important ways. While the nonhuman also aims to widen analytical perspectives to include other natural, cultural, and social actors than humans, it does not claim a historic shift from humanism to posthumanism but rather advocates research that takes the various complex relations of humans and nonhumans in contemporary as well as historical cultural and social formations into account.

On_Culture invites researchers from all fields in the humanities, social sciences, and other areas of the study of culture to submit abstracts pertaining to research on the implications of the nonhuman for the study of culture. Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- Concepts and theoretical frameworks pertaining to the nonhuman within specific fields such as material culture studies, ecological humanities, history, sociology, and philosophy;
- The effects of considering the nonhuman in analyses and interpretations of literary texts – how can literary forms and functions be read as responses to new nonhuman constituents of contemporary life, such as the internet, smart phones, and networking technologies?;
- The way in which attention to the nonhuman affects empirical research processes;
- The production of nonhuman vitality, particularly in delineation of several concepts of human agency (within a historical framework);
- Distinction and relevance between ‘analog’ and/or ‘digital’ nonhumans, e.g. in terms of pseudo-vital and media forms of emergence;

¹ This call for paper carries on the concept of an international conference held at the GCSC (Giessen, 27-28 May, 2013): “The Re/turn of the Nonhuman in the Study of Culture: Concepts – Concerns – Challenges”.

- Approaches to an idea of an ecology of things; explorations within material culture debates under the umbrella of nonhumanity;
- Theorizations and Analyses of the complex animal-human-relationship within the broader conceptual framework of the nonhuman;
- Representations and Reinterpretations of nonhuman agencies, aesthetics, and assemblages.

On_Culture is an electronic platform geared toward all researchers interested in the study of culture. For an overview of the research areas that reflect new approaches and emerging topics in the study of culture:

<https://www.uni-giessen.de/fbz/faculties/gcsc/gcsc/research/research-areas>.

If you are interested in having a peer reviewed academic article featured in the second issue, please submit an abstract of 200 words with the article title and a short biographical note to content@on-culture.org no later than 31 March 2016 with the subject line "Abstract Submission." You will be notified by 15 April 2016 whether your paper proposal has been accepted. The deadline for submitting the final paper is 15 July 2016.

Please note: *On_Culture* also features a section devoted to shorter, creative pieces pertaining to each issue topic. These can be interviews, essays, opinion pieces, reviews of exhibitions, analyses of cultural artifacts and events, photo galleries, videos, works of art...and more! These contributions are uploaded on a rolling basis. Interested in contributing? Send your ideas to the Editorial Board at any time: content@on-culture.org

About:

On_Culture: The Open Journal for the Study of Culture is a biannual, peer-reviewed academic eJournal created and edited by doctoral researchers, postdocs and professors working at the GCSC. It provides a platform and forum for pursuing and reflecting on the study of culture. It investigates, problematizes and develops key concepts and methods in the field. More often than not, developing such new approaches and emerging topics is a collaborative and collective process. *On_Culture* is dedicated to fostering such collective processes and the cultural dynamics at work in thinking about and reflecting on culture.

The journal consists of three sections: peer-reviewed academic articles, review essays and dynamic components such as video clips, interviews and visual statements. *On_Culture* is the result of collaborative processes and emergent structures in the field of e-Publishing. *On_Culture* puts new approaches and emerging topics in the (trans)national study of culture 'on the line' and, in so doing, fills the gap_____ between 'on' and 'culture'. There are numerous ways of filling the gap, and the plurality of approaches is something for which we strive with each new issue.

The journal offers numerous opportunities to contribute: calls for abstracts released biannually seek contributors of peer reviewed academic articles, while ideas for shorter pieces (textual, visual, graphic...you name it!) pertaining to any and all issue topics are welcome at any time.