

Editorial

(in)visibility

On the 25th and the 26th of June, 2015, the Critical Studies Research Group at the University of Brighton hosted its fourth international conference. Discussion surrounded the tension that exists between the visible and the invisible: while accepting many fecund conceptualisations of politics as the process of making visible what is invisible, what - we wondered - might be the value of remaining, precisely, invisible, of keeping off the radar, of staying underground, for radical activism, artistic performance, and alternative politics? In posing this question, numerous others soon present themselves: Is there a danger that the potential political efficacy of remaining hidden is effaced when politics, art, history, ethics, or philosophy are judged by their ability to disrupt what is visible and sayable? How, when, and where is the making visible of the invisible precisely depoliticising or politically debilitating?

To address these issues is to throw into question an entire tradition of thought and practice, a tradition that articulates politics and aesthetics as involving a widening of the regime of the perceptible, as granting a voice to those without a voice. It is to throw into question not so much the position that claims this is what politics may well be, but rather the implicit presupposition that this is what politics is exclusively and that politics ought, as a result, to be thought with and through categories such as speech, inclusion, and visibility.

The present volume of Critical Studies continues the conversations started during those two days. It opens up questions surrounding the visibility and intelligibility of certain identities and practices; it questions the interplay between visibility and invisibility in racial and gender politics; it traces the manners in which specific aesthetic and artistic media - performance, photography, film - incorporate and put into play the tension between visibility and invisibility; and it interrogates the intimate bond between (in)visibility and violence.

The conversations will not stop here, of course. The themes touched upon in this issue continue to intrigue us and demand further interrogation, problematisation, and scrutiny.

The upcoming, third volume of Critical Studies will not focus on a specific theme. Rolling submissions are welcome and, as always, we encourage conventional as well as non-conventional forms of presentation.