

## **MEDIAPOLIS Dossier CFP: Mediating Urban Automobility**

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It is hard to overstate the impact of the automobile on cities (broadly defined to include urban, suburban, and exurban areas). From enabling new modes of moving through and inhabiting urban space to prompting the reorganization of entire metropolitan regions to revolutionizing the very perception of time and space, cars and other motor vehicles have radically transformed the urban world. To best appreciate the magnitude of these changes over a century in the making, it's useful to understand the automobile (here understood to include the passenger car as well as other motor vehicles) not simply as a mode of transportation and consumer product, but as the nexus of an assemblage of social, economic, political, cultural, geographical, and technical systems. The term “automobility” suggested by sociologist John Urry among others, provides a useful conceptual framework for approaching the sprawling web of interdependent actors, processes, and phenomena that supports and is in turn supported by the automobile. Of chief concern in this dossier are the roles media has played in reflecting and shaping the relationship between automobility and urbanism. The functions of media in this dynamic are many and as such the types of media available for consideration will be left intentionally open, from representations of cars and other motor vehicles, automotive infrastructure, or car cultures, etc. in urban contexts in film, television, advertising, video games, and other forms of visual culture to

the incorporation and instrumentalization of various media technologies in motor vehicles and the various systems that support them. Contributions from a range of disciplinary perspectives including film and media studies, communication, art history, urban studies, urban planning, geography, architecture, history, sociology, anthropology, and economics, among others are welcome. Potential avenues of inquiry may include, but are not limited to, the intersection of media and:

- Urban and suburban car cultures/cultural practices of driving and car use
- Automobility and the formation of individual/local/regional/national identities
- Automobility and urban planning/development
- Urban automotive infrastructure (e.g., streets, highways, bridges, tunnels, parking lots, gas stations, traffic control systems, road signage, etc.)
- The environmental impact of automobiles and automotive infrastructure (e.g., land use, resource consumption, pollution, climate change, etc.)
- The automobile as dwelling/mode of inhabiting urban space
- Automobility and the navigation of urban space
- Embodied experiences/phenomenology of driving
- Automobility and race/class/gender in relation to questions of access, inclusion, exclusion, inequality, privilege, power, etc.
- The automotive industry and urbanism
- Automobiles as media “platforms” (i.e., the car as host for a range of media devices from radios to TVs and touch screens)
- “Smart” car/driver interfaces and driverless car technologies
- Automobility and labor (e.g., commuting, the circulation of goods, the car as workplace, etc.)
- Automobility and policing
- Automobility and public safety (e.g., accidents, road deaths, pedestrian/car confrontations, etc.)
- The politics of automobility (i.e., how cities should be organized and for whom)
- The car and anti-urban ideologies and practices
- Critiques of automobile-centric urbanism

Please submit an abstract of your proposed article (300 words) and a short bio (100 words) to Cortland Rankin ([rankicw@bgsu.edu](mailto:rankicw@bgsu.edu)) by **June 2, 2023**. Authors will be informed of the selection by June 9. Full articles (3,000-4,000 words) will be due by **August 7, 2023** and will subsequently go through an anonymous peer review process. The dossier is scheduled for the **September 2023** issue.

*Mediapolis: A Journal of Cities and Culture* is an interdisciplinary online journal that publishes scholarship from a range of academic fields addressing the complex and mutually constitutive relationship between media and the city.