Contents

List of figures —— XIII

List of tables — XVII

Introduction — 1

1	The image and the theories of visual semiotics — 1
2	The epistemology of the image — 4
3	Greimasian semiotics of the image — 7
4	The organisation of the book —— 9

Part I: Theoretical issues

Chapter 1

Approaches to the semiotics of images: The object of study — 15

Alexandros Ph. Lagopoulos and Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou

1	Introduction — 15
2	Peirce's semiotic as a foundation for visual semiotics — 15
2.1	Theoretical premises — 15
2.2	The analysis of the image — 19
3	Halliday's social semiotic as a foundation for visual semiotics
3.1	Theoretical premises — 24
3.2	A fragmentary theory — 28
3.3	The need for a coherent and unified semiotic theory of
	images — 33
4	The nature of images — 34
4.1	The visual aspects — 34
4.2	The structure of images — 35
5	The epistemological objects of visual semiotics — 37
5.1	Diagrams and maps — 37
5.2	Architecture and other functional objects — 41
5.3	The field of the semiotics of images — 43

Chapter 2

1

The semiotics of the static image: The structuralist tradition — 46

Alexandros Ph. Lagopoulos and Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou

- Eco on the static image 46
- 2 Eco and physicalism 49

- 3 Group μ on the visual sign 54
- 4 Levels, layers and hierarchies of figurativity 58
- 5 Figurative layers and visual syntax 63
- 6 A method for the analysis of the static image 69
- 6.1 Fontanille on Čiurlionis 69
- 6.2 A Byzantine mosaic 71
- 6.2.1 Visual syntax and isotopies 71
- 6.2.2 The structure of the isotopies **76**
- 6.3 Why Elkins is wrong about modern art 79
- 7 The visual syntax of sculpture **80**
- 8 Movement, temporality and narrativity in images 83
- 9 Image and natural language: Multimodality 85

Chapter 3

The semiotics of the dynamic image — 88

Alexandros Ph. Lagopoulos and Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou

- 1 Eco on cinema as langue — 88 2 Metz on cinema as parole ---- 94 3 Cinema vs visual syntax — 103 Isotopies in cinema — 108 4 5 The cinematic system — 110 5.1 The semiotic components of the cinematographic system — 110 5.2 The articulation of the cinematic system with narrative structure — 113 5.3 The cognitivist approaches to cinema theory — 115 6 Digital games and semiotics — 117

Chapter 4

The iconic and the plastic dimensions — 123

Jacques Fontanille

- 1 Terminological and methodological preamble 123
- 2 The emergence of the icono-plastic problematic in art history **126**
- 3 Iconic and plastic: Semiotic status 129
- 4 On icono-plastic relations: In search of lost time 132
- 4.1 Lost time 132
- 4.2 Time recovered through aspectualisation 133
- 4.3 The promise of the plastic dimension 134
- 4.4 The norm and its transgression vs the coopetition of iconic and plastic 135
- 4.5 Plastic synthesis and the singularity of the work **136**
- 5 Conclusion **137**

Chapter 5

The plastic signifier — 139

Alexandros Ph. Lagopoulos

1	The nature of the plastic signifier: Group μ —— 139
2	The nature of the plastic signifier: The Greimasian approach — 142
3	The components of the plastic signifier — 153
4	Visual fields in cinema —— 157
5	The expression substance of the plastic signifier — 159

Chapter 6

Visual semiotics: From structuralism to the material turn of big visual data —— 165

Maria Giulia Dondero

1	Introduction — 165
2	Structuralist visual semiotics after Barthes — 166
2.1	The image from the perspective of plastic categories — 166
2.2	Enunciation and the metavisual — 167
2.3	The metavisual in the digital image understood as inscription — 170
3	Applicates, substrates and gestures of inscription — 172
3.1	Painting, photography and digital production — 172
3.2	Form as the result of an inscription of forces — 177
4	Semiotics and art history in the wake of the big visual data
	revolution — 181
4.1	Computational language and visual language — 181
4.2	The image as a condensation of energies — 184
5	To conclude —— 188

Part II: Interpreting the static image

Chapter 7

Isotopies in painting — 191

Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou

- 1 Pictorial isotopies **191**
- 2 *The Virgin and Child with Nicolas Rolin* by Jan van Eyck: Religious devotion as power **193**
- 3 The census at Bethlehem by Pieter Bruegel the Elder: The divine in the everyday 201

Chapter 8

Serial analysis of the pictorial work: Series, networks, rhizomes, interstitial space-times — 208

Jacques Fontanille

Jucqueston	
1	Preamble — 208
1.1	The work of art — 208
1.2	The strategy of serial analysis — 209
1.3	Two painters, two different serialities — 210
2	The objectives of the serial analysis of the work — 211
2.1	Variations and invariants: A space-time dedicated to the
	treatment of iteration — 211
2.2	Syntagmatic dispositions of a semiotic presentation — 212
2.3	The sensible and the trans-sensible: A trajectory of the
	intuition — 213
3	The multilinear space-time of the Sahabi series — 214
3.1	Icono-plastic tensions — 214
3.2	<i>Graffiti:</i> The details of the network of transformations — 215
4	The progressive and multidirectional space-time of the series of
	Laurent — 221

Chapter 9

The Greimasian and post-Greimasian semiotics of photography — **226** Maria Giulia Dondero

1	Introduction — 226
2	Photographic ontology in Krauss, Barthes, and the legacy of
	Peirce — 228
2.1	Photography as a pretext — 228
2.2	Against photography as a ready-made — 230
2.3	Aiming beyond the figurative in photography — 231
3	The genetic and the generative — 233
3.1	Floch as a forerunner — 233
3.2	From the genesis of the utterance to the generation of
	meaning — 234
3.3	The photographic utterance as fieldwork for semiotic
	theories — 237
4	Semiotics of discourse and media specificity — 241
4.1	Ontology of the medium or semiotics of discourse? — 241
4.2	Act of production and discursive memory — 244
4.3	From the semiotics of discourse to the semiotics of the
	imprint —— 245

4.4	The <i>modus operandi</i> in painting and photography —— 246
5	From photographic textuality to the statuses of photography:
	Floch and Fontanille — 249
6	Conclusions — 253

Part III: Interpreting the dynamic image

Chapter 10

Light, shadows and revolution: Cinema's expression substance and the question of the avant-garde — 257

Rea Walldén

1	The structuring of the semiotic substance — 257
2	Cinema as a complex semiotic system and the structuring of its
	expression plane — 259
3	A semiotic meta-definition of avant-garde art — 265
4	The peculiar case of avant-garde cinema — 271
5	Strategies, tactics and techniques in avant-garde films — 276

Chapter 11

How the story is told: Arrival — 281

Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou

	51
1	Fabula and sjužet — 281
2	Story of your life: The novella — 282
3	Arrival: The film — 285
4	Arrival: The isotopies — 289
4.1	The nature of the isotopies in Arrival — 289
4.2	The structure of the isotopies in Arrival — 293
4.3	The semiotic square of Arrival — 296
5	A different semiotic square: Story of your life — 300

Chapter 12

Ingmar Bergman's *The seventh seal*: What kind of play is life? — 303 Rea Walldén

- 1 Introduction **303**
- 2 Discursive structure **306**
- 2.1 Summary **306**
- 2.2 Temporalisation and spatialisation **306**
- 2.3 Actorialisation **308**
- 2.4 Dramaturgical structure **310**

- 3 Narrative syntax 312
- 4 Semantic structure **314**
- 4.1 Themes and isotopies **314**
- 4.2 The allegory of the characters **318**
- 5 The philosophical structure **319**
- Chapter 13

Semiotic analysis of animation films: A case study of *Ratatouille* — 324

Maria Ilia Katsaridou

1	What is animation? — 324
2	Theoretical and methodological approaches — 328
3	A case study: <i>Ratatouille</i> — 332
3.1	Introduction and plot summary — 332
3.2	Syntactic analysis: Narrative trajectories — 334
3.2.1	Remy's narrative trajectory —— 334
3.2.2	Linguini's narrative trajectory — 338
3.2.3	Colette's narrative trajectory — 340
3.2.4	Skinner's narrative trajectory — 342
3.2.5	Notes on the narrative syntax — 344
3.3	Paradigmatic analysis: The semantics of <i>Ratatouille</i> — 3 4
3.3.1	The isotopies — 344
332	The relations between isotonies — 345

44

- 3.3.2 The relations between isotopies 345
- 4 A socio-cultural conclusion **350**

Chapter 14

Semiotic analysis of digital games — 354

Maria Ilia Katsaridou with Kosmas (Makis) Stergiou

- 1 Digital games **354**
- 1.1 What are digital games? **354**
- 1.2 The particularities of digital games **356**
- 2 Theoretical and methodological approaches to the analysis of digital games **359**
- 3 Case study: *Resident evil* **363**
- 3.1 The *Resident evil* series **363**
- 3.1.1 The plot of the series **363**
- 3.1.2 The actantial roles of the series **366**
- 3.1.3 The isotopies of the series **367**
- 3.2 Resident evil 1996 **369**
- 3.2.1 The plot of the game and its actantial roles **369**
- 3.2.2 The narrative syntax **370**

3.2.3The isotopies of the game — 3704Case study: EVE online — 3714.1The nature of the game — 3714.2The actantial roles — 3754.3The narrative syntax — 3764.4The isotopies — 3775Some comparisons and conclusions — 377

Chapter 15

A semiotics-based methodology for script creation: Linear and interactive narratives — 379

Maria Ilia Katsaridou

1	Introduction — 379
2	What is a script? — 379
3	Brief overview of existing scriptwriting literature — 383
4	A narratological approach to scriptwriting — 387
5	A case study: The creation of an interactive narrative — 391
5.1	Ina's forest: A branching interactive narrative — 391
5.2	The creation of <i>Ina's forest</i> : From the semiotic square to the
	emerging isotopies —— 392
5.3	Narrative syntax and modalities — 396
5.3.1	Narrative syntax — 396
5.3.2	Modalities — 397
5.4	The narrative paths —— 398

References — 405

About the authors — 421

Index — 423