

# Pictures as Messengers. The Role of the Visual within the global knowledge-project *dropping knowledge* [www.droppingknowledge.org]

Diploma Thesis to graduate in ‚Strategic Communication and Planning‘ at the Fakultät 02 – Architecture, Media, Design – at the University of Arts, Berlin.

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If the matter is to pass knowledge, what can pictures accomplish? In which way do pictures have the ability to pass knowledge? And how can knowledge be passed best today?

The focus of this thesis is laid on the expressiveness of pictures and their ability to pass knowledge. A medium which broadcasts pictures and information in large quantity is the internet. Its value is respectively significant within the information- and knowledge society. Within a closely nitted world intercultural communication through the internet and other media channels seems to be more important and increasing. A subject for analysis was therefore chosen, which is globally and interculturally designed and which emphasises the visual illustration: the interdisciplinary project *dropping knowledge* set its goal to collect knowledge on one spot and to distribute it through diverse medial channels, to net and to expand it. The initiative describes itself on its homepage (<http://www.droppingknowledge.org>):

„*dropping knowledge* is an educational resource and online network that connects people around the globe seeking to exchange ideas and solutions to the most pressing questions of our day.“

Introductorily the project is described in detail. The second part of the paper focuses on the message of the pictures used by *dropping knowledge*.

As a method of analysis a cultural-sociological perspective is taken; its center of attention is ‘to reconstruct the social matter of communication of the apparent and the latent patterns of interpretation and orientation of visual presentation’ [“die Rekonstruktion der sozialen Mitteilungsgehalte, der manifesten und latenten Deutungs- und Orientierungsmuster visueller Präsentation“]<sup>1</sup>: the structural-hermeneutical analysis of symbols according to Stefan Müller-Doohm.

A characteristic pictorial language is filtered out of the messages of the pictures analysed; a pictorial language of *dopping knowledge*. Next to the pictures of the website the context of the project is examined, which affects the selection of pictures and their impact. Closely linked are the subjects of information and knowledge transfer, the internet as a global pool of knowledge, aesthetics and cultural globalization.

The third part of the thesis answers to the questions: How is knowledge transfer linked to aesthetics? Can one reasonably speak of a ‘global aesthetics’? Which functions do pictures have when it comes to the acquisition of knowledge? How can *dropping knowledge* be classified within the development of networked communication?

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If you are interested to read the thesis, please contact via: [julia@juliation.net](mailto:julia@juliation.net)

<sup>1</sup> Müller-Doohm, Stefan (1993): „Visuelles Verstehen – Konzepte kultursoziologischer Bildhermeneutik.“ In: Jung, Thomas / Stefan Müller-Doohm (Hg.): *Wirklichkeit im Deutungsprozeß: Verstehen und Methoden in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp: 443