



Comunicazioni Sociali — Journal of Media, Performing Arts and Cultural Studies

Embodied Rhythms. Interdisciplinary Takes on the Perception of Rhythm in Reality, Arts, Cinematic and Immersive Experience

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In recent years, the study of rhythm has regained centrality across multiple disciplinary fields — from film and media theory to cognitive neuroscience, from aesthetics to performance studies. This special issue aims to explore rhythm as an embodied and perceptual structure that organizes audiovisual experience in both cinematic and immersive environments.

From this perspective, rhythm is seen not as a mere sequence of beats or cuts but as a dynamic field of sensorimotor engagement, where the viewer's body, mind and the moving image co-constitute an experience of temporal flow. The rhythms of editing, camera movement, sound, spatial transitions and user interaction become sites of bodily attunement: the spectator perceives, anticipates, synchronises with and sometimes resists the temporal pulses of the audiovisual text. In immersive media such as virtual reality, this attunement is further deepened by the mobility of gaze and body, by vestibular and proprioceptive feedback, and by the modulation of presence and agency. Here rhythm manifests in the coupling of visual-aural cues and bodily motion, in the adaptation of physiological rhythms (heartbeat, breathing, motor responses) to the media-temporal structures, and in the shaping of affective states and temporal perception through sensorimotor coordination. Discussions may thus address how semiotic and linguistic rhythmic elements in the audiovisual text trigger embodied responses; how the viewer's temporal and bodily schemas are recruited in the perception of rhythm; how immersive formats alter the very constitution of rhythmic experience; and how affect, embodiment and time-perception are intertwined in the rhythmic dimension of audiovisuals.

The issue invites contributions that integrate theoretical reflection, aesthetic analysis, and empirical investigation, addressing rhythm as a phenomenon that emerges at the crossroads between perception, cognition, and representation. By encouraging dialogue between humanities and sciences, the aim is to redefine rhythm as a transversal category that links artistic form and bodily resonance, narrative structure and neural entrainment, cinematic temporality and virtual immersion.

Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Embodied perception and rhythmic attunement in cinema and VR
- Semiotic and phenomenological approaches to audiovisual rhythm

- Temporal structures and sensorimotor coupling in film experience
- Rhythm, affect, and empathy in moving-image aesthetics
- Cognitive and neuroscientific studies of synchronization and entrainment
- Dance, gesture, and movement as models for audiovisual rhythm
- Musicality of editing, montage, and sound design
- Heartbeat, breathing, and bodily rhythms in spectatorship
- Immersive and interactive media: rhythmic modulation of attention and presence
- Rhythm as a principle of intersubjectivity and social coordination

Keywords: Rhythm; Embodied perception; Time perception; Film experience; Experimental aesthetics; Cognitive neuroscience; Neurocinematics; Neurofilmology; Entrainment; Virtual reality; Immersive media.

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Submission details

Please send your abstract and a short biographical note **by December 5, 2025** to redazione.cs@unicatt.it and to ruggero.eugeni@unicatt.it.

Abstracts should be 300 to 400 words long (in English). All submissions should include 5 keywords, the name of the author(s), the institution's affiliation, contact details, and a short bio for each author.

Authors will be notified of proposal acceptance **by December 19, 2025**.

If the proposal is accepted, the author(s) will be asked to submit the full article in English **by February 12, 2026**.

Submission of a paper will be taken to imply that it is unpublished and is not being considered for publication elsewhere.

The articles must not exceed 5,000/6,000 words in English (including references). Languages accepted: English, Italian, French.

For editorial guidelines, please refer to the section “Guide for the authors” on the Comunicazioni Sociali website: <http://comunicazionisociali.vitaepensiero.com>

Contributions will be submitted through a double-blind peer review process.

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