

Surrealisms in and of Scandinavia (Oslo, 30 Nov 18)

University of Oslo, Nov 30, 2018

Deadline: May 15, 2018

Oystein Sjastad, University of Oslo

Surrealisms in and of Scandinavia

International Conference at the University of Oslo

Organized by the "Munch, Modernism, and Modernity" research group

Surrealism is without question one of the most influential and mutating intellectual and aesthetic practices emerging from the twentieth century. But "when" was Surrealism and "where" was Surrealism?

The movement was codified in Paris in the 1920s and '30s with André Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924) as its foundational marker. For Breton, a revolutionary condition of Surrealism was its internationalism. Its participants held a wide range of nationalities; and throughout the 1930s, with Paris as a node, it appeared as an artistic and cultural movement on every continent due to the applicability of its revolutionary ideals and artistic practices to a variety of political and cultural circumstances. As a global movement it is often measured against, or understood within, the evolving thinking and artistic strategies of Parisian Surrealism. Recent studies have called attention to the culturally specific practices that constitute Surrealism as a global movement, drawing attention to more complex narratives within a multitude of manifestations and activities, challenging the canonical notion of Parisian Surrealism.

What were the specific entanglements of Surrealism and Scandinavia? For example, in a neglected passage of the *First Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924), André Breton paid homage to Knut Hamsun. Quoting at length from his novel *Hunger* (1890), Breton attributed the notion of automatic delirium to the Norwegian author, thus championing his prose as a quintessential precursor to Surrealism. In 1894 August Strindberg, whom Breton in *Arcane 17* (1944) proclaimed to belong to a lineage of prominent revolutionary thinkers, published an essay in the Parisian magazine *La revue des revues*, declaring the need for a new art through the application of chance in artistic creation. In 1934, Vilhelm Bjerke-Petersen declared the need for a Surrealist revolution in Scandinavia, and a number of artists joined the movement, organizing talks and exhibitions, publishing books and periodicals as well as adapting Surrealist strategies into their own practices.

This conference seeks to invigorate these intersections, and to ponder how Scandinavia has been surrealist and vice versa. We wish to probe historical, aesthetic, formal and cultural discourses, – French and Scandinavian, or of other origin for that matter – which may shed light on the productive intersection of Surrealism and Scandinavia. We hope to complicate the traditional historical

narrative of “Scandinavian Surrealism” and to re-open and expand the question of Surrealism’s broader relevance to art and culture in and of Scandinavia.

Submission of papers

Papers are invited that consider the visual arts, cinema, literature, theater and performance, and common cultural sites; and that examine individual practices, networks, sites of diffusion, theory, ideology, patronage, genealogy, achronicity and legacy.

Proposals for this conference must include (in English)

- a) an abstract of maximum 300 words summarizing your argument;
- b) your academic resume;
- c) your full contact information including email.

Papers will be 20 minutes in length and will be followed by discussion.

Proposals should be sent to both pberman@wellesley.edu and oystein.sjastad@hf.uio.no by 15th of May 2018. You will be notified by 10 June 2018 of your acceptance.

This is the eighth conference organized and sponsored by the Munch, Modernism, and Modernity Research Group at the University of Oslo, the Munch Museum, and the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design in Oslo.

The selection committee consists of Mai Britt Guleng and Øystein Ustvedt of the National Museum; Ute Kuhlemann Falck and Jon-Ove Steihaug of the Munch Museum; Øivind Storm Bjerke and Øystein Sjøstad of the University of Oslo; and Patricia Berman of Wellesley College (US).

Reference:

CFP: Surrealisms in and of Scandinavia (Oslo, 30 Nov 18). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 13, 2018 (accessed Jul 6, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/17578>>.