

INVISIBLE CULTURE

Issue 32: “Rest and the Rest: Aesthetics of Idleness”

For its thirty-second issue, *InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture* invites scholarly articles and creative works that address the aesthetics of idleness. This issue will also feature an introduction by and an interview with Jean Ma.

Idleness suggests slack and stasis. It evokes empty, wasted time, and thus the dangers of being useless. It even recalls the religious notion that there is something satanic about not being occupied with work. But what are the aesthetics of idleness? In what ways does being idle function as a cultural or artistic practice? How can we theorize idleness, and perhaps do so idly? Or does treating idleness as a site of cultural analysis and critical theory undo the danger of it?

Idleness covers a wide range of activities in the past few centuries: to name a few, resting and sleeping, leisurely activities outside of capitalist production, and even spiritual and mental sloth that is counter to societal good. As primordial functions, sleep and rest not only let us regenerate, but they also, through dreaming, give us a palpable experience of the unconscious that challenges our understanding of self-possession and embodiment.

Beyond the rest we take in private and personal spheres, resting in public often becomes a source of anxiety and a matter to control. In the medical field, for example, fatigue is a pathology. Someone who gets “too much sleep” may receive a diagnosis of lethargy, narcolepsy, or a variety of mental health issues. People who are homeless often find themselves subject to punitive measures for using public resources to rest. The politics of race, class, and gender turn the legitimized leisure of some into the illegal loitering of others. This unequal distribution of idleness points to the political economy of this state, especially the exclusive nature of certain modes of respite, such as vacation time, the indulgence of “treating yourself,” and #selfcare.

This issue of *InVisible Culture* invites contributions that consider the ways in which idleness works across cultures. How might the concept of idleness be seen as a space of inquiry and contestation, and how might it become generative and productive? Possible topics may include and are by no means limited to:

- Rest as a break or a point of departure
- Pauses (visual, literary, musical)
- Isolation, fatigue and exhaustion

- Liminality/in-betweenness
- Leisure and labor/Wasted or unproductive time
- Intimacy and vulnerability
- Health, illness, and convalescence (mental and physical)
- Slow cinema
- Idleness in digital and new media
- Imagery of/around the sleeping body
- Boredom, lethargy, apathy
- Posthuman/non-human notions of idleness or rest
- Dreaming and the unconscious
- Morality, sinfulness, sloth

Please send completed papers (with references following the guidelines from the Chicago Manual of Style) of between 4,000 and 10,000 words to invisible.culture@ur.rochester.edu by January 15, 2020. Inquiries should be sent to the same address.

Creative/Artistic Works

In addition to written materials, *InVisible Culture* is accepting works in other media (video, photography, drawing, code) that reflect upon the theme as it is outlined above. Please submit creative or artistic works along with an artist statement of no more than two pages to invisible.culture@ur.rochester.edu. For questions or more details concerning acceptable formats, go to <http://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/contribute> or contact the same address.

Reviews

InVisible Culture is also currently seeking submissions for book, exhibition, and film reviews (600-1,000 words). For this issue we particularly encourage authors to submit reviews of games or other forms of interactive media. To submit a review proposal, go to <http://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/contribute> or contact invisible.culture@ur.rochester.edu.

Dialogues

The journal also invites submissions to its Dialogues page, which will accommodate more immediate responses to the topic of the current issue. For further details, please contact us at invisible.culture@ur.rochester.edu with the subject heading "Dialogues submission."

* *InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture* (IVC) is a student-run interdisciplinary journal published online twice a year in an open access format. Through peer reviewed articles, creative works, and reviews of books, films, and exhibitions, our issues explore changing themes in visual culture. Fostering a global and current dialog across fields, IVC investigates the power and limits of vision.