Art and Speculative Futures (Barcelona, 27-29 Oct 16)

Barcelona, Oct 27–29, 2016
Deadline: Jun 15, 2016

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Art and Speculative Futures
International Conference

Thinking about art from the prism of speculation may involve the creation of alternative futures. Introducing doubt, babbling, the "what ifs", counter-memory against the ideal need of a primal origin (or source of meaning where we recognise each other) and being open to discontinuity, chance and materiality in history means asking ourselves if it is possible to both make and think about art in different ways. If it is possible to envision another history from other horizons of meaning, not so much to pursuit its truth but to question the meaning and the value embedded in the stories of our truths. This conference thus proposes to speculate about futures as contemporary fables producing truth effects imbued with ethical and political significance. Speculations over futures within the arts seek to contradict traditional modes of conceiving art history by means of meanings that stimulate thinking rather than generating new truths with which we align ourselves. Fables or stories that make people think, like toolboxes, upon which history is being "fictionalized" from a political reality that makes it true, just the same way politics which does not yet exist are being "fictionalized" from a historical reality.

We seek to explore not only one but multiple senses, not one but multiple and diverse art histories, ignored or omitted, including artists, materials, technologies or excluded geopolitical zones of repeated and commonly accepted stories. Such histories of art are to be investigated and revealed from a cosmopolitical scope that is aimed at building a common space where no one can claim the right to choose the central point of view from which a subject must be addressed. A space of coexistence of the otherness without the need of articulating consensus: a space of coexistence in the divergence that accounts for our constitutive heterogeneity.

This conference aims at assembling differences in semantic-materials skeins of all those agents involved in the art world, whether they are visible or invisible to be revealed, human or non-human, objects, materials, speeches, technologies or relational infrastructures that build and are in turn built as specific forms of governance. Precisely these art infrastructures, inherited from the Enlightenment, promised modernity, development and progress, but their lives have been shown to be made of fragile relationships between people, things, and institutions that try to govern them. Today its very fragility allows us to approach these infrastructures through maintenance and repair in order to shed light on actors, places and moments that have been overlooked or silenced by their stories.

This conference will examine alternative art histories that are committed to the material turn while moving forward, hand in hand, with methodological-theoretical perspectives such as media archaeology, new materialism, speculative realism or actor-network theory and social studies of science and technology exploring the world of the arts by means of speculation. Approaches that have already placed their focus on relationships, dismantling modern maxims that keep nature, society and technology confined.

The different research lines of the conference will be:

- Divergent and uncategorizable art histories, from a non-linear temporal approach, linked to perspectives of media archaeology or anarchive on the one hand and heteronymous or abject art approaches on the other.
- Processes of rendering visible and invisible agents and agencies in the arts, linked to discourses on the human and nonhuman – regardless of whether these are animals, microbes or things-, the Anthropocene and reconstruction of the relationship between nature, technology and society.
- Processes of rupture, maintenance and repairing practices related to art and infrastructure, linked to exhibitions, museums and exhibition centres or production and research spaces, etc …
- Cosmopolitical approaches from the arts whose anti-homogenizing potential aims at describing the possibilities of mutual co-existence and living with difference, understanding of the creation of any political horizon that is based on the creation of sustainable relationships with otherness.
- Diffractive approaches to the arts from a situated knowledge related to posthumanism and post-gender studies.

Keywords: alien, non human, non linear, uncategorized, divergent histories, an-archives, situated knowledge, diffractive, abject, anthropocene, posthumanism, dispositif etc..

People who are interested in participating are invited to send an abstract by June 15th, 2016 to the following e-mail address:
artfuturesconference@gmail.com.

Proposal format (two separate documents):

Abstract:
- Format .doc, .docx, .rtf, .odt
- Languages: English, Spanish and Catalan
- Title
- Abstract (300 words maximum)
- Between 3 and 5 keywords.
- Short biography:
- Format .doc, .docx, .rtf, .odt
- Languages: English, Spanish and Catalan
- Name and surname
- Institutional affiliation (in case of having it)
- Email address
- Brief curriculum (100 words maximum)

- Information and contact person (only if the communication is presented by more than one author)
- Abstract title

You will receive confirmation of acceptance of the proposed presentation by July 5th, 2015. The papers will be published in a ISBN publication edited by Universitat de Barcelona. Each paper is allocated 15 minutes and will be followed by a discussion.

Organized by the the Research Groups AGI (Art, Globalization, Interculturality) and AASD (Art, Architecture and Digital Society) from the University of Barcelona (UB), the Research Group Mediaccions from the Open University of Catalonia (UOC) and Arts Santa Mònica.

27th, 28th, and 29th October, 2016 at the Department of Art History (UB). c/ Montalegre 6-8. 08001 Barcelona

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Conference funded by the project "Arte, arquitectura y nuevas materialidades" (HAR2014-59261-C2-1-P) and "Cartografía crítica del arte y la visualidad en la era de lo global: Nuevas metodologías, conceptos y enfoques analíticos II Parte" (HAR2013-43122P) and Grup Consolidat Agència d´Ajuts Universitaris de la Generalitat de Catalunya (2014 SGR1050). Research groups Art, Architecture and Digital Society and Art, Globalization, Interculturality.

Reference:

CFP: Art and Speculative Futures (Barcelona, 27-29 Oct 16). In: ArtHist.net, May 20, 2016 (accessed Nov 18, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/13038>.