

Research Project „The Literariness of Media Art“

The project investigated the potential of literary theory for the analysis of media art. Literariness – a term coined by Russian Formalism – was used as a guiding concept to describe the aesthetic surplus created by a non-pragmatic use of language. Taking examples from video art, experimental films, multimedia-installations and net art, the analyses focused on dimensions of signification related to language, voice and script. Different levels of literariness were found, for instance in poetic titles, integrated script segments, acousmatic voices, lyrical speech, narrative structures or dramatic story arcs.

Nearly 100 works of media art were analyzed, comprising video art, experimental films, net art, as well as multi-media-installations. Four artistic strategies turned out to be central for effects of literariness: (1) the materiality of voices and the poeticity of speech, (2) the non-pragmatic use of written language, (3) the reference to literary genres (poetry, drama, prose), and (4) the adaptation of literary works.

The project was funded for four years (July 2014 to June 2018) by the German Research foundation (DFG). The findings of the research have resulted in a jointly written monograph as well as two dissertations (Jordis Lau: *Foregrounding the Past. Literary Modernism in Media Art*; Maraike M. Marxsen: *Deviant Girls, Deviant Forms. Female Adolescence in the Experimental Films and Videos of Sadie Benning, Sarah Jacobson, and Jennifer Reeder*).

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- Open Access book publication: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781351608718>
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