

Prof. Dr. **Brian R. Jacobson**, California Institute of Technology, USA

Brian Jacobson is Professor of Visual Culture in the Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences at the California Institute of Technology. His work focuses on the history and interpretation of world making and the creation of artificial environments, from media architecture and visual representation to energy infrastructure, climate control, and terraforming. Jacobson has written extensively about the history of studio architecture and the essential role architecture and infrastructure play in the creation of visual media and their artificial image and screen worlds. In his field-defining book *Studios Before the System: Architecture, Technology, and the Emergence of Cinematic Space* (2015), Jacobson situates the world's first film studios in the architectural and technological developments of urban industrial modernity and argues that cinema should be understood both as a system of environmental regulation and as a critical component of the human-built world. His award-winning edited volume, *In the Studio: Visual Creation and Its Material Environments* (2020), extends this work further into the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries in a range of geographic and media contexts.

His more recent work combines histories of energy and environment with art and media to examine the role visual culture plays in shaping the practices, politics, and cultural imaginaries of energy forms and environmental futures. What role, this work asks, have visual media played in shaping broad cultural interpretations of new energy forms and with what implications for the formation of political willpower and energy and environmental policy making? Focused primarily on France and its late-colonial empire but also attentive to intersecting histories in the US, UK, and the sites of their (neo)colonial ambitions, this work includes studies of the hermeneutical work of state and corporate propaganda, the epistemological role that visual media play in extractive industries, and the forms of art that emerge within and in response to unstable moments of energy transition like the one we are experiencing today.