CIHA Motion - Transformation (Florence, 1-6 Sep 19)

Florence, Italy, Sep 1–06, 2019
Deadline: Jan 31, 2019

The 35th CIHA World Congress presents a unique experiment: for the first time a CIHA congress will take place in two different locations and in two different moments: in Florence, Italy, in September 2019 and in São Paulo, Brazil, in autumn 2020. It is dedicated to the general topic of "Motion" and invites the international community of scholars to discuss fundamental aspects of art and architecture under this heading in a broad transcultural perspective, from earliest times to the present. The Congress is conceived as a strong collaboration between the two national CIHA committees, who are responsible for their respective venues and will also create formats for a dialogue between the two events such as joint sessions in each place. The venues focus on two major, though not mutually exclusive aspects of Motion: Transformation in Florence and Migrations in São Paulo. The two committees are pleased to announce this intense collaboration and are looking forward to an extraordinary transcontinental debate about the most challenging concerns of art history and related fields today.

Motion: Transformation
(Florence, 1–6 September 2019)

Migrations
(São Paulo, 13-18 September 2020)

CIHA FLORENCE 2019 – MOTION: TRANSFORMATION

The Florentine venue of the 35th CIHA congress proposes the title Motion: Transformation as an invitation to study the specific "life" of artworks, artifacts and images: animation, "lifelyness", efficacy or "emanation" are phenomena that in many cultures, since prehistoric times, are linked to crafted objects, images or rites. Be it religious energy, magical qualities or aesthetic vivification, artifacts are produced, dwell and could be consumed in a great variety of attributed forms of agency. One figure the Florentine congress wants to rethink in this horizon is that of the artist or "maker", seen in a transcultural perspective. We might refer to the myth of Daedalus, legendary creator of automata, or to Neo-platonic philosophy of late antiquity, according to which the animated simulacrum represents an inescapable element of the link between humans and the cosmos. In subsequent Christian thought, instead, such connections could contribute to the negative conception of the idol. This is only one example which shows the multiple constellations of objects and images in specific world views and cultural practices, often connected to astrology or political the-

ologies. The combination of art historical and anthropological expertise could be a strong point of the congress, to better understand the position of the “animated” object in the formation and transformation of collective identities and in transcultural negotiations. In fact, the cross-cultural gaze can be a means to “vivify” the images and symbols of other cultures of the present or the past, even if often in negative terms as diabolic or inhabited by demons. On the other end of the scale is a discourse of art that attributes to works, images and created objects virtues which are due to a specific aesthetic quality of matter and shape. This can involve an appreciation of subtle crafting and ingenious vivification of representations from nature and the social world. The metamorphotic dimension of such artistic creation (making one matter appear in another) contributes to the celebration of a work as magical and animated but it is important in the congress to differentiate these various dimensions, even if they are shared by many cultures. The congress invites comparative approaches or explorations of dynamics of connectivity. In its broad chronological and geographical range it is specifically interested in epochal changes and the processes of globalization under colonial or postcolonial premises.
In the context of new production methods developed during the Industrial Revolution artistic practices were cast out, whereas the aura could shift from the work of art itself to the figure of the creator. One may even think of terms of social theories such as alienation and estrangement which in their negation evoke concepts of creative work. Already evident in early movements from Romanticism to Symbolism, this “metamorphosis” was pushed further by the twentieth century through the contributions from the anthropological perspective and psychoanalytic mythologies.

The CIHA Italia Committee invites proposals for 8 of the 9 Sessions of the 35° CIHA World Congress Motion: Transformation

Sessions:
[1] The mystical mind as divine artist: visions, artistic production, creation of images through empathy
[2] Matter and materiality: from removal to re-enactment
[3] Art and nature. Cultures of collecting
[4] Art and religions
[5] De/sign and writing
[6] The eye and the hand, from project to product
[7] Artist, power, public
[8] Artists, critics, and Viewers

---

[1] The mystical mind as divine artist: visions, artistic production, creation of images through empathy

Chairs: Akira Akiyama (University of Tokyo), Giuseppe Capriotti (Università di Macerata), Valentina Zivkovic (Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrad, Serbia)

Descriptions of mystical experiences have been mostly analyzed to highlight the relation between visions and real images: in recounting their visions, in effect, mystics let their visual heritage emerge, that is, the images they love to use in their private meditation and the popular iconography of their territory: they see with their minds what they have already seen with their eyes. In this panel, however, we aim to investigate the figure of the mystic as an inspired artist, able to model and build his own work of art entering in empa-

thy with his visual and intellectual heritage. Like a painter or a sculptor, the mystical mind selects literary sources and stylistic and iconographic models to build the mental image and create his work of art. Recently, in effect, such mystical experiences have been interpreted as the extreme outcome of an ability to look deep down, learned through practice, through a look educated in the use of images and a mind skilled in “inner visualization”. Going beyond this perspective and analyzing the production of images through empathy, should be possible also to verify if and how the “embodied simulation” works not only in the fruition of a work of art, but also in the field of the production of images, originated from the mystical experience.
Therefore, for this panel, we intend to collect papers that investigate the figure of the mystic as a “divine” artist, able to product effective mental images (often linked to real pictures), which are often described in reports of visions or in devotional writings.

The themes and subjects for discussion could be:
- visions and the visual arts
- the meaning of the visions and mental images in hagiographic literature
- transformation and censorship of works of art in visions
- visions and vivification of works of art
- visions and “inner visualization”
- visions and mnemonic technique
- visions, embodiment, embodied simulation
- comparative studies on visions between different religious cultures

---

[2] Matter and materiality: from removal to re-enactment

Chairs: Francesca Borgo (University of St Andrews, Scotland), Riccardo Venturi (Villa Medici, Roma)

Shaping and transforming matter into an “eternal”or “ephemeral” work has always been one of the constituents of art discourses. Vice-versa in modernity matter has lost its importance and the category of obsolescence emerges in both industrial design and artistic production, as a manifesto of historical vanguards and of post-Second World War’s architecture. However, at the same moment in which conceptual art apparently dominated the artistic scene, other experiences re-enacted dynamics of body and matter, claiming their centrality. Today matter and discourses of materiality have become a central concern of the arts as well as of art histories, globally.

---

[3] Art and nature. Cultures of collecting

Chairs: Marco Collareta (Università di Pisa), Avinoam Shalem (Columbia University, NY)

Contemporary collections, de-hierarchized and “innocent”, according to the “modest manifesto for new museums” by Orhan Pamuk (2012), invite us to reread Julius von Schlosser‘s anthropological perspective, introduced in his studies dedicated to the Wunderkammer. From religious treasures to Cabinets of curiosities and art galleries, European collections became a display either of comparison, conflict or convergence between natural and human sciences, and a space for artifacts or natural devices from distant cultures. Metamorphosis is a key concept in all of these collections. In Modernity, collecting provoked an animated discussion to which we can refer to Aby Warburg’s Atlas, as well as to the ethno-anthropological contexts

beloved by Surrealists through to the archives of conceptual art and beyond. The session welcomes papers which will confront Western perspectives with those of other cultural horizons.

---

[4] Art and religions

Chairs: Mateusz Kapustka (Universität Zürich – Kunsthistorisches Institut, Swiss Confederation), Andrea Pinotti (Università degli Studi di Milano)

The session aims to discuss the role of artifacts and images in religious practices and thought, from cult images to iconoclasm, legends such as the myth of acheiropoieta and theurgical images, spiritual and sacrificial aesthetics across cultures and religions. What is the relation of images and relics, of artefacts and the making of sacred space? What is the role of human-shaped things in Islamic, Buddhist and other contexts? What are the functions of “animating” things and notions of metamorphoses in religion and “magic” in a transcultural and transreligious perspective? What is the contribution of the visual (and that of multisensorial staging or perception) to religious experience, collective or individual, and how does art foster religious imagination or critically respond to religion and magic?

---

[5] De/sign and writing

Chairs: Lihong Liu (University of Rochester, New York), Marco Musillo (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz)

The session aims to analyse, in a cross cultural perspective, the coincidence, convergence or differentiation between writing and drawing. On the one hand one might consider the achievements of calligraphy in Islamic and Chinese traditions; on the other hand, those of the didactic, prophetic and exegetical diagrams, including magical ones. What kind of connections can be found amongst these various traditions? How might we characterize the separation of figurative drawing and writing in Western and other cultures?

---

[6] The eye and the hand, from project to product

Chairs: Filiz Çakır Phillip (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto), Dario Donetti (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz)

The image of architecture as a representation of a three-dimensional object appears during the first industrial revolution through the planning stage and the production: once completed, the product conserves the distinctive signs of that process of metamorphization in an interplay of thought, matter and technique. But in the post-industrial era the primacy of the process has been replaced by the absolute power of the icon, which reduces the spatial and performative potential of architecture, steering it into the advertising jargon of goods for the planetary mass cultures.

---

[7] Artist, power, public

Chairs: Giovanna Capitelli (Università della Calabria), Christina Strunck (Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Erlangen)

The central aim of the session is to examine the relationship between art/the artist, power and the public through a new methodological perspective, drawing on concepts from the spatial and translational turns that have changed our understanding of the dynamics of transformation in historical and modern societies.

Works of art and architecture have always been used to establish and maintain power, on behalf of either an individual or a group or party, in political as well as religious contexts. In accordance with the theme of the 2019 CIHA meeting, 'Transformation', this session will focus on moments of crisis and change in which the creations of artists helped to transform inadequate systems or traditional views by positing new ideals or even utopias. The session invites papers that address the role of the arts in the transformation of societal structures, including political systems or power relations between distinct social groups. In this context the empowerment of women and ethnic or sexual minorities deserves special attention. The session will analyse the artistic strategies that engage with power structures (in terms of social class, gender, foreign/local identities, minority/majority status, religious/lay society etc.): how do artists create, enforce, or challenge these?

Works of art have the potential to make intellectual concepts 'come alive'. In the most successful examples, they not only visualize, but vivify ideas. The session proposes to study the artistic means through which artists give shape to their concepts of power and communicate them to the beholder: how do they involve and attempt to persuade the public?

The participants of the session are invited to consider these questions within the theoretical framework provided by the spatial and translational turns. The 'spatial turn' has not only shifted attention to regions and topics previously regarded as marginal, but it has also stressed the necessity of focusing on the interaction between human and non-human 'agents'. Social space is created via the interaction of people, objects and social goods that are present at a given site. In sociological studies, this approach has yielded important results regarding power relations within cities, but it can also be employed to analyse larger or smaller spatial entities from an art-historical point of view. Questions to be considered are: with what intentions did patrons and artists place buildings or works of art at specific sites? How do these works condition social interactions that take place with, within or around them? In what ways do they contribute to the dissemination or deconstruction of ideas, political ideologies or religious beliefs that aim to shape, stabilize or reform the society with which they operate?

In discussing these questions, it is useful to draw on some key concepts developed by the proponents of a 'translational turn'. Historians like Peter Burke and Peter Burschel have underlined the fact that power is the result of inter-cultural negotiations in which acts of translation occur on numerous levels (not least via artistic 'translations' and visualizations of concepts of rulership). Further inspiration may be derived from postcolonial theory to which such positions are closely linked. Homi K. Bhabha highlights the 'third space' of negotiation in between cultures, acts of cultural mimicry and hybridisation as means of resistance, while Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak focuses particularly on women's roles and the 'female subaltern'. Their ideas can serve as a starting point for rethinking the session topic in a global perspective by studying the means through which artists try to make certain more or less powerful persons or groups 'speak out' in public.

The session intends to create a productive dialogue between scholars working on similar questions with reference to different countries and epochs. The organizers would particularly like to highlight the following fundamental approaches:

- the contribution of old and new visual media to the analysis, questioning, subversion, and destruction of established power structures
- the role of the artist and his negotiation with power in the transformation of societal structures
- the artist and the involvement of the public
- artistic 'translations' and visualizations of concepts of rulership.

Examples of relevant topics include, but are not limited to:

- the role of colonial architecture in enforcing political and/or religious domination
- the artistic strategies deployed by Roman missionaries, the 'Typographia Medicea' and 'crusading' politics in order to introduce societal change abroad
- international travel of both students as well as artistic concepts and practices in fine arts academies as a means to determine the relationship between art and power in Europe, the United States, and Latin America
- the role of the great port cities in the negotiation of political and economic contacts with foreign powers as well as in shaping cultural interaction and power relations
- museums as sites of cultural negotiation (for instance in 'ethnographic' museums in Europe/North America and the new 'mega-museums' in Asia and the Middle East).

This session welcomes case studies as well as theoretical approaches that refine or redefine the concepts outlined above.

---

[8] Artists, critics, and viewers

Chairs: Rakhee Balaram (University at Albany, NY), Flavio Fergonzi (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa)

The session invites to discuss the general statement according to which the separation between the work of art and art criticism has disappeared. The notions of authenticity, reproduction, and forgery have long been topics of discussion; furthermore the eyes of the artist, critic and viewer might now appear to be interchangeable. The session aims to investigate to what extent this new hegemony of criticism has until now undermined not only historical paradigms but also the very practice of art history.

GENERAL AND PRATICAL INFORMATIONS

We invite proposals for 20-minute papers, that will be followed by 10-minute discussions. Please submit a 350/450-word abstract, a short bio (max. 100 words) and a cv as a single PDF file by uploading it at the following link:
http://www.ciha-italia.it/florence2019/2018/04/07/upload-your-paper/

Please note that your abstract needs to have a concise title, pertinent to the content of you talk, since it will be featured in the conference program and on social media.
If you have further documents that you wish to attach to your proposal (references, list of publications, institutional affiliation etc.), we kindly ask that you combine them to the proposal, bio and cv and send everything with a single-file upload.

If you are presenting a proposal for a paper, please remember that it is meant to be pertinent in the topics

of the session for which you are applying.
If you apply for a poster presentation instead, it is not necessary to indicate a specific session.
Papers can be delievered in any language, however we ask a copy of the contribution in English, to be projected on a screen during the talk. The debates will be moderated in English.

Deadline for submissions: January 15th, 2019
Notification of acceptance: February 28th, 2019
Draft paper submission: in the two months prior to the conference the conveners
will be in contact with the Congress organizers and the Chairs to discuss draft
versions of their papers/posters.

NOTE:
Young scholars, graduate students, PhD students and candidates have the opportunity to attend the Congress presenting a Paper or a Poster, qualifying for grants provided by the Getty Foundation - Los Angeles. Applicants for the Getty Grants should not upload their proposals using the platform. They are instead kindly asked to submit their proposals and documents sending an e-mail at the following address: firenze2019@ciha-italia.it and pointing out they are applying for the Getty Foundation grants.
To the grant holders will be given more information once they will receive an acknowledgement of receipt.

The awarded Papers and Posters will be published on the CIHA Italia Firenze 2019 website as content proceedings of the Congress.

Applicants coming from low GDP countries worldwide are especially welcome.

-CIHA plans to refund Speakers with a grant of about 500 € that will be handed at their arrival in Florence.

-The registration fee for Speakers is of 150 €. It includes congress kit, participation in all the sessions, Opening cocktail and keynote speeches. More information on terms of payment will be given soon.

-The registration fee for young scholars, PhD students and graduated students is of 80 €.

-Travel and accommodation: travel organization will be up to each Speaker, as well as the accommodation option (the CIHA Italia Committee Secretariat will provide soon a list of suggestions). It is expected that candidates are able to seek funding in their own country to cover travel and accommodation expenses.

For any further information on the application procedure please contact us using the following email address: firenze2019@cihaitalia.it
or visit the Websites:
- http://www.ciha-italia.it/florence2019/2018/04/07/sessions-papers/
- and http://www.ciha-italia.it/florence2019/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/cfp.pdf
Deadline for submissions: January 15th, 2019.

Reference:
CFP: CIHA Motion - Transformation (Florence, 1-6 Sep 19). In: ArtHist.net, Dec 17, 2018 (accessed Jan 10, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/19795>.