

S4: Aesthetics of Affect

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S4 continues the work of the SFB's first two funding periods, taking up previous studies on forms of articulation, attraction and mediality of the heroic, as well as projects on the aesthetics of the heroic and its effects. The SFB's insight that collective ascriptions (such as the values and desires of a society, as well as its more general formative experiences and problems) converge in heroic figures is fundamental to S4's research. As a gestalt-like focal point, heroic figures have a polarizing and affective effect. They challenge established boundaries and thus facilitate social self-understanding and conflict negotiation – processes for which heroizations can also function as indicators. The mediation of the heroic is inherently linked to its aesthetic forms, and it is particularly suited to certain forms of representation, such as the genre of the epic. Radiance, magnification and singularization, as well as certain visual and auditory effects, intensify the affective effect of the heroic, as do references to its aesthetic prefigures. S4 also draws on the observation that aestheticizations and the associated effects of affect are currently becoming increasingly prevalent in social, political and economic fields. Aestheticization often involves heroizations or aesthetics with an affinity to heroism.

S4 synthesizes the SFB's previous research on aesthetic forms of representation of the heroic, its effects and social figurations, and relates them to the dynamics of affect. In-depth case studies from antiquity to the present scrutinize the ways in which heroic figures in historical-social constellations have aesthetically and affectively generated and directed attention. The impact potential of the heroic is expressed in certain styles, genres or "pathos formulas", and its contribution to the negotiations of the social, especially in times of transformation, is questioned. S4 thus conceives the heroic as a category of analysis that helps to answer fundamental questions about the relationships between aesthetics, affect, and social dynamics. S4 combines approaches from the study of visual images in art history and popular culture (*Bildwissenschaften*), literary and cultural studies (including English literature, Romance studies, and classics), classical archaeology, and cultural sociology. A postdoctoral art historian strengthens the project's existing expertise in visuality, and a

dissertation in musicology further broadens the scope of the media included and adds a focus on reception analysis.