

The 6th Euroacademia Forum of Critical Studies (Lucca, 25 Nov 17)

Lucca, Tuscany, Italy, 23.–25.11.2017

Eingabeschluss : 15.09.2017

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The 6th Global Forum of Critical Studies

Asking Big Questions Again

23 - 25 November 2017, Lucca, Italy

Agora Cultural Centre

Deadline for Paper Proposals/Performing Lectures/ Short Performances:

15th of September 2017

Early Bird Deadline: 25th of July 2017

The 6th Euroacademia Global Forum of Critical Studies aims to bring into an open floor the reflexive and questioning interaction among academics, intellectuals, practitioners and activists profoundly concerned with evaluative understandings of the world we're living in. The focus of the forum is to initiate an arena where no question is misplaced and irrelevant as long as we acknowledge that evaluation, critical thinking and contestation are accessible trajectories to better understand our past, present and alternative scenarios for the future.

Conference Description:

Some say that the 21st Century or modernity altogether made humans more concerned with doing rather than being. As the classical Greek civilization valued the most reflexive thinking as a form of freedom from natural necessities, contemporary times profoundly involve individuals and the imaginary accompanying social practices in a restless logic of consumption, competition and engagement that profoundly - or some would say, radically – suspends or indefinitely postpones the autonomous capacity of human beings to question and reflect upon the social order and the meaning of social practices. The fast advancement of the logic of post-industrial societies, the gradual dissolution of alternative models to the capitalist logic and a multitude of other alerting factors pushed ahead a global spread culture of one-dimensional productions of meaning that advances a closure rather than a constant reflexive re-evaluation of cultural/social practices.

Many alternatives at hand are often condemned to marginality or lost in the plural practices where everything goes as long as it's part of an intellectual market. The 'fatal strategies' of post-industrial societies to keep individuals captive, busy and seduced by contingent social arrangements and economic practices minimized the questioning detachment required to evaluate and give meaning through reflexive criticism and unlimited interrogation. Various labels

were given to our unfolding times from apocalyptic ones to some more comforting yet not by chance lacking some vital optimism. Despite a wide-spread discontent and suspicion towards the daily realities of our current societies, most of the big questions are often left outside by the self-involved active pursuit of an imagined well-being that is no longer transgressed by harsh critical evaluation of its meaning. The academic arena itself also advances, supports, integrates and promotes limited particular methodologies that generate an effect of mainstreaming and often keeps researchers or practitioners out of the battle-ground for big questions.

The ongoing economic crisis made reality even harsher and pushed ahead the need for more thinking as many habitual categories lost their meaning or relevance. New ways of thinking could transgress some inappropriate conceptions or misconceptions that preserve their centrality due to the mechanics of habits. This is a time when a call to thinking is well-placed. This is a call to arms for critical studies that promotes alternative, questioning and multi-dimensional thinking.

Call for the Section on Arts, Literature, Film and Performance Studies

When it's about critical thinking and critical studies there is intrinsically an unending open list of topics to be included. The Fifth Euroacademia Forum on Critical Studies proposes the 5 sections (that are by no means exclusive): Theory/Philosophy/Politics/Cultural Studies/Political Economy/Arts, Literature, Film and Performance Studies

We welcome papers, performing lectures, performances and small scale exhibitions. Presentations on the following topics (and not only) are welcome:

The Critical Potential of Arts ~ Aesthetics and Criticism ~ Arts, History and Critical Social Imaginary ~ The Politics of Social Representations ~ Art as an Exchange Value ~ Originality and Complacency ~ Literatures and Authors ~ Heroes and Heroines in Electronic Literature ~ Fiction and the Fictionalization of the Contemporary World ~ Film and the Persisting Hunger for Heroic Imagination ~ The Visual Turn ~ Facing the Post-Self in Critical Art ~ Communication, Media and Simulacrum ~ Art and Social Criticism ~ Art and Protest ~ Social Art ~ Critical Performances ~ Performing Identities ~ Queer Art and Gendered Representations ~ Performances and Violence ~ Engaging Critical Audiences ~ Exhibitions and Critical Art ~ Film as a Critical Art

For complete information before applying see full details of the conference at:

<http://euroacademia.eu/conference/6th-forum-of-critical-studies/>

You can apply on-line by completing the Application Form on the conference website or by sending a 300 words titled abstract together with the details of contact and affiliation until 15th of September 2017 at application@euroacademia.org

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Call for Papers for the Panels:

[1] Art as Cultural Diplomacy

[2] Critical Art History and Representations of Identity

[3] Performing Identity: The Relationship between Identity and Performance in Literature, Theatre and the Performing Arts

[4] The Sequential Art: Comics as a Cultural Nexus

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[1]

Art as Cultural Diplomacy

Panel Organizer: Cassandra Sciortino, University of California, Santa Barbara

The panel Art as Cultural Diplomacy seeks papers that explore the function of art (in its broadest definition) as an instrument of cultural diplomacy by the state and, especially, by nongovernmental actors. The main theme of the session is the question of art and diplomacy in Europe before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. This focus however does not limit the thematic universe of papers to be included in the panel to Europe. Papers are welcome which explore issues related to the role of art, diplomacy and the politicization of Europe, as are those which consider how the arts have pursued or resisted East-West dichotomies and other narratives of alterity in Europe and worldwide. The panel seeks to combine a wide range of interdisciplinary perspectives to explore how art -its various practices, history, and theory - are an important area of inquiry in the expanding field of cultural diplomacy. Papers addressing the role of art in consolidating soft power of states are welcome together with contributions addressing the role of art as cultural diplomacy in the context of significant historical political events.

Some examples of topics include

- How can art serve as a neutral platform for exchange to promote dialogue and understanding between foreign states?
- How can art, including organized festivals (i.e. film, art, music.), cultivate transnational identities that undermine political dichotomies and narratives of alterity making in international relations?
- The implications for art as an instrument of diplomacy in a postmodern age where geopolitics and power are increasingly mobilized by image based structures of persuasion.
- How has/can art facilitate cohesion between European Union member states and candidate states that effectively responds to the EU's efforts to create "unity in diversity."
- The politics of mapping the world: mental and cartographic
- Community based art as a social practice to engage issues of political identity
- The difference between art as cultural diplomacy and propaganda
- The digital revolution and the emergence of social media as platforms for art to communicate across social, cultural, and national boundaries?
- Diplomacy in the history of art in Europe
- Artists as diplomats
- Art history as diplomacy—exhibitions, post-colonial criticism, global art history, and other revisions to the conventional boundaries of Europe and its history of art
- The international activity of cultural institutes
- Art as cultural resistance in non-democratic regimes
- Art as instrument of international promotion
- Art as instrument of social change and democratization
- Art, social movements and protest
- The critical function of art in cultural diplomacy

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[2]

Critical Art History and Representations of Identity

Identities are socially attributed imaginary significations. They are part of the dynamic projects of individual and social autonomy (C. Castoriadis). Nothing shapes, represents or reflects better the imaginary constructions of particular societies than arts. The artistic perception and practice are often identity making processes while the object of art can be a direct or indirect embodiment of experienced identities. At the outcome line of the process of artistic creation, the perception of the objects of art as oeuvre is an identification with cultural claims for specific aesthetic standards.

Art has a tremendous impact in indicating or shaping various dimensions of multilayered identities. Trough time art represented or influenced human visions of life and death, natural or supra-natural, meanings of life and daily practices, beliefs and their expression, history and change, places and differences. Art is simultaneously a process of building contextual cultural identifications and an instrument for cross-cultural dialogue. Arts supported the symbolic legitimating of various political orders and had an essential role in the creation of national identities. Arts shaped cultural aspirations and credos as an effective element of cultural innovation, change and openness to new. Through imaginary representations, art inserted divisions and differences among cultures and self-perceptions of people yet also opened the path of curiosity for the other and the emergence of trans-cultural dialogue. As artistic visions touched upon the most intimate identitarian representations of individuals and societies, they exercise a fundamental role in the developments and dynamics of identity making processes. Arts deeply touched on social and self-representation through sculpture and portraiture, on civic identities through defining social spaces in architecture or quotidian perceptions through design, on social or political allegiances through symbols, iconic objects and cultural diplomacy, on acting identities through theater, literature or performance arts, on the formation of transnational and global symbols. They exercised an essential impact on the formation of social memories or in addressing inclusion and exclusion nexuses for the marginalized or oppressed. Art is as well one of the important modes for asserting identities.

This panel addresses explicitly and invites the theoretical or applied studies that relate artistic manifestations with identity making processes. As the universe of reflection and research on the topics involved are virtually unlimited and impossible to anticipate in full diversity, we welcome contributions that add value or challenges to the discussion of the topic.

Some suggested topics for the panel are:

- Art and identity: a bidirectional influence
- Arts and the formation of social imaginary
- Art as search for self-expression and identity
- History, memory, art and identity: from literature to visual and performing arts
- Renaissance and humanism influence on modern identity
- Art and the creation of national identities
- Modern art and novelty as a value
- Portraiture and identity: from painting to sculpture and photography

- Performing identities: identity and performance in literature, theatre and the performing arts
- The body in art
- Photography and identity making: from single images to serial portraits
- Identity and migration or displacement in art
- Alberto Giacometti and Constantin Brancusi: the human and the absolute
- Picasso and Modigliani: images of a deeper self
- Cindy Sherman: the nature of representation and construction of identity
- Architecture and urban vision: from civic identities to globalization
- Contemporary design and the visions of life and the self
- Displaying allegiance: from ideological art to political symbols
- Fashion and social staging of personal identity
- Cinematography and identitarian representations
- Art and cross-cultural dialogue
- Art and post-colonialism
- Art and search for recognition: expressing cultural heritage
- Art, infinite reproduction and the global village
- Museums, galleries and exhibitions: displaying identities

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Performing Identity: The Relationship between Identity and Performance in Literature, Theatre and the Performing Arts

Panel Organizer: Pollyn Chrysochou, The University of Cyprus

Identity is often seen as being a controversial topic. Whether it is fictive or real, (de)politicized and/or aesthetic, gendered or engendered, identity is often seen as being a powerful political tool and an essentially social construct. It also allows individuals to define themselves. In a sense, we perform our own identities everyday - or, perhaps, we perform a wide range of different identities at any one time. We implicitly live in a society which constructs various definitive identifications, and which often sees the rigid maintenance of hierarchical systems and exclusive ideological constructions of gender, identity and sexuality, or what Judith Butler defines in her work *Bodies that Matter* as an 'exclusionary matrix.' This has often resulted in the displacement of any discursive systems which resist these exclusionary systems. This panel seeks to give voice to discursive systems which have so often been displaced by exclusionary systems of identification. The main exclusionary focus in culture and the arts has often been on the white, heterosexual and supremacist male (or female). To rectify this oversight, this panel seeks to address any works of art and culture which are directly and explicitly related to the performance of identity from a different standpoint - that is, one which is not exclusively heteronormative and heterosexual.

We welcome any papers which focus on the following topics:

1. Identity as a performative and political tool and/or as a site of political resistance and change
2. The work of gay/lesbian or drag performance artists who do not form part of the white, male/female and heterosexual/heteronormative matrix
3. Identity as a fluid and shifting construct in the theatre, the performing arts and literature generally
4. Cultural and literary works or works of art which resist fixed identifications and engender performative meanings/ways of 'reading'
5. The abject as a site of identification
6. Gender and identity formation
7. Sexuality as a performative and identificatory construct or mode of identification.

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The Sequential Art: Comics as a Cultural Nexus

"Comics are just words and images. You can do anything with words and images." Harvey Pekar

The phenomenon known as comics, bandes dessinées, graphic story or fumetti was first defined as sequential art by Will Eisner in his work *Comics and Sequential Art* (1985). Further inquiries were led by Scott Mc Cloud (*Understanding Comics*) or Benoît Peeters (*Lire la bande dessinée*) in trying to establish a theoretical framework for this mean of expression. After a long period of being perceived as a childish form of entertainment, nowadays the sequential art is a well-known and respected form of art and it has even became the field of academic research.

This panel aims to feature the transdisciplinarity of its subjects and its methods, to bring together different ways of approaches, and to highlight its numerous possibilities of cultural dialogue. The panel welcomes contributions regarding the following topics, but any other paper or subject related to sequential art are most appreciated:

- Mainstream, independent and underground comics traditions
- How comics have been a way of expression to social and historical subjects
- Theoretical and critical approaches of comics
- Otherness in comics: depiction of exotic places and alterity
- The Superhero prototype: a way of understanding the American way of life?
- The Space In Between. On Time and Space in comics. Phenomenological interpretations
- The connection between comics and architecture: François Schuiten – *Les cités obscures*
- Comics versus Movies

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