

Counterhistory (Berlin, 13 Jul 19)

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin - Institut für Kunst- und Bildgeschichte, Jul 13, 2019

Andrew Witt

Abstract: This conference spotlights the ways in which artists, critics, and historians have mobilised critical methods and methodologies against the rising tide of authoritarianism and illiberal populism. Featuring a wide range of projects — from the militant image to secret and clandestine works and networks — the one-day conference, Counterhistory: Latent and Underground Currents in American Art, aims to articulate new forms in the writing and research in art history. The goal of the event is to rethink the notion of the underground as an evocative terrain for thought and struggle, in particular, the peculiar ways through which images and objects are historically obscured and silenced but emerge, unexpectedly, out of states of latency. The conference seeks to make sense of these forms of delay, resurrection and survival.

The proposition to think counterhistorically presupposes a renewed engagement with method. The principle question this conference seeks to address is the following: how to reactivate repressed aesthetic projects and social forms as an act of political reorientation? As a way to rethink the standard narratives on modern American art, we encourage papers that closely consider the forking paths and broken links in the life world of objects and images. The project is premised on developing new strategies to respond to the countermovements demanded by the object of study as a means to identify and explore the elisions of official history.

Keynote: Molly Nesbit (Vassar College)

Speakers: Larne Abse Gogarty (Slade School of Fine Art), Eric de Bruyn (Freie Universität Berlin), Afonso Dias Ramos (Forum Transregionale Studien, FU Berlin), Leigh Raiford (University California, Berkeley), Stephanie Schwartz (University College London), Blake Stimson (University of Illinois at Chicago), Andrew Witt (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)

Organized by Andrew Witt (Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow, Terra Foundation for American Art, HU Berlin) and Afonso Dias Ramos (Forum Transregionale Studien, FU Berlin).

The event is wheelchair accessible.

Please register for the event here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/counterhistory-latent-and-underground-currents-in-american-art-tickets-62999006725>

Schedule:

10:00 – Welcome: Charlotte Klonk (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)

10:15 – Introduction: Andrew Witt (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin) and Afonso Dias Ramos (Forum Transregionale Studien)

Panel 1:

10:30 – Blake Stimson (University of Illinois, Chicago)

Late Latent Enlightenment

11:00 – Larne Abse Gogarty (The Slade School of Fine Art)

For your own security: Cady Noland's containments and conspiracies

11:30 – Discussion

12:00 – Lunch break

Panel 2:

13:00 – Andrew Witt (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)

Counterhistory: Agnès Varda in California

13:30 – Stephanie Schwartz (University College London)

Martha Rosler: Seeing the Screen

14:00 – Discussion:

14:30 – Coffee break

Panel 3

15:00 – Leigh Raiford (University of California, Berkeley)

Archives of the Underground: The Eldridge and Kathleen Cleaver Family Photography Collection

15:30 – Eric de Bruyn (Freie Universität Berlin)

Life Underground: Subterranean Environments in Post-War Art

16:00 – Discussion

16:30 – Break

Keynote lecture:

16:45 – Molly Nesbit (Vassar College)

Marcel Duchamp Underground

17:30 – Respondent

18:00 – Discussion

Reference:

CONF: Counterhistory (Berlin, 13 Jul 19). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 13, 2019 (accessed Jul 5, 2025),
<<https://arthist.net/archive/21070>>.