Art and Presence (Odense, 15-16 Sep 17)

SDU Syddansk Universitet og Faaborg Museum, Sep 15–16, 2017
Deadline: Jan 15, 2017
www.faaborgmuseum.dk/en/about-the-museum/art-and-presence/

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Art and Presence. A conference on art, atmosphere, museums and presence

Presence and atmosphere has become a new object of study across academic fields within the humanities. Academics have described "presence" as moments of aesthetic intensity, while others use the term "atmosphere" to discuss the embodied experience of the visitor and the materiality of artworks and museum spaces.

We live in a "meaning culture". Everything – including artworks and cultural artifacts – are ascribed meanings, and museums operate as meaning machines making sense out of the past. However, for many the attraction of art is a bodily experience of being there and being present – an experience that is hard to describe in words. In Production of Presence (2004), the German-American literary theorist Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht describes such an experience of presence as a 'state of being lost in focused intensity'. He argues that the fleeting and unpredictable experience of presence is an essential part of what attracts us to music, museums, literature, archives and artworks.

The conference will discuss how such theories of 'presence' and 'atmosphere' can inform museum practice with regard to curating collections and temporary exhibitions and how recent findings in museum studies can contribute to theory. Theories of presence and atmosphere stress the bodily and non-linguistic experience of the encounter with art, and if we seek to facilitate moments of intensity rather than merely meaning-making, we need to curate the artworks in new ways and develop new kinds of settings. This may imply that we need to focus on finding and displaying particular kinds of artworks, or that we must intensify our focus on the space in-between human subjects and material objects; but we also need to discuss the theory itself.

Papers are not limited to theories of presence and atmosphere, but may also discuss museum practice and adjacent theories such as affect, phenomenology and materiality. Papers could also involve critical studies of art, museum collections, the museum space and the theories we use to make sense of them.

We welcome papers for 20-minute presentations from academics working in the fields of art history, aesthetics, anthropology, architecture and museum studies. We wish to facilitate an open, interdisciplinary dialogue across fields and invite speakers to cross the boundaries between two or more of the following topics:

- The aesthetic of presence
- The aesthetic of atmosphere and ambiance
- Affect studies
- Materiality and sensory studies including sense ethnography
- Phenomenology and philosophy of perception
- The challenges of new media/digital technology
- Museum architecture
- User engagement and immersion in museums
- Critical studies of museum practice and aesthetical studies

Applicants are invited to send an abstract of 300 words (Word or PDF) and a mini-biography (max 50 words) before January 15, 2017 to artandpresence@sdu.dk. Selected papers will be announced by the end of April 2017.

The conference will take place at University of Southern Denmark 15-16 September 2017 and is organized by the research project "Art and Presence" at Faaborg Museum and University of Southern Denmark and supported by the VELUX Foundation. For further information on the project see:

Reference:

CFP: Art and Presence (Odense, 15-16 Sep 17). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 28, 2016 (accessed Nov 5, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/13771>.