

Empathy, Intimacy, and Ethics in American Art (Berlin, 5–6 Jun 18)

John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies Freie Universität Berlin (Berlin, Germany) Lansstraße 7-9, Berlin-Dahlem Room 340, Jun 5–06, 2018

Lauren Kroiz

Empathy, Intimacy, and Ethics in American Art

Do we feel ourselves by looking at objects? This two-day international symposium in Berlin returns to the late nineteenth-century German proposal that empathy (*die Einfühlung*) constitutes a way to understand aesthetic response. In contemporary usage, empathy implies the ability to share another person's feelings, offering the possibility of transcending social divisions through emotion. However, the word's complex life begins in an aesthetic theory of how human emotions project into optical forms. At a moment in which discussions of empathy seem to be in the air, it is all the more crucial to interrogate this aesthetic legacy.

Who feels themselves in which objects? Considering the relationships of visual perception, bodily touch, and emotional response, symposium speakers will offer new narratives and counter-narratives of empathy and intimacy that foreground the differences of power, race, ethnicity, and gender that mark the complex history of American art. Talks will range across art forms, styles, and periods, including nineteenth-century performances and neo-classical sculpture, early twentieth-century urban photography and Communist dance, post-war abstract sculpture by veterans in France, contemporary memorials to victims of police brutality, and social practice projects with refugees. We will consider empathy as a notion for opening connections, as well as highlighting the disconnections, among separated academic disciplines and national aesthetic histories.

PROGRAM

Tuesday, June 5, 2018

6:00 pm Opening Keynote

The Anarchy of Colored Girls Assembled in a Riotous Manner
Saidiya Hartman, Columbia University

Wednesday, June 6, 2018

10:15 am Welcome and Opening Remarks

Panel I: Models of Difference and Difference as Model

10:30 am - 12:00 pm

Art as a Social Tool

Katharina Oguntoye, Founder, Joliba Interkulturelles Netzwerk in Berlin e.V.

“Ethnicities-in-Relation”: Racial Triangulations, African America, and Global South Immigrant Communities in American Cinema

Heike Raphael-Hernandez, Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

Panel Chair: Dominique Haensell, Freie Universität Berlin

12:00 pm Lunch Break

Panel II: Performing Bodies

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

Greek Slave/Virginia Slave: Segregated Art History

Caroline A. Jones, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Max Planck Institute

“When we dance it is not a mere diversion or social accomplishment”: Communist Dance and Jazz

circa 1930

Larne Abse Gogarty, Terra Foundation for American Art Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Panel Chair: Jill H. Casid, University of Wisconsin, Madison

3:00 pm Break

Panel III: Abstraction and Materiality

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

U.S.A. Etranger: American G.I. Sculpture in Paris c. 1949

Lauren Kroiz (University of California, Berkeley, Terra Foundation for American Art Visiting Professor, Freie Universität Berlin)

“Burning All Illusion”: Abstraction, Black Life and the Unmaking of White Supremacy

Leigh Raiford, University of California, Berkeley

Panel Chair: Martin Lütke, Freie Universität Berlin

5:00 pm - 5:30 pm Closing Discussion

5:30 pm Break

6:00 pm Closing Keynote - Ernst Fraenkel Distinguished Lecture

To the Bone: Some Speculations on Touch

Hortense Spillers, Vanderbilt University

Sponsored by the Terra Foundation, this symposium is free and will be held in English.

Please register by email: culture@jfki.fu-berlin.de

For posters and additional information please visit:

<http://www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/en/faculty/culture/dates/Terra-Conference.html>

Reference:

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