

Preface

The studies collected in this volume trace a conceptual field. The concept of the image is at their center. Each of the eight studies describes the relation of this concept to an adjacent concept. The conceptual field thematized here includes the concepts of the sign, of abstract photography, of the window, of virtual reality and immersion, of mimesis, and of the medium. However heterogeneous the phenomena addressed might be, the thesis defended in all of the studies remains no less unified. Only if the artificial presence of the objects visible in images is understood as the specific characteristic of each and every image do the disciplines of image studies work with a concept of the image that is able to capture both the irreplaceable capacity of the image and its resulting relevance to the human. Human beings are convinced that they can see something in an image even though, at the same time, they are certain that this something is not really, but only artificially, present. That is the topic of this book, the phenomenon that the image opens up a view on a reality liberated from the constraints of physics.

For the most part these essays and lectures, written between 2000 and 2004, are published here for the first time; essays published previously have been revised. In their elaboration I was fortunate to receive help in many ways, and I would therefore like to thank Stefan Matuschek, Stephan Günzel, Michael Albert Islinger, Grit Hammer, Sandra Gadinger, Silvia Seja, Iris Därmann, Manfred Sommer, Ralph Behrwald, Gottfried Jäger, Thomas Rolf, Wolfgang Kienzler, and Klaus Rehkämper.

L.W.

Sendenhorst, June 2004

A German book's translation into English is always a particularly pleasant development for its author. All of a sudden the possibility opens up that a significantly larger readership will receive the author's reflections. I am glad that, thanks to this translation, this is true for my phenomenology of artificial presence as well. Hence it is important to me to express my thanks for the support the realization of this translation has received. Thanks are due especially to Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, who, very early and very enthusiastically, supported this project. I am glad that in Nils F. Schott my book has found a translator who has taken up even the least of my suggestions and always knew how to implement them convincingly. I am grateful for the suggestions I received from Dawn Phillips, Jens Bonnemann, and Nico Brömßer in discussions of the final version. The translation project received a driving force, and I received particularly helpful contacts, in Emily-Jane Cohen and Sarah Crane Newman at Stanford University Press. It was Ms. Cohen, too, who supported the idea to publish the American edition, unlike the German original, with several illustrations—indeed a rewarding addition, whose realization is indebted to the support of Gottfried Jäger.

L.W.

Sendenhorst, June 2009