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Visuality in Scientific research

Call for Papers (January 2026) for the Canon Foundation Fellows Book

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY (in 2027) of the Canon Foundation in Europe, we (Dr. Helen Westgeest, Dr. Matthias De Groof and Dr. Nozomi Takahashi) propose to edit an interdisciplinary collection of essays by Canon Foundation Fellows (current and alumni) on the theme of *visuality in scientific research*.

With this book, we aim to show that visuality is not merely a means of communicating research results (to peers and to a broader public), but that research itself is often grounded in visuality, and that visuality often constitutes a condition of research as such. In other words, *how is research fundamentally premised on the idea of visuality?*

The (epistemic) principle of visuality is foundational to modern sciences. Microscopes and telescopes, cameras, atlases, and similar instruments and practices are based on the assumption that rendering elements of nature visible produces scientific knowledge. The humanities and social sciences likewise often depend on visual concepts such as perspective, imagination, and representation, as well as on practices such as recording, mapping, drawing, and diagramming. The image, therefore, is not merely a methodological tool but often a condition of the scientific enterprise itself.

This elicitation of one of science's foundations, reveals both the limitations and possibilities when visuality forms the core of scientific endeavor. On the one hand, visuality is necessarily constrained by an anthropocentric regime of visibility, by what humans are able to perceive. On the other hand, technical means and imaginative capacities can exceed the limits of the human eye, allowing us to reveal phenomena that remain invisible in everyday experience, as well as to expose the biases inherent in our modes of perception. It is this resonance between limitations and possibilities that interests us in this book, approached through a simple guiding question: *How was visuality constitutive of your research?*

Related questions include:

- To what extent does your research depend on visuality?
- In what ways would your research have been impossible without it?
- How did visuality reorient or transform your research?
- Were you dependent on the development of specific forms of visuality in order to conduct your research?



Rather than publishing academic or scientific research results, we are interested in *essays in which you recount the personal story of the genealogy of your research (during your Canon Fellowship or afterwards) and the role that visuality played/plays in it*. Our aim is to make the possibilities and difficulties of the exciting, but at times challenging, research process tangible for readers who are not specialists in your field, *and to shed light on the ways in which visuality shaped and informed that process*.

Evidently, the theme can be approached from many different scholarly perspectives and backgrounds, and relates to the core business and philosophy of the Canon Foundation: **visuality and imaging**, connecting different worlds and different disciplines. In doing so, the volume (with the provisional title *Reflections on Visuality in Research*) will be the sequel on the first book, entitled *Making Research Visible to the World* (2010) which was about ways of visualizing research-results.

We hope that you, and many others among the Canon Fellows, feel stimulated by this call for essays to reflect on some of the mentioned questions from the perspective of your research. We are eager to learn about differences and similarities with regard to these issues in disciplines such as natural sciences, engineering, medicine, social sciences, humanities, etc. We really hope that you are willing to contribute to this second publication of the Canon Foundation by Canon Fellows.

Please send us a reply before the 28th of February if you like to participate in this project and include an abstract of about 100 words. The exact word count of your essay (most likely about 1500 to 2500 words) will depend on the amount of submissions, and will be communicated by early March. In any case, the length of the essay will be substantially less than an academic article, more personal and more free. Moreover, we ask you to add two illustrations to the text. We intend to produce a full color book.

The deadline of the first version of the essay will presumably be early June. The editors will send their comments to the authors by the end of July. We hope to be able to schedule the deadline of the final versions of the essays for early September. Depending on the progress of the book, the book launch will take place at the Fellow meeting in November 2026 or November 2027.

If you would like to participate, but won't be able to meet the mentioned deadlines, please let us know. In case we receive many of those responses, we will postpone the deadlines and launch the book in 2027.

We are excited about the idea of a second volume containing essays by Canon Fellows, but the success of the book depends on the willingness of the Fellows to participate. And if you are even willing to join the board of editors, please let us know!

Kind regards,
Helen, Matthias, Nozomi

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