

International Conference

Present's disjunctive unity. Constructing and deconstructing histories of contemporary cultural and aesthetic practices

Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 26 – 28 November 2015



"All art has been contemporary", Maurizio Nannucci, 2005, Altes Museum, Berlin. (Foto: Jürgen Liepe)

The Conference

What concepts of “the contemporary” are there around the world? What are their historical contexts? What cultural, aesthetic and artistic theories and practices did they generate?

The concept of “the contemporary” in art and culture has its own history; paradoxically, contemporaneity in itself is historical. It is also determined by the many cultural and regional contexts in which ideas of the present and contemporaneity are negotiated. Hence, there are varying histories of the contemporary, each informed by specific socio-political conditions and geo-political power structures. Historical turning points such as the end of the Second World War in 1945 or the end of the Cold War in 1989 prompted certain narratives of contemporaneity and shaped specific historiographical modes through which people in different places reflect on meanings and patterns of the past in relation to the present and tell stories in different ways.

The conference combines socio-political, historical and other theoretical perspectives, seeking appropriate categories for these different historiographical genealogies.

Research Network for Critical Transcultural Perspectives on Artistic and Visual Practices (preliminary title)

The conference is conceived as a kick-off event for the international and cross-disciplinary "Research Network for Critical Transcultural Perspectives on Artistic and Visual Practices" (preliminary title) – a critical, interdisciplinary and international research association of post-doctoral researchers, who study phenomena and processes of cultural exchange. Overcoming the institutional confines of projects, departments and universities, the network shall provide an international and interdisciplinary forum for open and critical debate on how to identify and cope with common pressing, often methodological problems of this research perspective.

The conference is conceived and organized by:

Birgit Hopfener (Free University Berlin), Franziska Koch (Heidelberg University), Kerstin Schankweiler (Free University Berlin), Annette Bhagwati (Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin) and Kirsten Einfeldt (Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin) in co-operation with the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context", Heidelberg University, the Research Group "Transcultural Negotiations in the Ambits of Art", FU Berlin, and the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.

Affiliated projects/researchers who chair the closed workshop sessions of the program:

Philippe Cordez (International Junior Research Group "Premodern Objects. An Archeology of Experience", LMU Munich), Melanie Klein (FOR 1703 "Transcultural Negotiations in the Ambits of Art", Research Unit C3 "Fictions of the original. Exploring practices and discourses of the arts of Africa", FU Berlin), Silke Förschler (LOEWE-Research Group "Tier-Mensch-Gesellschaft", Projekt A3 "Insekten, Reptilien, Fische. Ästhetische Ordnungen und wissenschaftliche Praktiken der Académie des sciences und der Royal Society (1660–1750)", University of Kassel), Stephanie Zehnle (DFG-Research Group „Gewaltgemeinschaften“, Research Unit "Leopardenmänner. Ein translokales Gewaltphänomen in der kolonialen Phase Afrikas (Sierra Leone/Liberia 1880-1950)", University of Kassel) Liesbeth Minnaard (Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen, Centre for the Arts in Society, Film and Literary Studies, Leiden University), Kea Wienand (Dept. for Art and Visual Culture, Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg).

The conference is kindly supported by:

Ernst-Reuter-Gesellschaft der Freunde, Förderer und Ehemaligen der Freien Universität Berlin e.V.

Frauenfördermittel des Fachbereichs Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften der Freien Universität Berlin

Ulmer Verein. Verband für Kunst- und Kulturwissenschaften e.V.

PROGRAM:

Thursday, November 26th, 2015, 5.30 – 7.45 pm

- 5.30 – 6.00 pm Welcome and Introduction
- Panel: Identifying contemporaneities**
- 6.00 – 6.15 pm Introduction: Franziska Koch (Heidelberg)
- 6.15 – 7.00 pm Knut Ebeling (Berlin): "Digging for Now. An Archaeology of Contemporaneity"
- 7.00 – 7.45 pm Atreyee Gupta (Berlin/San Francisco Bay Area): "The Future-oriented Topographies of Desire: Insurgent Photomontage in Interwar India"

Friday, November 27th, 2015, 3.00 – 6.00 pm and 7.30 – 9.00 pm

- Panel: Criticality and agency**
- 3.00 – 3.15 pm Introduction: Kerstin Schankweiler (Berlin)
- 3.15 – 4.00 pm Tobias Wendl (Berlin): "Neoliberalism and Contemporary Arts in Africa"
- 4.00 – 4.45 pm Paul Gladston (Nottingham): "Contemporary Art and the (Differentiated) Limits of Criticality"
- 4.45 – 5.00 pm Coffee Break
- Artist Talk**
- 7.30 – 9.00 pm "Of Heroines and New Homosexuals." With Ato Malinda (Rotterdam/Nairobi) and Milumbe Haimbe (Lusaka).
Moderation: Melanie Klein (Berlin)

Saturday, November 28th, 2015, 3.30 – 8.45 pm

Panel: Thinking through the past

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| 3.30 – 3.45 pm | Introduction: Franziska Koch (Heidelberg) |
| 3.45 – 4.30 pm | Francesca Tarocco (Shanghai): "Berlin Buddha: Contemporary Art Practices and Post-Secular China" |
| 4.30 – 5.15 pm | Fabian Heubel (Taipei): "Revolution and Transformation in Contemporary Mountain-Water-Painting" |
| 5.15 – 5.30 pm | Break |
| 5.30 – 6.15 pm | Monica Juneja (Heidelberg): "Between Abstinence and Re-enchantment – Making Place for Tradition in Contemporary Art" |
| 6.15 – 6.45 pm | Coffee Break |

Panel: Constructions of temporalities

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| 6.45 – 7.00 pm | Introduction: Kirsten Einfeldt (Berlin) |
| 7.00 – 7.45 pm | Philip Rosen (Providence): "The Fragment and the Forecast" |
| 7.45 – 8.30 pm | Lourdes Morales (Mexico City / Montréal): "On the Notions of Direct and Testimonio: Constructing Sync Temporalities through Cinema" |
| 8.30 – 8.45 pm | Public Announcement of the "Research Network for Critical Transcultural Perspectives on Artistic and Aesthetic Practices" |

For more information about the conference and the research network please see:

<http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/en/e/khi/presents-disjunctive-unity/index.html>