

ICONOSPHERE

A term introduced by Mieczysław Porębski to designate the universe of images of all kinds surrounding man. The iconosphere is the whole visual information reaching people at every moment.

Along with the development of technology in the twentieth century there was a rapid increase in the production of images, which began to occupy more and more space in the human environment. They have become an inseparable component of the landscape both as its elements (e.g. large-format advertisements) and as a determinant of perception of landscapes (e.g. tourist photography). Visual culture of which the landscape is an immanent element has become increasingly important.

The landscape therefore offers a frame for the iconosphere, as well as being its product. As such, it is understood primarily in visual terms, i.e. it is identified with a view of the area stretching from a specific place. As a result, the aesthetic evaluation of the landscape is to a large extent limited to the evaluation of its visual qualities, ignoring other factors, such as meanings, values or stimuli affecting smell or hearing. An example of such an approach may be various legal solutions aimed at counteracting the "pollution" of landscapes, mainly understood as a type of visual disturbance of the view (e.g. the fight against advertising). For example, power relations or social relations prevailing in a given landscape or creating a specific landscape are analysed in a similar way.

The visual depiction of the landscape is rooted in the tradition that links the idea of landscape with landscape painting, according to which the landscape is a picture of a country that stretches in front of the human eye. Such a concept results in a specific depiction of the relationship between man and landscape – man is not a part of the landscape and thus can, for example, appropriate it.

Reducing the landscape to the iconosphere favours its analysis through the prism of images, treated as the most important key to its understanding. The 20th century visual culture and research on it have strengthened this approach. In the last two decades, however, tendencies to broaden this paradigm in favour of a multi-sensual approach and treating the landscape in terms of the experienced world have come to the fore.

[M. S.]

Literature:

Frydryczak, Beata. *Krajobraz: od estetyki the picturesque do doświadczenia topograficznego*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo PTPN, 2013.

Porębski, Mieczysław. *Ikonosfera*. Warszawa: PIW, 1972.

Zaremba, Łukasz. *Obrazy wychodzą na ulice. Spory w polskiej kulturze wizualnej*. Warszawa: Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, 2018.