EDITORIAL: FRAMES

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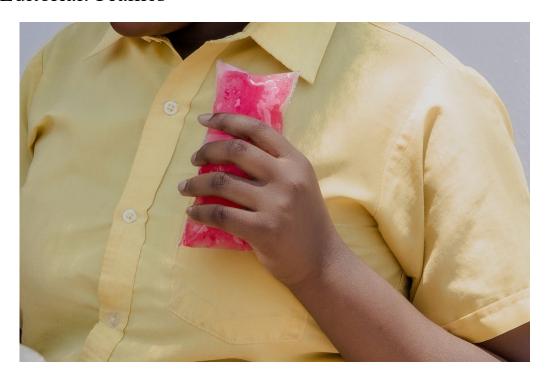
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Fig. 1: "a schoolgirl treating herself after a long day of schooling," from the photo series "Kamahuka," © Steven de Beer

Frames function as a tool of recognition. They determine what is seen, how it is seen, and, just as importantly, what remains unseen. The photograph above is an excellent example of this. It comes from Steven de Beer's project "Kamuhaka," completed as a part of the Reframe workshop discussed in detail in the _*Perspective* section of this issue. Initially, the photograph appears casual and innocent, but there is much more to it. It has a simple but arresting color composition, and the close-up framing highlights the textures of featured elements: the clean and ironed fabric of the shirt, and the frost on the plastic melting under the gentle grip of the hand. It feels both refreshing and intimate. However, underneath its soft appearance, the photograph frames a story of resilience, labor, and otherwise unremarked-upon existence. De Beer's project brings into view ice cream vendor Alberto David, whose familiar presence in Windhoek has shaped numerous childhood memories, but whose name usually goes unrecognized. Though David has cycled through the city of Windhoek, selling ice cream on hot days, for over fifty years, he has remained outside the frame of formal acknowledgement. Kamuhaka—meaning "to sell" or "to work"—is not just a portrait of a street vendor but a reflection on visibility itself: who gets framed, who gets left out, and what it

means to truly see someone. In this way, the photograph corresponds well to the theme of this issue of *On_Culture*: the power of frames to construct narratives, identities, and the ways we engage with the world around us.

Thus, frames organize our perceptions, define boundaries, and create meaning, whether in art, architecture, media, or social structures. The 18th issue of *On_Culture* explores the complex nature of frames, moving beyond their physical presence—such as picture frames, book covers, and architectural structures—to their conceptual and ideological implications. Contributions to this issue prove that frames can be tools of both inclusion and exclusion, structuring narratives, identities, and power dynamics. From national borders to cognitive schemas, frames influence the ways in which individuals, communities, and cultures construct reality.

This issue brings together interdisciplinary perspectives to examine frames in their diverse manifestations. Contributions explore frames in art history and visual culture, considering the aesthetic and symbolic functions of framing devices. Others address the geopolitical and societal implications of frames, analyzing how borders, both literal and metaphorical, construct historical and contemporary experiences. The role of framing in knowledge production is another crucial area of inquiry—what strategic purposes do frames serve in academia, politics, and media? And how do alternative frameworks challenge dominant narratives?

In an era where global crises demand new ways of thinking, interrogating frames becomes more urgent than ever. As climate change redraws geographic and political boundaries, and as social movements seek to reframe entrenched discourses, this issue of *On_Culture* invites readers to reflect on the power and limits of frames. Whether material, conceptual, or ideological, frames are everywhere—but they are not immovable. By critically examining their function, we can better understand how to challenge, redefine, or dismantle them in pursuit of more inclusive and dynamic perspectives.

_Contribution Summaries

Ümit Kennedy and Shima Louise Sardarabady discuss how homelessness can be framed via social media. In "(Re-)framing the Homeless Experience: Exploring Homeless Lives and Identities on TikTok and YouTube" they present two cases of women living without permanent housing in the US, who share their experience via

social media accounts. Their _Article contributes to destigmatizing such persons by demonstrating their everyday struggles and joys. The authors address commonplace issues for the vloggers, such as self-care and privacy, honesty and communication with viewers, and convey the subject's voices through the use of many quotes. As a result, the _Article shows how social media can empower unhoused prsons to regain personal agency.

Agnieszka Balcerzak's _Article "Grotesque, Absurdity, Cuteness: On the Intertwining of the (Anti)Populist Argumentative Frame, Aesthetics, and Emotions in the Polish 'War on Abortion'" unpacks the role of visual and rhetorical framing strategies around polarized debates on abortion politics in Poland. Employing the concept of argumentative frames, the article looks into how the aesthetic and emotional appeals that are employed by both anti- and pro-life activists articulate ideological positions and foster engagement from broader public. Balcerzak's approach combines participant observations, qualitative interviews, and discourse analysis to highlight framing as a multifaceted process, which can contribute to the polarization of debates as well as to the efforts of controlling public narratives and bringing social change.

Gabriele D'Amato's _Article "Framed Slowness and the Ecological Value of Multiperspectivity" examines the potential of multiperspective narratives to foster slow reading through specific framing strategies. Challenging the common association between multiperspectivity and fast-paced storytelling, the article introduces the concept of "framed slowness," exploring how segmentivity, paratextual framing, coordination of perspectives, and rereading can disrupt teleological narrative progression. Through a case study of Mark Z. Danielewski's *Only Revolutions*, D'Amato demonstrates how experimental framing techniques decelerate reader engagement, fostering attentiveness to the entanglement of human and more-than-human temporalities. This approach positions multiperspectivity as a key narrative strategy for ecological awareness.

In "Reframing the Dove, the Rifle, and the Faces: Débora Arango's Gift to Álvaro Uribe," Juan Camilo Brigard examines the complex political significance of artist Débora Arango's gift of a drawing to former Colombian president Álvaro Uribe. Though celebrated for her politically charged art that challenged conservative gender norms, Arango's donation of a drawing to Uribe—who subsequently framed it, adding text that sought to make it a symbol of his administration—presents a fascinating case

of artistic appropriation. Brigard's analysis moves beyond Uribe's selective framing, first by contextualizing how the president repurposed only half the image for propaganda, then by reinterpreting the work through Arango's broader political oeuvre. The _Article reveals the drawing's full critical potential by examining its emotionally charged visual elements, offering a new interpretation or framing of this politically charged artwork.

Ewelina Woźniak-Wrzesińska's _Article "Media Framing and Stereotype Transformation: Analyzing Polish Gender Discourse and Anti-German Sentiments (2015–2023)" analyzes how stereotypes about Germans and LGBTQIA+ individuals are (re-)used in Polish media to form both an ideological discourse and narratives on current political debates. Central to her discussion stand traditional and historical stereotypes that are re-formulated and re-contextualized in the current political discussions on gender and nationality. The analysis of the online media performances reveals different framing strategies, such as bridging, amplification, extension, and transformation.

In his _Article, "Interlaced Frames: Seriality, Information, and Contact Zones in Late 18th and Early 19th Century Press and Printing Industry," Heiner Stahl takes his readers on an archival journey to elaborate on a media history of frames. Focusing on a variety of advertisements, newspaper articles, business cards, and menus, Stahl identifies their framing techniques and traces their vital contributions to the historical shaping of the modern information society. Chiefly understanding the archival material as demarcating material and communicative contact zones, this _Article offers a range of perspectives on the phenomenon of framing that encompasses visual, material, semiotic, narrative, and epistemic considerations.

Mansi Tiwari's _Article "Winning Time and Losing Frames: Clashing Formats in the Post-Archive," shifts our focus to the realm of moving pictures. Her analysis engages with HBO's television series *Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty* (2022–2023) which chronicles the L.A. Lakers basketball team in the 1980s. Drawing attention to the use of frames, Tiwari points to the underlying clashes of film formats that lie at the show's core. Grappling with the multitrack possibilities in film, according to Tiwari, it is in fluctuating image frame that the seam between visual technologies is articulated.

Steven Seegel's _Essay, "Geopolitical Frames, Bold Lines: Online Global Solidarity and Mapping Russia's War Against Ukraine" demonstrates the power of maps and social media during the times of war, with a focus on Ukrainian resistance to Russian aggression. Rather than seeing maps as mere propaganda tools, the author presents them as artefacts of survival, sovereignty, and identity. Building upon his *February 24th Archive*—a vast collection of social media documentation—Seegel shows how digital mapping and OSINT (open-source intelligence) have been used to track the war, counter disinformation, and build global solidarity. His article shows that maps are not just records of territory, but active instruments of resistance in both physical and information battles.

Heidrun Friese opens her _Essay thinking through the breadth of what frames do and what they can be: framing as a technique of structuring ideas and experiences, as standardizing normative principles, as visual or rhetorical representations for translating meaning, and most importantly, as creating relationships between all of the aforementioned, as well as between institutions, power structures, and discourses. As the title, "Multiple Frames: Remarks of the Framing of Borders and Migration," suggests, the _Essay's central theme is migration and borders, and how they are understood, represented, and connected to ideas of sovereignty, nationalism, and biopolitics. Friese illustrates three frames or framings of migration, which are life, death, and law, and how they can serve simplified, racialized, populist discourses.

Jan Marschelke's _Essay, "From Imagined Communities to Cultures of Collectivization," deals with the theoretical conceptualization of imagined communities. He argues that *any* form of collectivity is based on ideas and is therefore 'imagined'; at the same time, it is linked to practices and other types of human activities. In this context, schemata and frames are identified as implicit knowledge. He highlights praxeological approaches to collectivization processes in order to capture the materiality of human activities. The essay illustrates how theoretical considerations of schemata contribute to an extended theorization and better understanding of frames.

Reframe is a photography project initiated by photojournalists Julia Runge, Hildegard Titus, and Lisa Ossenbrink to challenge Eurocentric narratives by empowering young Namibian photographers to document their own realities. The project involved a three-week workshop for 14 participants, culminating in exhibitions in Windhoek and later in Berlin. The organizers argued that representations of Namibia

are too often reduced to generic 'African' landscapes devoid of people, a legacy of colonial-era photography and the white gaze. In response, *Reframe* equipped young Namibian photographers with the tools to tell visual stories about social and political issues. Following the success of the project, Reframe Kollektiv e.V. was founded in Berlin to continue the work and develop other projects with similar goals.

"'Within the Gates of the Master, Is There Any Such Thing as a Prime Minister?' A Space Without Frames in the Zhuangzi" written by Ludwig Drosch is an exciting journey into Buddhist temples. The _Perspective discusses how roles differ between people in society and in the religious service. In the spirit of Zen Buddhism, Drosch abstains from imposing his view by providing clearly structured arguments, and posing questions about life based on the dialogues from the sacred tales. This _Perspective is an invitation for the reader to reflect upon their own attitudes and actions, and suggests that everyone can find a compelling argument for themselves at the gates of a temple.

In "Making Queer Content Visible: Media Framing of Queerness in Serbia" Ana Marija Spasojević offers an analysis of the discourse surrounding queerness and acceptance of the LGBT+ community in Serbia by assessing the framing offered by Serbian newspaper *blic.* Tracing *blic's* reporting on the annual Pride parade in Serbia's capital city Belgrade, Spasojević provides both a recapitulation of reporting strategies concerning the public image of Serbia's LGBT+ community, and an evaluation of the potentials and limitations of media framing as method and practice.

As you explore this issue, we invite you to set aside any fixed ideas about what 'frames' should be. The contributions gathered here reveal that frames come in many shapes, forms, and contexts—but they are never truly neutral. These texts encourage you to notice not just what is being framed, but also what is left outside the frame. By examining these structures, you may begin to see not only the boundaries they create but also the possibilities that exist beyond them.

_Acknowledgements

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We hope you enjoy reading "Frames"!

Giessen, May 2025

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