

ABSTRACTS

Keynotes

Art & Language – ‘Feeling Good: The Aesthetics of Corporate Culture’

Luis Camnitzer

‘The Two Versions of Santa Anna's Leg and Other Things’

An analysis of the post-modernist implications of Santa Anna's prosthesis, with some speculations about the perception of space in relation to systems of measurement, and the problems of infographic and geographic localities vis-à-vis Milan Kundera's wrongheaded arguments in defense of a *Weltliteratur*.

Panel 1: Sensate Thinking: Aesthetics, Art, Ontology

Christoph Menke – ‘Not Yet - The Philosophical Significance of Aesthetics’

This talk inquires into the preconditions and consequences of the emergence of aesthetics in and for philosophy. The question is: what does it mean for philosophy to engage the question of the aesthetic? My answer will be: it means nothing less than putting philosophy in question. Or more precisely: by engaging the question of the aesthetic, philosophy puts itself into question. In order to show this, I will refer to a brief passage in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, which I will try to turn against what I take it to be Hegel's own intention. I proceed in three brisk moves by, (1) distinguishing a philosophy of the poetic from a philosophy of the aesthetic; (2) describing the aesthetic as regressive and reflexive; and (3) sketching the paradoxical place of aesthetics within philosophy.

Eric Alliez

‘Undoing the Image’

Modern art and the modern idea of art have drawn from one another an evermore exclusive and inclusive problematization of images, leading to a crisis in the very notion of the image, and with it in the ‘aesthetic’ identity of the Art-Form. This is the constitutive crisis of modern art since Manet, affecting the sensible status of art as well as the image. But this crisis could attain its ‘strongest’ impact only through what appears in contemporary art in the wake of the radical break with the aesthetic image in Matisse and Duchamp. In a single movement, Matisse and Duchamp determine the two founding paradigms of contemporary art, opposed at every point (in an ideal and practical polarity). I aim to examine under this (non-aesthetic but hyper-sensible) aegis what we will call the Matta-Clark-Operation. It is a question of relaunching afresh, in what takes the name of Post/modern (with the bar of a fraction expressing the force of the phenomenon), the conflict on *the question of the sensible* and on the political relation of art to its outsides.

Panel 2: The Dissolution of Artistic Limits: Objects, Events, Ideas

Juliane Rebentisch

‘Aesthetic Autonomy and Contemporary Art’

Rarely has the concept of aesthetic autonomy played a smaller part than in the avant-garde art practice of the past decade. And where it was relevant at all, then clearly as an object of attack. This autonomy, however, from which these developments strove to dissociate themselves (as did the classical and neo-avant-gardes), is invariably the illusory autonomy of

an organic, self-contained artwork supposedly free of context and aesthetically self-sufficient. If there is a counterpart to this in the art of today, then it is the idea that, in the broadest sense, its works literally open on and/or thematically treat of their visible and invisible contexts. Starting point of my deliberations is the diagnostic thesis that the way contemporary art reflects its contexts does not (as often assumed) dispute aesthetic autonomy per se, but only a hypostasizing misconception of it: the idea that art is independent of viewer and context. What art that reflects its contexts urges, then, is not that we say goodbye to but that we fundamentally revise our concept of aesthetic autonomy, so that art's relation to its context is seen not as its converse but as a determinant thereof.

Sebastian Egenhofer

'Aesthetic Materiality in Conceptualism'

The conceptual practices of the sixties and seventies, in the strongest cases, also stand for an eminently *materialist* conception of art. In these cases, as always in the experience of art, the opposition of sensuality and concept is destabilized. By providing a particular formalization and self-reflection, the work of art gives perception free range, leading it beyond its passive-receptive character to the boundary of a thought process that ignites and breaks itself on the materiality of the work. With a view towards Kant's aesthetics and several classic works of the Sixties and Seventies, I intend to trace the outline of this destabilization.

Peter Osborne

'The Fiction of the Contemporary'

This paper addresses the problem of contemporary as the problem of the fictitious unity of the present. If 'fictiousness' or 'fictiveness' is a condition of representation of the contemporary, what are its implications for contemporary art? The paper will take up this question at two levels: (1) the historical ontology of the artwork – contemporary art as post-conceptual art; (2) the fictionalization of artistic authority and the collectivization of artistic fictions in the work of the *The Atlas Group* (1999–2005).

Panel 3: Aesthetics of Post-Autonomy: Institution, Collaboration, Participation

Brian Holmes

'Rules of the Game: The Artistic Device and the Articulation of Public Speech'

I will consider a range of projects that try to rediscover a singularity of experience through a process of collective research. The argument will move from an institutional critique of museums to the larger frames of a cybernetically controlled society (which, in each specific context, attempts to set "the rules of the game"). Artistic institutions and the contemporary economy are now closely linked, as cognitive capitalism is continually developing new ways to at once stimulate and channel the creativity of its most productive subjects - thus making art and its institutions into more important sites of governance and governmentality than in the industrial age. However, there are also a lot of experiments within those frames and rule-sets; I will describe a few and allude to more.

Stewart Martin

'The Subsumption of Art by Capital'

This paper will address the following questions and their answers. What does the intensification of the subsumption of labour by capital, extending it to life in general, mean for art? What constitutes a critical art practice in this context? And how should it relate to considerations of autonomy and heteronomy? What do the alternative philosophies of capitalist subsumption available – from the Frankfurt School to (post-)Autonomia – offer to our understanding and engagement with these questions?

Susanne Leeb

'Human Rights as "Compass" for Art'

One could call "post-autonomous" an art that does not seek the discourse that legitimizes it within art itself but in other public "institutions" like journalism or, as will be discussed in my paper, in human rights. In an article of 2004, Okwui Enwezor published what can be regarded as the theoretical epilogue of Kassel's *documenta* 11, and he claimed in it that the "compass" for political contemporary art be no longer class struggle but human rights. I will parallel this statement and the question of its plausibility with a specific artistic project: the paintings by the conceptual artist Dierk Schmidt. Schmidt produced a series of abstract panels using cartographic and statistical sign languages in order to ask questions about the possibilities and the limits of visualising law in the context of German colonial history. Several questions rise from this constellation: Does a juridical basis indeed guarantee the "truth" of art? And where does aesthetics, the "former" main domain of art and its experience, remain within this claim for ethics and politics, for it cannot be neglected even in the most conceptual work?

Panel 4: Exhibition-Value: Aesthetics of Curation in a Global Artworld

Pamela Lee

'Not Politics as Usual: On the Political "Problem" at the Venice Biennale'

This paper takes the 52nd Venice Biennale as a case study in the ways in which questions of global politics are thematized as curatorial form. As organized by Robert Storr, "Think with the Senses/Feel with the Mind" did not seem to engage these issues as such. My charge is to consider what is immanently political about its organization and much of the work on display. In order to complicate the show's official narrative, I take brief recourse to two positions that have been regarded as emblematic of this debate within art critical circles: that of the curator and critic Nicolas Bourriaud, on the one hand, and the philosopher Jacques Ranciere, on the other. Ultimately, the constellation of these three figures will prepare the ground for a discussion of Felix Gmelin, whose work "Tools and Grammar" was among the most powerful in the show.

Dorethea Von Hantelmann

'The Rise of Exhibitions and the Exhibition as Art'

The global adoption of a Western idea of art is fundamentally is the success story of the Western format of the exhibition that ritually enacts a set of fundamental values of Western democratic market societies. Yet although Conceptual art, with its focus on 'the idea', might have paved the way to a new notion of 'art at large', it is much rather the legacy of Minimal Art, with its focus on the exhibition, that can offer a new and relevant perspective on art's role in the global processes into which it is entangled.

Charles Merewether
'A Work in Progress'

This talk will address the creation of the Cultural District on Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi, most notably some of the issues concerning the establishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi in regard to their conceptual framework and proposed programmes in the context of the Gulf and Middle East. Some reference will also be made to the Biennale of Sydney 2006, 'Zones of Contact.'