

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Complexity of Bodies

By the 1980s, a field of research had developed within intersectional and interdisciplinary gender studies that addresses the complexity of concepts and images of the body. In her *Cyborg Manifesto* (1985), Donna Haraway emphasized the ambiguity and indeterminacy of biological and non-biological, discursive and technical embodiments that do not adhere to predetermined concept of wholeness and stability, attempt to evade biopolitics, and destabilize binary coding. Numerous works on body concepts within queer, intersex, trans*, and critical disability studies have built on this. Examples include Tobin Siebers' concept of "complex embodiment", which describes the discursive co-construction of non-normative, disabled bodies using the example of "passing" practices; micha cárdenas' understanding of "transreal", which problematizes the transgression of body and identity boundaries at digital interfaces such as video games; Margrit Shildrick's concept of the "prosthetic body", which discusses the inseparable and intimate intertwining of the body with recent technologies; and Johanna Hedva's "sick woman theory", which addresses the constantly scrutinized intersectional and relational category of bodies that are "uncared for" or "unworthy of care".

This special issue encourages contributions that explore the complexity of body concepts and body images. The focus will be on the significance of cultural semiotic practices, such as texts, films, and other (multi)media, in postponing, suspending, interrupting, shifting, and keeping rigid classifications for questioning essentialist and naturalized differences in favor of productive symbioses, synergies, resignifications, ramifications, and transgressions. To counteract current biopolitical tendencies toward simplification and disambiguation and to reflect on the co-construction of material, biological, discursive, and technological aspects of embodiment, we welcome contributions that critically examine new interdisciplinary, intersectional, and interdiscursive strategies for producing complexity. Contributions should engage with current debates in (health) policy, aesthetics, and law on topics such as body/embodiment, gender, sexual orientation, illness, disability, and racialization.

Possible questions/research topics in detail

- How do complex concepts and images of bodies challenge rigid, reductionist positions, and identity categories at the intersections of gender studies, cultural and social sciences and life sciences?
- Which potential for a critical discussion of biopolitics can be identified in recent approaches to the complexity of bodies at the intersections of gender theory, queer studies, inter- and transculturalism, critical race studies, postcolonialism, critical disability studies, medical humanities, affect studies, ecocriticism, and new materialism?
- How are new complex concepts and images of bodies generated with the help of new discursive, literary, and aesthetic (writing) techniques, genres, and interdisciplinary perspectives?

Procedure and timetable

- Please submit a one- to two-page abstract by **7 December 2025**. Non-German speakers are welcome to submit their articles in English.
- Please send your proposal as well as your manuscript as Word file to: manuskripte@gender-zeitschrift.de (subject: **Special issue „The Complexity of Bodies“**).
- Once your abstract has been assessed and judged suitable for this issue, you will receive an invitation to submit. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by **22 December 2025**. The deadline for submission of the final manuscript is **31 May 2026**.
- Manuscripts must not exceed **50,000 characters (including space characters)**. A style sheet for authors is available at www.gender-zeitschrift.de/en/manuscripts.

All submissions will be reviewed in our double-blind peer review process based on which the final selection of contributions to be published will be made. The editors may give instructions to revise the contribution, which is the rule rather than the exception. In case of a high number of positively peer-reviewed contributions, the Editorial Department reserves the right to make a final selection of articles and to publish some contributions in a later issue.

About GENDER. Journal for Gender, Culture and Society

GENDER. Journal for Gender, Culture and Society was founded in 2009 as a journal on women and gender studies. The journal aims to cover a wide range of topics and academic disciplines in which gender issues are reflected. Given the journal's multi-disciplinary setting, we welcome analyses from, for instance, sociology, educational science, political science, cultural science and history which correspond to the interdisciplinary nature of gender studies. GENDER is published in three issues a year. Contributions to the free section are always welcome, irrespective of the focus of the special issue.

Do you have any questions?

For further topic-related information please contact the editors of the special issue: **Prof. Dr. Sigrid Nieberle** (sigrid.nieberle@tu-dortmund.de), and **Prof. Dr. Katrin Röder** (katrin.roeder@tu-dortmund.de).

For questions on formal issues and work flow please contact the editorial team of GENDER (redaktion@gender-zeitschrift.de).

Please note: Manuscript submissions only via manuskripte@gender-zeitschrift.de