

LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN



Scaling from Digital and Computational Perspectives

22 and 23 May 2025

Workshop of the CAS Research Focus "Scales/Maßstäbe", organized by Prof. Dr. Julian Schröter (LMU).

Program

Thursday, 22 May 2025

Chair: Julian Schröter

- 10:00-11.30 Welcome Note and Opening Keynote Prof. Katherine Bode, Ph.D. (Australian National University): Diffractive Writing: Text, Data, and the Limits of Scale
- 11:30-12.15 **Christian Wachter** (Bielefeld): Augmented Vision: Scalable Heuristics for Historical Research
- 12.15-13.30 Lunch Break

Chair: Sina Steglich (LMU)

- 13.30-14.15 Jan Horstmann (Münster): Intertextuality at Scale
- 14.15-15.00 **Thomas Weitin** (Darmstadt): Scaling the Reader. Experiments at the Darmstadt LitLab
- 15:00-15.30 Coffee Break

Chair: Sina Steglich (LMU)

15.30-16.15 **Florentina Armaselu** (University of Luxembourg): Scalable Writing: From Text to Becoming Text

18.30: Dinner (on invitation only) at "Italy", Leopoldstraße 108

Friday, 23 May 2025

Chair: Buket Altinoba (LMU)

- 9.00-9.45 **Boris Čučković Berger** (LMU): The Digital Scale beyond a Cosmic Zoom: Critical Epistemologies of 'the General' and 'the Specific' in Post-Digital Art
- 9.45-10.15 **Ursula Ströbele** (HBK Braunschweig): Scaling Practices in (Digital) Sculpture
- 10.15-10.45 Coffee Break
- Chair: Carlos Spoerhase (LMU)
- 10.45-11.30 Stefanie Schneider (LMU): Distant Pasts or: Pasts from a Distance
- 11.30-12.15 **Jana Diesner** (TUM): Scales of Measurement for Identifying and Replicating Social Science Theories

Light Lunch and end of the workshop

Center for Advanced Studies Seestraße 13 80802 München



Florentina Armaselu (University of Luxembourg): Scalable Writing: From Text to Becoming Text

Starting from the viewpoint of an aesthetics of detail, the study enquires on the role of scale, as an engine of writing, in the creation of a literary text. The presentation will elaborate on concepts such as Barthes's *punctum* and *studium*, Morelli's *minor detail*, Lukács's *narration* vs *description dilemma, zoomable text*, and research areas such as genetic criticism and generative AI. The talk will aim at fostering discussion on how the *variation of scale* in the act of writing and the *electronic medium* may lead to a shift of perspective from text as a product to the creative process itself

Boris Čučković Berger (LMU): The Digital Scale beyond a Cosmic Zoom: Critical Epistemologies of 'the General' and 'the Specific' in Post-Digital Art

The trope of 'zooming out' in order to see 'the big picture' has been one of the pervasive solutions for contemporary artworks engaging with digital platform economies. This talk will problematize the large-scale display techniques deployed by artists such as Trevor

Paglen and Aaron Koblin, and explore what their approaches reveal about the scalability of the digital. Instead of the idea of the 'Cosmic Zoom' (Zachary Horton, 2021), contemporary post-digital art increasingly entails renegotiating –and re-scaling– the relationship between the general and the specific, the average and the particular, the social and the individual. What are the repercussions and lessons learned from this aesthetic process for the academic frameworks we like to call interdisciplinary?

Jana Diesner (TUM): Scales of Measurement for Identifying and Replicating Social Science Theories

Many of the social science theories that we use for statistical and predictive modeling and to explain empirical findings were identified decades ago based on observing small- to medium-sized samples over long periods of time. More recent findings about the structure and behavior of society are based on analyzing large-scale, human-centered data that capture shorter time spans. These differences in research design have also led to the development of different, culturally contextualized algorithms for data indexing and analysis. I show under what conditions these differences in research design converge or lead to different results, and discuss what these findings mean for the validity and policy implications of computational social science research.

Jan Horstmann (Münster): Intertextuality at Scale:

The knowledge of intertextual references in literature is well hidden: often as a secondary finding in research contributions with a different focus; in very few cases are there explicit contributions on the intertextual relations of a text. Even rarer are contributions on which (later) texts have referred to a particular text.

Computational modeling and manual annotation in the form of a semantic web knowledge graph can help and make knowledge about the referentiality of (world) literature accessible and analyzable in the sense of scalable reading. In the talk I will present developments around intertextuality ontologies and the tool "Intertextor", which is currently under development.

Stefanie Schneider (LMU): Distant Pasts or: Pasts from a Distance

The talk is positioned at the intersection of two recent currents in the digital humanities: the metaphor – and practice – of scaling, and the methodological turn to "distant viewing" in image science. It harnesses the 'artificial eye' of computational methods to construct a virtual space of possibilities – of associations, references, and similarities – for the historical embedding of the human figure, and its posture, in the visual arts. Building on the metaphor of zooming, I argue for the integration of both close and distant viewing, where the global analysis of distant viewing logically precedes and enhances the localized, on-demand analysis of close viewing – i.e., the qualitative analysis of individual artworks within their spatio-temporal contexts. I ask: how do global clusters meaningfully inform the reading of a single posture? In this context, I present a case study in which large-scale pattern discovery reveals under-recognized typologies that are then interrogated.

Ursula Ströbele (HBK Braunschweig): Scaling Practices in (Digital) Sculpture

"The size is nothing; what matters is the scale," said Barnett Newman in 1969. While in Abstract Expressionism and (Post-) Minimal Art the body is still considered a reference, this orientation is of little relevance in digital sculpture, which allows permanent (re)-scaling and floating on the screen, thereby provoking a so-called sitelessness. Size can be marshaled as a critique of traditional monumentality, as exemplified in Karin Sander's *Body Scans* (1997) in which the artist produces miniatures of museum visitors. How might scaling alienate us from our experience and calibrate a relation between viewer, (art) work, and space in a miniature format or eccentric gigantism? This variable treatment of dimensional relations and the translation processes question the constancy of spatial relations, site specificity, and a 'somatic scale' (Meyer 2004), such as expressed in Alina Szapocznikow's *Photosculptures* (1971). These questions are also relevant for Morehshin Allahyaris digital monuments" scaled down to miniature formats (*Material Speculation: ISIS*, 2015–16) and Tamiko Thiel's eco-critic sculptural creatures – mediated by an app in augmented reality – that move through space in differing sizes, numbers, and temporal placements, all determined by a co-creating audience on their digital devices. Based on these artistic examples, who go beyond traditional concepts of sculpture, I will analyze, how they use scaling as an essential media-specific tool and how "the bodily sense of scale becomes a corporeal link" (Getsy).

Christian Wachter (Bielefeld): Augmented Vision: Scalable Heuristics for Historical Research

Scalable reading techniques bring together distant and close analysis in a productive interplay. They combine the affordances of the "macroscope" (Graham/Weingart/Milligan, 2015) – the ability to access and process large volumes of data – with the scholarly skill of contextualizing and critically interpreting patterns in that data. This paper discusses this complementary zooming in and out as a powerful tool for historical inquiry. From a theoretical perspective, it explores scalable reading as a method for digitally augmented historical heuristics. This "augmented vision" helps identify and structure relevant primary sources in ways that make them more accessible for answering research questions. The paper illustrates this approach using the case of historical newspaper research, a domain where the serial nature of the material lends itself particularly well to scalable reading workflows.

Thomas Weitin (Darmstadt): Scaling the Reader. Experiments at the Darmstadt LitLab

Reading is one of the most complex cognitive processes of the human brain. It follows a domain-independent rhythm of attention but is also shaped by embodied cultural patterns that influence cognition and can be decisive for success or failure in school. Against this background, this talk discusses recent reading research conducted at the Darmstadt LitLab. School curricula assume that literature lessons, besides imparting literary knowledge, also strengthen key secondary skills such as empathy and judgment. Literary scholars tend to believe in the higher purpose of poetic justice, according to which literature sensitizes readers to its themes, fosters empathy, and thereby impacts their lives. Consequently, the humanities have rarely demanded empirical evidence for such strong assumptions. However, research indicates that reading literary texts can improve the theory of mind. Moreover, it has become clear that we cannot assume a simple transmission of emotions through literary texts and that empathy must be understood in a more nuanced conceptual framework. Cognitive data from our school research allows for an interpretation of how literature lessons can foster empathy and how individual reading habits diversify comprehension. Furthermore, an awareness of historical contexts leads to more confident judgment, while shared semantic arousal patterns emerge when a reading experiment captures the essence of a literary work.