The artist and the philosopher: Paolozzi and Wittgenstein (Venice, 23–25 Nov 16)

Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Querini Stampalia Foundation, Venice, Nov 23–25, 2016
Deadline: Sep 30, 2016

Diego Mantoan, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE
The artist and the philosopher: Eduardo Paolozzi and Ludwig Wittgenstein
Venice, 23-25 November 2016 (Querini Stampalia Foundation)

Organisers:
Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy
University of Udine, Italy

Deadline:
Submission of Speech Proposal - 30 September 2016

THE MEETING OF AN ARTIST AND A PHILOSOPHER.
The conference is set to investigate the encounter between one of the most renowned philosophers of the previous century, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and one of the major British visual artists of the second half of the 20th century, as well as a pop art initiator, Eduardo Paolozzi. Aim of this conference is particularly to discover, retrace and critically ponder the influence of Wittgenstein's philosophy on the idea of art in Polozzi, but mostly in his artistic production.
Indeed, the encounter with Wittgenstein - specifically with his Tractatus logico-philosophicus, as well as with the writings of his friend and disciple Norman Malcolm (A Memoir) - originated a series of 12 screenprints in 1965 titled As is When. Even later works bare the marks of direct reference to Wittgenstein, to episodes of his biography or further to various themes of his thought: so for instance the sculpture Wittgenstein at Cassino (1963) or the collages and screenprints of the mid 1990s that were subsumed under the title A logical picture of facts is a thought (3) Tractatus '21-'22. As observed by Judith Collins, what brought Paolozzi and Wittgenstein together was their mutual interest in syntax.

THE INFLUENCE OF A PHILOSOPHER ON AN ARTIST.
The guiding star of the conference is the influence of Wittgenstein on the considered British artist, though investigated from a broader perspective than previously done. In fact, the aim is to go beyond the mere works by Paolozzi with an explicitly "wittgensteinian" title, since the hypothesis is that the artist remained fascinated also by the Philosophical Investigations. Compared to the state of the art, this conference focuses on the entire oeuvre of Paolozzi, hence deepening the critical search on one of last century's most intriguing, though less analysed artists.

AN ARTIST AS AN INTERPRETER OF A PHILOSOPHY.
The conference wants to become a privileged occasion to reflect on the possible influence of a philosopher on an artist, as well as on the interpretation that an artist may provide as regards a philosophical thought. Therefore, the intention is to clarify the way, in which a philosophy - for this purpose the one of Wittgenstein - could find a proper interpretation or fulfilment not just in further theoretical writings, but also in artworks. In this perspective Paolozzi as an artist is to be considered a true interpreter of Wittgenstein. Eventually, the conference is set to disclose an unprecedented perspective - that of an artist that makes an artwork out of it - which could help to deepen the knowledge on Wittgenstein's philosophy, particularly his considerations on form, image and rules.

PROPOSALS AND THEMES OF THE CONFERENCE.
If you are interested in submitting a speech proposal, please write an abstract in Italian or English of no more than 3000 characters (spaces included) together with the provisional title and a short biographical note or CV (max 2 pages).
Since a peer reviewed volume is planned in the aftermath, some proposals might be considered for publication, even if they have not been chosen for the conference. The presence of young academics is particularly welcome, thus 8 places are reserved for PhD students.
The organisers will favour proposals that should engage explicitly with the relationship between Wittgenstein and Paolozzi, although further ones will be considered that refer to Paolozzi, his artistic production and education, or to Wittgenstein and his influence on visual arts.
All materials should be sent by September 30, 2016 via email to the organisers at diego.mantoan@unive.it with subject matter "Conference Paolozzi & Wittgenstein". Selected speakers will be provided with accommodation in Venice over the conference days, as well as their travel expenses to and from Venice covered (economy or second class only).

For further details please contact the organisers at diego.mantoan@unive.it.

Reference:
CFP: The artist and the philosopher: Paolozzi and Wittgenstein (Venice, 23-25 Nov 16). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 9, 2016 (accessed Nov 5, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/13604>.