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Call For Papers for Session 15: Creative Misunderstanding

Chairs of the Session:

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Please submit the abstract of your paper for this session to the chairs before June 30, 2015.

In the spirit of the Section's proposal we can read: „The focus here is on misunderstanding and misinterpretation in the history of art. It intends to further study the problem of the reception of foreign, heterodox and non-traditional cultures." Everybody knows the 19th century misinterpretation of the cloud and fog representation in the Chinese landscape painting as early impressionistic sign of atmosphere. Another example of a (tragic) mistake from the 20th century is the destruction of the Montecassino abbey by an American bomber because of a misunderstood verbal instruction. (The American decoder thinks the German word „Abt" (abbey) for the abbreviation of German „Abteilung" (military department).) However, our understanding of the Section title is based on the confrontation of the two concept creativity and misunderstanding.

We are interested in any kind of cross-connection between creativity and misunderstanding. In which aspect differ Western and Eastern kind interpretations of creativity and misunderstanding?

Concerning creativity, we are interested in the cultural determinants of conscious and unconscious part of the creative process, in the dialogue between artists and the audience, as well as the inner process by bi- or multicultural artists.

Concerning misunderstanding and understanding we recommend to analyse creativity as a sort

of divergent thinking, deviating from the norms, especially from cultural norms, or as a result of a bias in perception or generally in understanding, how switching of cultural frames might lead to misunderstanding, and eventually to a creative novelty.

Misunderstanding could appear in interpreting art historical phenomena, in trying to explain changes in historical processes, interpreting old sources and documents.

Experts could not recognise fakes, they could not distinguish between original and copies. You can find historical or contemporary examples, when the author misunderstands his or her task or commission, misinterprets the subject matter (if it is a natural or a social, political phenomenon).

You could deliver comparative studies among different national traditions of the failures and their corrections. Different theories could emerge from linguistic differences of national terminologies of misunderstanding and other kind of mistakes, errors, failures, misfits etc. How is it possible to convert mistakes for advantage or favour – in the composition or interpretation? How the audience or the viewer could better understand the artwork better than even the artist?

Invent new strategies to exploit errors and misunderstandings for the profit of art!

Reference:
CFP: Session at CIHA (Beijing, 15-22 Sep 16). In: ArtHist.net, May 11, 2015 (accessed Nov 4, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/10242>.