

Indigenous Epistemologies and Artistic Imagination (Barcelona, 24–25 Oct 19)

Barcelona, Oct 24–25, 2019

Deadline: May 12, 2019

Art, Globalization, Interculturality @ University of Barcelona

1st INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE "Indigenous Epistemologies and Artistic Imagination"

Venues:

Aula Magna, Faculty of Geography and History, Universitat de Barcelona (Montalegre 6); MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (Plaça dels Àngels 1).

Direction: Anna Maria Guasch (UB)

Co-direction: Nasheli Jiménez del Val (AGI)

Coordinators: Juan Vicente Aliaga, Christian Alonso, Julia Ramírez Blanco, Pablo Santa Olalla

Organized by: AGI (Art, Globalization, Interculturality), Universitat de Barcelona

Indigenous situated knowledges are increasingly being recognized as an urgent voice in global debates on natural resources, sustainability, heritage, governance, representation, and social justice. Given the current world situation, in which migration, poverty, discrimination and other social forces are compounded by natural disasters and anthropogenic climate change – dismantling any humanist ideals of peace and prosperity –, indigenous epistemologies have become an alternative for re-thinking what Arjun Appadurai has termed an “emancipatory policy” that could address the asymmetries in the distribution of resources, capital, and power in what is now a clearly destabilizing global landscape.

How may a position of marginality become a space of power in our contemporary world, a possibility that seems even more relevant today as we contemplate the broad resurgence of indigenous societies in multiple regions and forums? How do indigenous claims to self-representation and cultural production challenge current Western-hegemonic ways of belonging and looking at the world? Seen through the lens of an as-yet unfinished process of decolonization in which “the indigenous” is now being activated and understood through different social, political and aesthetic platforms, contemporary indigenous artistic agents and activists share complex and often conflicting agendas that signal potential points of tension and resistance in the current global scenario.

The First International Conference “Indigenous Epistemologies and Artistic Imagination” aims to address the recent inclusion of “indigenous thought” in the global art world by seeking to create links between non-Western knowledges, indigenous epistemologies and the artistic imagination,

deploying an approach that Rosi Braidotti terms “non-Western indigenous humanism” or “indigenous knowledge systems”. Within the framework of a critical humanities that addresses our current posthuman landscape, Braidotti poses a series of questions that echo our aim to link post-colonial theories, environmental humanities and indigenous epistemologies:

What do we make of the fact that so few institutional patterns have emerged around feminist / queer / migrant / poor / de-colonial / diasporic humanities? What are the actual implications of these deterritorializations for both the posthuman knowing subject and her disciplinary practice? How can we negotiate the paradoxical confluence that tenses a certain fagocitation of “other” epistemologies by (Western) academia and the will – or need – of some communities to gain ground in the social sphere in order to make their demands visible? These are some of the central questions that we aim to discuss through a trans-disciplinary stance in what we might call the rhizomatic field of contemporary knowledge production.

Panel 1: Indigenism(s) / Indigeneity: A Conceptual Genealogy of “The Indigenous”

Keynote Speaker: Nasheli Jiménez del Val (Art, Globalization, Interculturality)

Moderator: Julia Ramírez Blanco (Universitat de Barcelona)

This panel aims to critically consider the concepts of “the indigenous”, indigenism, and indigeneity by providing a genealogy of the terms in different geographical and historical contexts. What function do those terms continue to serve in a cultural push for decolonization? What sites of situated agency do identifiers such as “aboriginal peoples”, “First Nations”, and “pueblos originarios” mark? Taking into account both hegemonic discourses of indigenism and practices of indigenous strategic resistances, this panel seeks to discuss the deployment of these concepts as epistemological tools for cultural (self)representation.

Panel 2: Curating [INSERT PREPOSITIONS HERE] Indigenous Cultures

Keynote Speaker: Katya García Anton (Director of the Office for Contemporary Art Norway, OCA) and Ándre Somby (Writer and Sámi Yoiker)

Moderator: Pablo Santa Olalla (Universitat de Barcelona)

Western epistemology is attached to subject-object relations which are linear, usually regulated by a single preposition (‘of’, ‘with’, ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘at’, ‘from’, ‘by’, ‘after’, and so on). As prepositions express the relations between elements, we can imagine a prepositional thinking that switches every time the relational convention between the elements that it manages changes. Do non-Western epistemologies compel towards a prepositional displacement of thought? How does this switching affect the curatorial? Instead of theoretically wondering (once again) if it is possible to decolonize Western institutions such as the museum or the art system, this panel seeks to present practical cases that interweave curatorship and indigenous cosmologies. From the politics of hearing to taking political action; from “walking in the other’s shoes” to taking advantage of exoticization; what actions, advocacies, cares, catalysts, dispositifs, displacements, processes, and strategies do the curatorial employ when engaging with so-called “non-Western” cultures? What are the hazards?

Panel 3: The Political Cosmogony of the Jungle

Keynote Speaker: María Belén Saéz de Ibarra (Director of Museo de Arte de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia)

Moderators: Juan Vicente Aliaga (Universitat Politècnica de València) and Anna Maria Guasch (Universitat de Barcelona)

This panel will address, through the scope of the museum-as-institution and contemporary curatorial practices, how the thought of the modern European enlightenment has been configured in opposition to indigenous atavistic thought understood as the unconscious of an ancient primitive race that holds a secret: the living. A secret that science cannot unveil. Only culture and imagination are capable of approaching this issue of universal dimensions.

Panel 4: Encounters among Ethics, Aesthetics and Epistemologies

Keynote Speaker: Ursula Biemann (Artist) and Hernando Chindoy (Inga Leader)

Moderator: Christian Alonso (Universitat de Barcelona)

How might artistic imagination and indigenous epistemologies engage in a generative collaboration to rethink disciplinary practice, working together for the continuous task of decolonizing thought? Indigenous groups—human and non-human—embody different conceptual universes that significantly challenge our stratified, dualistic systems of reference. How might these “other” conceptual universes become the seedling for a reconsideration of the metaphysical schemes that inform human sciences, anticipating a more-than-humanist ontological turn? In what ways could this endeavour benefit from a creative practice defined by a permanent recreation of subjectivity from which new social realities can be forged?

Scientific Committee:

Anna Maria Guasch (Universitat de Barcelona)

Nasheli Jiménez del Val (Art, Globalization, Interculturality)

Belén Saéz de Ibarra (Director of Museo de Arte de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia)

Katya García Anton (Director of the Office for Contemporary Art Norway)

Ursula Biemann (Artist)

Juan Vicente Aliaga (Universitat Politècnica de València)

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Collaborating Entities:

Faculty of Geography and History, Department of Art History, Universitat de Barcelona.

MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

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and Competitiveness.

Research Group GRC: Art, Globalization, Interculturality AGI/ART II (2017 SGR 577), Generalitat de Catalunya.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Scholarly papers, creative projects, and other non-traditional presentations exploring the aforementioned topics are welcome. An abstract (300 words) and a short biography (300 words) must be submitted to IndigenousEpistemologies2019@gmail.com by 12 May, 2019. Please indicate in your message which panel you are submitting your abstract to.

Authors will be notified of their acceptance for a panel by 15 July, 2019. Presenters must kindly confirm their participation by 31 July, 2019.

Please note that at this time the conference organizers are not able to provide travel grants or accommodation stipends for presenters.

Reference:

CFP: Indigenous Epistemologies and Artistic Imagination (Barcelona, 24-25 Oct 19). In: ArHist.net, Mar 27, 2019 (accessed Jul 16, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/20486>>.