Diderot and 18th-Century Human Simulacra (Berlin, 5 Oct 17)

Freie Universität Berlin | Institut für Theaterwissenschaft | Grunewaldstr. 35 | 12165 Berlin-Steglitz | Room 103, Oct 05, 2017
Registration deadline: Oct 3, 2017

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The aim of the workshop is to explore the different aesthetical and anthropological dimensions of the “mannequin” metaphor in Diderot’s "Paradoxe sur le comédien," which Diderot introduces as a model for actors/actresses at the very beginning of his acting theory. Central questions of the workshop include, but are not limited to, the following: Why does Diderot use a tool for visual artists to exemplify his idea of the ideal actor/actress? What is the specificity of the “mannequin” compared to other types of human simulacra such as the statue, the marionette and the automat? In order to analyse this specific metaphor and to explore possible answers to these questions, the workshop will approach the subject from two angles:

The first approach consists of a comparative analysis between the “mannequin’s” function as an art tool for painters or sculptors and Diderot’s conception of the ideal actor/actress. Such an analysis implies a comparison between Diderot’s theoretical works on theatre and his theoretical writings on visual art, as for example his "Salons."
The second approach consists of a historical contextualisation of Diderot’s concept of the human body in the broader philosophical and scientific discourse of his time.

The workshop will focus on the “mannequin’s” specificity while comparing it to other human simulacra of that time, such as Jacques de Vaucanson’s famous automata or the moving statue of Condillac’s "Traité des sensations." The workshop will also discuss other forms of simulacra present in Diderot’s works, as they appear for instance in the "Encyclopédie."

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

09.45-10.00 Opening and Introduction

10.00-11.00 L’automate chez Diderot : le vivant et le mécanique (Aurélia Gaillard, Université Bordeaux Montaigne)

Coffee break

11.15-12.00 L’esthétique de la singularité : abstraction et figuration du personnage chez Condillac

et Diderot (Manuel Mühlbacher, LMU München)

12.00-12.45 Aesthetic and Scientific Concepts of 18th-Century “Mannequins” (Marie-Irène Igelmann, Freie Universität Berlin)

Lunch break

15.00-15.45 The "Encyclopédie," Similarity and the Simulacrum (Thari Jungen, Graduate School “Performing Citizenship,” Hamburg)

15.45-16.30 The Notion of Genius in Diderot’s "Salon de 1767" (Christian Hartwig Steinau, Freie Universität Berlin/LMU München)

Coffee break

16.45-17.30 Final Discussion

The workshop will be held in French and English. Please register via e-mail by October 3rd: marie.igelmann@fu-berlin.de

The workshop is organised by Marie-Irène Igelmann (Freie Universität Berlin) in the context of the Dahlem Junior Host Program of the Dahlem Humanities Center.

Reference:
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