

IF, HOW, AND WHEN AN IMAGE CAN BE SAID TO BE ATMOSPHERIC

Tonino Griffiero

University of Rome Tor Vergata

Department of History, Cultural Heritage, Education and Society

t.griffiero@lettere.uniroma2.it

ESSAY 169/12

ATMOSPHEROLOGY

ICONIC TURN

PATHIC AESTHETICS

TWILIGHTNESS

The paper questions the atmospheric scope of images. First, it aims to critically discuss the enthusiastic excesses of the so-called iconic turn, showing both its relatively limited novelty compared to other phases of culture and the current risks of aesthetic manipulation. Secondly, it examines briefly some traditional ideas on iconic atmospherics, and in more detail, what could be the iconic atmospheric generators, referring to

both perceptual images and artificial-artistic ones. The identified generators (vagueness, distance, ephemerality, foggy, twilightness) suggest that the image is more powerfully atmospheric when it blurs the boundaries of reality, subverts the teleology of clarity embedded in its representational function, thus triggering a felt-bodily resonance that is not antagonistic but based on a certain balance between contraction and expansion.

INTRODUCTION

An aesthetics of atmospheres should reconsider Baumgarten's concept of *aesthetica* (1750) as a theory of sensitive perception, while also exploring today's late-capitalist "widespread design" and "staging value" (Böhme, 2001, 2017), as well as the socio-affective repercussions of the iconic deluge, both in the so-called society of *Erlebnis* (Schulze 1992) and, even more so, in the AI-driven society. Nevertheless, one must remain cautious of the overzealous enthusiasm stirred by the iconic turn.

Could the current iconic intermediality merely represent the long-term effect of the Wagnerian dream of the "total work of art," which, however, materializes not in art (the fusion of all arts), but rather in the atmospheric blend of artifice and everyday life? In any case, as the continuation of the "non-extreme indirect total work of art" (Marquard, 1989, pp.110-111), once sought in earlier aestheticization (the global musealization, shopping malls as paradisiacal non-places), the iconic turn does not seem to offer a true novelty.

This iconic aestheticization is by no means wholly positive, not least because when the aesthetic illusion nearly coincides with reality, reality inevitably risks transforming into illusion. In an era marked by changes so swift that they fail to settle into experience, and by media-driven cultural distortions (beginning with the multitude of so-called 'turns' in the humanities), there exists an exaggeration that would be prudent to partially demystify, namely, that ours is the age par excellence of the image.

THE PRIMARY EXAGGERATION: THE ICONIC TURN

We encounter images everywhere. Yet, their widespread misuse, particularly in the absence of proper education in the pragmatics of images, is not the mature consequence of the asemantic direction of the visual arts, but rather the

perverse fulfilment of the prophecy that “any person today can lay claim to being filmed” (Benjamin, 2008, p. 33). However, even if one prefers not to see in the exaggerated, iconically immersive turn the decline of the rational world, it remains pertinent to underscore the limitations of this euphoria. In the worst cases, it serves even as a strategy to obscure socially (and often legally) indefensible behaviours, while in the best, it simply reflects the amplification of mimetic-illusory iconic technologies (from digital effects to virtual reality and AI).

Clearly, not all scholars are uncritical defenders of images or backward-looking detractors. Some, however, expertly explore the immanent logic of the visual pre-predicative realm, without reducing the iconic to a mere substitute for language. They also delve into what images “afford” rather than what they “tell.” Indeed, before we interpret “X in an image,” we are already emotionally engaged with the image’s atmospheric impression, which is influential and even contagious, not so much because of its cultural (semiotic-hermeneutic) reference, but due to its ability to evoke a felt-bodily resonance—precisely the focus of the neo-phenomenological approach.

Accordingly, when discussing iconic atmosphere, we are not referring to the cognitive-recognitive task of images, but rather to what they “want” from us (Mitchell, 2005). As with any other quasi-thing (Griffero, 2017), in the case of images as well, atmospherology must challenge the conventional distinction between being (substance) and its appearance (accidents), thereby promoting an appearance-ontology that focuses not so much on the causes of appearance but on its emotional effects. Just as cold and wind, night and sunset, shame and pain, or feelings in general are not properties of a substance, but (so to speak) ‘pure acts’, similarly, an image, when understood as an ‘actual’ rather than a ‘factual’ fact (Böhme, 2001), is fully realized in the mood (*Stimmung*) or token-atmosphere it (as a type-atmosphere) generates.

However, the limits to which the iconic turn must be subjected are also of a historical nature. Indeed, there have been eras that can be more accurately described as “ages of images” than our own. In those times, it was commonplace to believe that a powerfully desired or emotionally contemplated image could generate an ontologically new and independent reality *in distans*—a belief that marks the millennia-long history of plastic or transitive imagination (Griffero, 2003). Or that, to punish someone, it would suffice to destroy their image (as in the case of iconic *damnatio*) (Freedberg, 1989, pp. 246–282). Not even the most ardent supporter of the iconic turn would truly subscribe to the beliefs held by the “imaginationist” Renaissance. They are content to acknowledge the psychological and social (rather than ontological) power of the iconic and to embrace the (seemingly) democratic proliferation of iconic media.

Moreover, the current apologia of images pales in comparison to the truly ontological-performative conception of images proposed a century ago by Ludwig Klages (1929–1932). For Klages, if properly and pathically experienced, reality is not primarily composed of things—mere constructs of instrumental value and projections of a “soulless” ego increasingly subjected to the ‘spirit’—but of appearing, fluctuating, and irreproducible primordial images (*Urbilder*). In Klages’ Heraclitean polydaimonism, the image becomes a pathic-atmospheric reality, whose power manifests only in its singular and unrepeatable appearance, and is all the more real (*wirklich*, i.e., active) the less it is tied to a physical support and the more it is ecstatically contemplated. It should therefore come as no surprise that, for Klages, the current iconic deluge does not pertain to the images themselves but only to their degraded forms (ghosts, *larvae*) (Griffero, 2024a).

Thus, a somewhat paradoxical hypothesis emerges: the global ubiquity and vast circulation of images, rather than demonstrating their power, in fact reveals their increasing semantic and performative emptiness, their loss of aura, if it is indeed true, as Benjamin asserts, that:

“the trace is appearance of a nearness, however far removed the thing that left it behind may be. The aura is appearance of a distance, however close the thing that calls it forth. In the trace, we gain possession of the thing; in the aura, it takes possession of us”. (Benjamin, 1999, p. 447)

The erosion of the aura of images appears to be a consequence of their increasing physical and “spiritual” proximity, which is fundamentally anti-pathic. Consequently, an image can be considered atmospherically active primarily when it is experienced pathically, involuntarily, and in its uniqueness and irreplaceability. In other words, when, regardless of how physically close, we encounter it within an insurmountable-transcendent distance that makes us more subjects-to than subjects-of it. The thesis that “the reality [*Wirklichkeit*] of images can only be suffered [endured]!” (Klages, 1929–1932, p.861) is utterly incomprehensible to anyone today who posts their images on social media in search of their own (and for this very reason improbable) identity.

To put it briefly: our iconic and hypermediated era cannot properly be defined as the ‘age of images’ (in the ontological sense), for far from affirming their autonomous ontological value, it seems to be a desperate response to their growing derealization and manipulability. While the autotelicity of the iconic represents one way of preserving the affective dimension against the consumptive or aesthetic ideals and the increasing industrialization of vision, it is certainly not the defining feature of our media practices. To put it humorously: the compulsion to watch television precisely undermines the erotic-pathic tele-vision of primordial images (Klages’ *Eros der Ferne*).

WHAT ATMOSPHERE FOR IMAGES?

It may seem trivial to say that the atmospheric image does not primarily serve a denotative or documentary function.

Indeed, Turner's painting of a stormy sea emotionally transports us to the very heart of the event, and even an advertising image undeniably awakens in us an atmosphere of desire for what it depicts. Yet, images captivate us atmospherically most profoundly when they represent (in the strict sense) or reproduce nothing at all. Through a piercing (Barthes' *punctum*), they "do not merely convey an atmosphere; they create it. The images themselves become the atmosphere, not just its representation." (Mersch, 2002, p.36) It is precisely for this reason that post-impressionist abstraction, perhaps the purest form of the image in general (Seel, 2005), embodies a particularly intense atmospheric function. In a sense, these images allow us to experience atmospheres visually that are not only expressed (represented) by the image but, above all, diffused within it and triggered by it (Böhme, 2004, p.149).

Nevertheless, asserting that the "beautiful" image is atmospheric is hardly sufficient. First and foremost, because atmospherology, as "pathic aesthetics" (Griffero, 2014, 2020, 2021), aims to contribute to the aesthetic rehabilitation of a broader field of felt-bodily sensitivity, thereby revaluing the entire sentimentally tonalized space and extending beyond the confines of art. And all the more so, it moves beyond the singular atmosphere long deemed legitimate by traditional aesthetics—the beautiful (Böhme, 20102, p.175 ff.). Within the framework of a (neo) phenomenological approach to philosophy, which reflects on how one feels in the here and now (Schmitz, 2003; 2019), the affective engagement and felt-bodily suggestions of contemporary art are far more compelling than the interpretation of artworks as static, closed, and discrete objects (Hauskeller, 2002).

Like other entities, and especially quasi-things, images radiate an atmosphere within perceptual space. Yet perceiving this atmosphere does not simply mean receiving and processing data organically and neurally; it involves holistically and peri-corporeally sensing a feeling that pre-

cedes the subject/object dichotomy, diffused throughout the (lived) space, also through its distinct (lived) dimensionality. As the “primary object of perception” (Böhme, 1995, p.48), atmospheres captivate the perceiver from the outside, without being arbitrary projections of inner-subjective emotional states, whether intentionally impossible to produce (as Schmitz frequently underscores) or ‘ecstatic’ radiations of things, potentially shaped by competent “aesthetic job” (Böhme, 1995, pp.155-176; 2001). Yet, up to this point, little has been said about the image as a specific generator of atmosphere.

WHEN DOES THE IMAGE BECOME (MORE) ATMOSPHERIC?

Let us begin by addressing certain exclusions.

1) The iconic atmosphere need not necessarily be “responsive,” as this would limit it to the exceptional case of existential attunement. On the contrary, the most prototypical atmospheric quality (for an ideal-typical distinction among atmospheres, see Griffero, 2021, pp.29-55) is the ingressive-dystonic one, where there is a contrast between the quasi-objective iconic atmosphere and the more subjective mood of the perceiver. This explains why an image of joy, although inherently joyful, can often evoke sadness in those with a negative disposition.

2) To define the atmosphere of the image in terms of the so-called “institutional” theory (Danto’s “world of art”), which involves an ontological metamorphosis (musealization) of the common object into a work of art, is applicable only to contemporary art and, moreover, overlooks the essential felt-bodily dimension of atmospheric experience (Griffero, 2024b).

3) The thesis that the image becomes especially atmospheric when, by accentuating the oscillating perception between the physical support (*tableau*) and the phenom-

enal effect (the full-fledged image), it draws attention to itself, seems scarcely applicable to the entire artistic sphere—let alone to the broader aesthetic domain.

4) It is equally untrue that the iconic atmosphere is merely a condition for the possibility of its perception, rather than a perceptual-thematic subject in itself, nor that only the affective resonance arising from the first impression—which, while crucial as a paradigm for subsequent ones—holds true atmospheric value, and not that which emerges from a ‘second’, more cognitively penetrable ‘glance’ (Bockemühl, 2002, p.212).

5) To claim that images are atmospheric when they depict not so much things but rather “the envelope that embraces everything” (Mahayni, 2002, p.62) renders them something rare and, in any case, exclusively artistic—at the expense of the undeniable atmospheric quality of extra-artistic images.

From an atmospheric perspective, it is crucial to note the following: first, images are atmospheric when, by reducing their hermeneutic and semiotic referentiality, they provoke the affective and felt-bodily involvement of a (pathic) ‘me’ that is not yet fully a (cognitive) ‘I’. Being looked at, they, in turn, look back at us (as in many portraits) (Griffero, 2017, pp. 93-99), stirring us as long as we surrender to them pathically, as evidenced negatively by the iconoclastic or even vandalistic tendencies directed towards them. Second, once the transcendental conception—according to which the iconic atmosphere primarily reveals the mode of its own appearing, its “figurality as a process” (Bockemühl, 2002, p.219)—is excluded, we can view atmosphere as the qualitative specificity of an actual iconic appearance.

This need not be artistic, for from this standpoint, the aesthetic experience (in its strict sense) merely ‘trains’ individuals to better engage with atmospheric emotions in controlled conditions (Böhme, 1989; Griffero, 2023a), allowing one to immerse in them while also re-emerging from them (Griffero, 2023b). Yet, it achieves this only

because it intensifies an atmospheric experience already active in ordinary life (Hauskeller, 2002, p.180). Thus, the iconic atmospheric generators to be discussed further are active both in iconic artworks and in everyday images.

GENERATORS OF ICONIC ATMOSPHERES

a) The iconic atmosphere is characterized not by 'beauty', which here is relegated to one among many possible atmospheres (Böhme, 1989, p.159), but by a vagueness that is experienced as a surplus "which exceeds real factuality and yet we feel it with and in it" (Tellenbach, 1968, p.47; see also Luhmann, 1997, p.181). It is a supervenience that appears to thrive through non-objective vividness, rendering objects less 'objects' and attesting to the fact that clarity is not an absolute value, but rather one mode of existence among many others (Minkowski, 1936, ch. XIV). Whether *de dicto* (due to intentionally obscure images or the limitations of the perceiver) or *de re* (images of entities that are inherently indeterminate), this atmospheric vagueness holds the merit of manifesting not 'something as something' (i.e., an individual instance, but entirely framed within a specific genus), but rather a 'chaotic-impressive situation', whose internally diffused significance sparks a unique form of intercorporeal communication."

b) The atmospheric potency of the image intensifies with the remoteness and auratic intangibility of its subject. Through this irreducible, cognitively unanalyzable distance—an affective rather than metrical one—primeval images serve as vehicles for temporal remoteness. This distance, which hinges not so much on the physical proximity of the object as on the mode of observation (as both Klages and later Benjamin suggest), becomes particularly atmospheric when it presents an intangible remoteness, thus rendering visible, in a certain sense, what is irreducibly absent. Whether it is a star shining despite its extinction, the door-

mat of the Guermentes, symbolizing for Proust the seemingly unattainable refinement of the faubourg Saint-Germain, or any other such image, this phenomenon echoes Goethe's dictum: *Schön ist alle Nähe fern...*

However, placing too much emphasis on the mnemonic nature of the iconic atmosphere risks overlooking the potential for 'new' atmospheres. If the phenomenal existence of an object depends less on its 'what' than on its immersive, transient qualities, an image becomes atmospheric primarily when it embodies its radical opposition to the realm of fixed and solid things, presenting itself as an actual-active pre-thingly reality. In this context, the 'ratification' of an image, through its objectual focalization, may even operate in a de-atmospheric manner.

c) The images whose objects are ephemeral—that is, those with an “optical presence, despite not being physically tangible” (Schurmann, 2003, p.350), such as the light works of artists like James Turrell or Dan Flavin—are undeniably de-objectualizing. Whether it's a sudden flash or the shadow of an object, the shimmering of asphalt in the heat, or the distant bark of a dog, what fascinates atmospherically is precisely the de-thingly effect of ephemerality: its irreducibility to substantial properties and, consequently, its subversive value in relation to duration. This can manifest in various forms: the constant chromatic perceptual variation over time (as artistically mimicked, for instance, by Monet), the metamorphic cosmic becoming, the fading of all distinctions between figure and background, the pre-dichotomous fusion of subject and object, the “light in things” that is “fundamentally responsible for the impressions it produces on us” (Böhme, 2006, p.103), whether it arises from artistic production or physical-climatic events, the striking ‘moment’ (this tree, in this light, with this sky, and that smoke in the background, etc.) so cherished by Impressionism, and so forth.

To properly appreciate the atmosphere of the ephemeral is to escape the pressure to accept the sensible only when

it conveys an idea (from Plato to Hegel), instead emphasizing the affective and felt-bodily envelope that surrounds and precedes subject and object, without necessarily being an omen, as Benjamin (2008, p.276 ff.) anticipates in photographs that manage to preserve a certain aura.

d) An eminent example of a *de re* iconic atmosphere is that of fog. Whether it is the “foggy clarity,” characteristic of the Mediterranean landscape according to Goethe (Lehmann, 1986, pp.155-156, p.159, p.190), or the dense fog that veils and envelops everything, it radiates, even when generated exclusively within the image (without reproducing the external fog), a sense of unlocalized yet gentle oppression for the viewer—a lack of salience of things that imbues them with a “newly menacing character,” akin to the “total dematerialization of the surrounding world” (Bollnow, 2020, p.244, p.246) also brought about by a snowfall. “Having a foggy mind,” in fact, refers to having a world narrowed and obscured. Wrapped in fog, one feels solitary; every pre-vision becomes impossible, sounds result in threatening, amplified echoes, and a sensation of “floating in empty space” (Bollnow, 2020, p.246) emerges, intrinsically linked to the characteristic, intangible humidity that blends sensory impressions and hidden tonic influences.

Images rendered vague and imprecise by smoke, vapours, and especially fog undeniably acquire a more suggestive atmospheric power, regardless of whether the mood is more negative (anguish) or positive (muffled tranquillity). The vagueness and pervasive greyness produced by fog on colour are quintessential atmospheric generators, perhaps because, stimulating “a perceptual modification that entails an emotional tone of space” (Böhme, 2006, p.67) —so devoid of depth that it creates, for instance, in Japanese landscape painting and the technique of *sfumato*, the effect of a flat wall without objectual salience (Böhme, 2006, pp.71-72)— they most effectively promote the Kantian ‘free play’ of the faculties. Alternatively, because, less traditionally, fog can cause, perhaps aided by backlighting,

“the entirety of what is seen [to be] crossed by light or acquire a unified tone” (Böhme, 2006, p.67). Therefore, images of fog distance the nearby and allow it to re-emerge suddenly, as if from nothing, in its nascent, epiphanic, and even archaic form.

e) It is widely recognized that certain days, and particularly specific moments within them, possess a distinct atmospheric quality: from the unbearable inaugural vividness of dawn to the paralyzing demonic force of midday (both Nietzschean in their intensity), to the myriad colours of the night. The primal and poetic atmosphere of night envelops and disorients us, reifying sound and dissolving the boundaries between perceiver and perceived, leading to a state of diminished motor freedom and a regression to a surfaceless, animistic, prelogical, and extraobjectual spatiality (Merleau-Ponty, 2005, p.330; Schmitz, 1969, p.389 f.; Bollnow, 2020, pp.249-253; Minkowski, 1936, ch. XIV) —a realm where everything becomes terrifyingly possible, yet where, paradoxically, the self discovers its own irreducible identity (Hauskeller, 1995, p.127).

However, while blinding brightness fails to generate atmospheres, so too does the absolute darkness of night. What truly creates atmospheres, especially through images, and perhaps more so in an age of universal illumination, is the light emerging faintly from the dark, or resisting it—a struggle that, both literally and pictorially, carves matter into being. Consider, for example, the (both iconic-pictorial and everyday) motif of the seductively protective candlelight, or the so-called gum print technique employed by early photographers to cultivate a more haptic and kinaesthetic perception. Most notably, however, it is the diminishing light and the felt-bodily tension inherent in twilight that powerfully evokes atmosphere.

Twilight, with its ability to blur contours and generate a vague, overarching impression, proves far more conducive than daylight to evoking various moods. This is why what appears as an ugly ‘sea of houses’ by day transforms into a captivating play of light by evening, particularly when fog

envelops the scene. Indeed, iconic twilight—an indistinctly emotional realm, both felt-bodily and climatic—ultimately resists analysis due to its intermodal and synesthetic nature, as it is “suffered” in a deeply immersive manner. Twilight falls (not metaphorically!) upon everything, an irreducible quasi-thingness that emanates from without, making things less discrete. It dissolves the distinction between identity and difference, a distinction typically upheld by rational thought, while compelling light into an arresting, fragmented residue. The only luminous remnants that survive, heightening the fascination of the scene (and of the night image), are the stars, the lights in the houses, and those objects with their own light—objects that, in the harsh clarity of daylight, lack significance, but now, within the semidarkness, sparkle with an unexpected, magical kinetic independence.

Inhibiting any spatial direction, twilight alienates us from familiar things, reducing them to mere silhouettes, thereby suggesting a necessary dematerializing experience, both of the perceived and the perceiver. Even in its semidarkness, it evokes an impression of numinosity and immemoriality. It also brings forth a vague feeling of sadness, generated by the threatening sense of the futility of things, and, at times (especially when the departure of light alludes to other farewells), real despair. The fact that we are assailed by it as a quasi-thing is also evident from the way in which, just as “the brightness of objects on earth is seen essentially as a property of their own rather than as a result of reflection” (Arnheim, 1974, p.304), their shadowiness is felt not so much as an absence (contrasting the ancient tendency, dating back to Eleaticism, to de-ontologize darkness), but as a positive and felt-bodily active quality—in short, more as an enigmatic emission of darkness than as a mere banal statistical relativization of the bright values of the field of view.

One should not discount the possibility that, with the loss of a thingly orientation, the twilight atmosphere might evoke relatively distinct moods in different subjects. For instance, it

could provoke deep concern or induce mature self-reflection. However, what remains certain is that the force behind these feelings is an intersubjective, quasi-thingly atmosphere, whose felt-bodily resonance—before it is individualized in its emotional variations—presents itself universally as the “horried retreat into the narrowness of one’s felt-body in the face of an extraneous vastness that surrounds us” (Schmitz, 1964, p.157), alongside the intensification of hearing as, following Nietzsche (1979, p.143), the organ of fear.

The twilight atmosphere is, without question, less potent in regions or seasons where the transition from day to night is swift, or in urban environments where the very act of switching on artificial lights subdues its effect. Yet, should it persist, it would undeniably draw the subject back into their “primal and ultimate element: an ominous feeling” (Böhme, 1998, p.32). This feeling is tinged with a quiet nostalgia, one which, curiously, seems increasingly necessary in our time. This is evidenced by the widespread use of dimmers in an age governed by the relentless pace of 24/7 work and the omnipresence of artificial light and, in parallel, from the passion for images in which blurriness, shadowiness, and graininess play the central role. Moreover, in our attempts to craft an intimate atmosphere within our living spaces, we instinctively reject the harshness of natural light, cold fluorescent lighting, and the uniformity of bright lights. Indeed, we actively resist the light whose unforgiving effect—intolerable unless one is engaged in precise, analytical tasks (such as surgery)—renders all objects at an equal, flattened distance from the observer, a stark contrast to the nuanced depth of haziness and twilight.

CONCLUSIONS

All the atmospheric generators explored thus far—whether natural-climatic or artistic-iconic—converge towards the realm of blurriness. This is because an image

appears most atmospheric when it subverts the teleology of clarity embedded in its representational function. According to the neo-phenomenological theory of felt-bodily communication (Schmitz, 2011; Griffero, 2024, pp.129-136), it triggers a felt-bodily resonance that is not antagonistic but mutual if not solidary, where the constriction of perception is encouraged to expand into the vastness of the peri-corporeal space, even in the face of immediate optical and motor inhibition. Through filters that produce colors which obscure the material structure and form of things, or by generating shadowed regions that evoke a *Stimmung* which the image itself could never suggest in isolation, the twilight image —understood in its broadest sense— effaces the objectivity of the world, fully cultivating the indeterminate and the ephemeral.

However, this emphasis on the twilight atmosphere serves merely as the starting point for a broader contemplation on whether and how the image can generate the intermodal atmosphere, one that radiates from an array of sensible yet non-thingly qualities, such as the following:

“dusty, cloudy, humid, smoky, fiery, incandescent, stony, metallic, woody, wet, dry, gaseous, fragmented, soft, heavy—the rustling of leaves in the tree, the roughness of bark, the pulsing sap of the canopy, the fleshy tone of the skin, the character of hair, the rough softness of animal fur, the texture of fabric, the draping folds of garments that now flow, now fold heavily, now wrinkle and stiffen, the woolly, the silky, the brocade, the satin, the carpet, the veil, and so on”. (Klages 1929-1932, p.1128)

These are not merely real qualities; they are atmospheric images in themselves, even before they find expression —whether approximate or not— in proper representations. They precede and transcend the often-exaggerated apologia of the iconic world that our era so frequently champions, pointing to a more profound and expansive realm of sensibility.

NOTES

¹ For Klages (1929–1932, pp.176–177), twilight, which resists reduction to discrete properties as a singular image, is instead the vertiginous interpenetration of elements: the fluttering of a flag in the twilight, the fluttering itself, and the twilight in turn, each implicated in the other in an intricate, coalescing dynamic.

REFERENCES

- Arnheim, R. (1974). *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Benjamin, W. (1999). *The Arcades Project* (1982). London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP.
- Benjamin, W. (2008). *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media* (1936). London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP.
- Bockemühl, M. (2002). Atmosphären sehen. Ästhetische Wahrnehmung als Praxis. in Mahayni, Z. (Eds), *Neue Ästhetik. Das Atmosphärische und die Kunst* (pp.203-222). München: Fink.
- Böhme, G. (1989). *Für eine ökologische Naturästhetik*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Böhme, G. (1995). *Atmosphäre. Essays zur neuen Ästhetik*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Böhme, G. (1998). *Anmutungen. Über das Atmosphärische*. Ostfildern v. Stuttgart: edition tertium.
- Böhme, G. (2001). *Asthetik: Vorlesungen über Ästhetik als allgemeine Wahrnehmungslehre*. München: Fink.
- Böhme, G. (2004). *Theorie des Bildes*. München: Fink.
- Böhme, G. (2006). *Architektur und Atmosphäre*. München: Fink.
- Böhme, G. (2010). *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*. Bielefeld-Basel: Sirius.
- Böhme, G. (2017). *Critique of Aesthetic Capitalism*. Milan: Mimesis International.
- Bollnow, O. F. (2020). *Human Space* (1963). Milan: Mimesis International.
- Freedberg, D. (1989). *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press.
- Griffero, T. (2003). *Immagini attive. Breve storia dell'immaginazione transitiva*. Firenze: Le Monnier.
- Griffero, T. (2014). *Atmospheres: Aesthetics of emotional spaces* (2010). London-New York: Routledge.
- Griffero, T. (2017). *Quasi-Things. The Paradigm of Atmospheres*. Albany (N.Y.): Suny Press.
- Griffero, T. (2020). *Places, affordances, atmospheres. A pathic aesthetics*. London-New York: Routledge.
- Griffero, T. (2021). *The Atmospheric "We". Moods and Collective Feelings*. Milan: Mimesis International.

- Griffero, T. (2023a). Erfahrung des Atmosphärischen im geschützten Raum. Anmerkungen zu einer neuphänomenologisch-pathischen Ästhetik. In Kluck, S., Puchta, J. (Eds), *Neue Phänomenologie im Widerstreit. Kritische Perspektiven auf Ertrag und Potential* (pp. 289-324). Baden-Baden: Alber Verlag.
- Griffero, T. (2023b). Immersion and (Re)Emersion. Atmospherological Ideas. In Bremer, M., Heinzelmann, M. (Eds), *Eintauchen in die Kunst/ Diving into Art* (pp. 61-72). Bochum: Verlag Für moderne Kunst.
- Griffero, T. (2024a). Urbilder, Abbilder oder gar Phantome? Ludwig Klages und die Atmosphären. In Großheim, M., Smiljanic, D. (Eds), *Ludwig Klages und die Neue Phänomenologie* (pp.179-225). Baden-Baden: Alber Verlag.
- Griffero, T. (2024b). *Being a Lived Body. From a Neo-Phenomenological Point of View*. London-New York: Routledge.
- Hauskeller, M. (1995). *Atmosphären erleben. Philosophische Untersuchungen zur Sinneswahrnehmung*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- Hauskeller, M. (2002). I could go for something Koons. Neue Ästhetik und Kommunikative Kunst. In Mahayni Z. (Eds), *Neue Ästhetik. Das Atmosphärische und die Kunst* (pp.173-182). München: Fink.
- Klages, L. (1929–32). *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (Voll. 3). Leipzig: Barth.
- Lehmann, H. (1986). *Essays zur Physiognomie der Landschaft*. Wiesbaden-Stuttgart: Steiner.
- Luhmann, N. (1995). *Die Kunst der Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Mahayni, Z. (2002). Atmosphäre als Gegenstand der Kunst. Monets Gemäldegalerie der Kathedrale von Rouen. In Mahayni Z. (Eds), *Neue Ästhetik. Das Atmosphärische und die Kunst* (pp.59-69). München: Fink.
- Marquard, O. (1989). *Aesthetica und Anaesthetica. Philosophische Überlegungen*. Paderborn et al.: Schöningh.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2005). *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945). London: Routledge.
- Mersch D. (2002). Was ist ein Bild? Yves Kleins Anthropometrien (1958-61). In Mahayni, Z. (Eds), *Neue Ästhetik. Das Atmosphärische und die Kunst* (pp.35-49). München: Fink.
- Minkowski, E. (1936). *Vers une cosmologie: fragments philosophiques*. Paris: Aubier Montaigne.
- Mitchell, W.J.T. (2005). *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press.
- Nietzsche, F. (1997). *Daybreak. Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality* (1879-1881). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schmitz, H. (1964). *System der Philosophie, Bd. I, Die Gegenwart*. Bonn: Bouvier.
- Schmitz, H. (1969). *System der Philosophie, Bd. III.2, Der Gefühlsraum*. Bonn: Bouvier.
- Schmitz, H. (2003). *Was ist Neue Phänomenologie?* Rostock: Koch.
- Schmitz, H. (2011). *Der Leib*. Berlin-Boston: de Gruyter.
- Schmitz, H. (2019). *New Phenomenology. A Brief Introduction* (2009). Milan: Mimesis International.

- Schürmann, E. (2003). So ist es, wie es uns erscheint. Philosophische Betrachtungen ästhetischer Ereignisse. In Hauskeller, M. (Eds), *Die Kunst der Wahrnehmung. Beiträge zu einer Philosophie der sinnlichen Erkenntnis* (pp. 349-361). Die Graue Edition, Kusterdingen.
- Schulze, G. (1992). *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft: Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus.
- Seel, M. (2005). *Aesthetics of Appearing*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Tellenbach, H. (1968). *Geschmack und Atmosphäre*. Salzburg: Müller.

Article available at

DOI: 10.60923/issn.2724-2463/24025

How to cite

Griffero, T. (2025). If, How, and When an Image Can Be Said to Be Atmospheric. *img journal*, 12, 52-71.



© 2025 The authors. The text of this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.