Gustave Courbet and the Narratives of Modern Painting (Munich, 27–29 Mar 19)

Carl-Friedrich-von-Siemens-Stiftung, Munich, Mar 27–29, 2019
Deadline: Apr 6, 2018

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Stephanie Marchal

Gustave Courbet and the Narratives of Modern Painting

Organized by Jun.-Prof. Dr. Stephanie Marchal (Ruhr-Universität Bochum) and Dr. Daniela Stöppel (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

The goal of the meeting is to substantively extend our view of the oeuvre of Gustave Courbet (1819–1877), to link the classical methodological repertoire of (art) history with newer approaches stemming from the history of science and to consider Courbet as an example to subject the art historiography of Modernity to a self-reflective examination.
Courbet's oeuvre and Courbet as a person play a key role in the constitution of aesthetic Modernity: his oeuvre can be used to establish "high modernism" and equally as a point of departure for a postmodern criticism challenging the teleological narrative of modernism. Thus, Corbet's name can be linked in equal measure to ideas such as authenticity, naivety, presence, immersion and self-referentiality, which are determinative for the modernist narrative, but also to ideas of the political artist who acts as part of society as has been stressed since the 1960s in social art history and, based on this, research focusing on the artist.

The study of Courbet thus does not only mean positioning his oeuvre within 19th-century art, but rather, in accordance with the main idea of our conference, taking a stand on modernity itself and in so doing reflecting on the role that art can or should play within Western societies.
A simple confrontation of modernist and postmodern perspectives does not seem to be very constructive in this context inasmuch as this would only perpetuate art-historical narratives. Instead, the goal of the planned meeting is not to one-sidedly endorse the one or the other camp, whether in relation to method or to the history of discourse, but rather to open a cognitive space permitting multi- and meta-perspective argumentation in decidedly (art)historical terms. This does not only make it possible to submit Courbet's role in the construction of (Post)Modernity to a fundamental examination; but also the other way round, the roles attributed to Courbet can paradigmatically shed light on the discourses of (Post)Modernity.

Due to this cognitive interest, in addition to recognized Courbet experts, scholars concerned with the history and exploration of Modernity in a more general approach shall also be invited.

The amalgamation of these discourses with newer empirical-historical findings of recent research on Courbet – new sources, attributions, revocations of attributions and new datings – is intended

to result in a questioning of standard narratives and to a new perspective on Courbet's work with special consideration of work groups such as landscapes and portraits that up to now have received little attention in research.

We are looking forward to contributions from visual culture studies, art history and subject-related disciplines (especially from graduate and postgraduate students).

Please send your abstracts (up to 400 words) and a short CV (up to 150 words) by APRIL 6, 2018 to:

daniela.stoeppel@lrz.uni-muenchen.de and Stephanie.Marchal@ruhr-uni-bochum.de

Reference:

CFP: Gustave Courbet and the Narratives of Modern Painting (Munich, 27–29 Mar 19). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 21, 2018 (accessed Oct 31, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/17429>.