

Lecture by Gabriele Dietze, 31. May 2007: Digitally Remastered - The (Re) Construction of `Beauty` in Digitalised Images

Gabriele Dietze has studied German, Philosophy and American Studies. She taught Cultural Studies and Gender at Humboldt University Berlin and is currently Aigner Rollett Visiting Professor at Karl Franzens Universität, Graz.

Abstract

Perfectly toned, sculptured bodies, and beautiful, symmetrical faces have become a major asset for success and happiness. Various technologies – fitness gear, plastic surgery, drug programs - are designed to enable 'deficient' clients to improve their appearance. The plastic surgeon scans the patient into the computer, remodels his imperfect features on the screen, and 'operates' accordingly. On Reality TV Shows images of 'fat' children get digitally morphed in order to visualize their sad future as fat grown ups. After therapeutic interventions, the conversely morphed images are displayed, and the 'fat' kid is presented with a beautiful picture as the teen he/she has to live up to from then on. Both developments exemplify a structural change in the politics of representation. Classical mimesis links matter with image. In late-modern representation, 'digitally remastered' images might become the new 'matter' to work on. The talk will be concerned with the beauty complex, especially with digital design and with governmental self-conduct on behalf of clients and consultants.