

Future States: modernity and national identity (23 Mar – 5 Apr 20)

A nearly carbon-neutral conference (NCNC), hosted by the Centre for Design History, University of Brighton, Mar 23–Apr 5, 2020

Deadline: Nov 4, 2019

Tim Satterthwaite

Future States explores the projection of modern national identities in magazines from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. The scope of enquiry is global: we are looking to capture the distinct and intertwined histories of magazines in all corners of the world, and to bring together a worldwide community of magazine researchers. But we are doing so in a radically new way.

The event is a nearly carbon-neutral conference (NCNC), a model pioneered by UC Santa Barbara in 2016, and developed in a series of environmental conferences over the past three years. This will, to our knowledge, be the world's first NCNC in the history of art/visual culture. Running for two weeks (23 March – 5 April 2020), the conference has no physical venue, and its participants do not, on this occasion, meet in person. In place of the concentrated spatial and temporal unity of a conventional conference, Future States offers a more expansive (asynchronous) online event: panellists record a 20-minute video or PPT recording, which is submitted to the organisers in the weeks leading up to the launch. Over the two weeks of the live event, the conference website will host multiple keynotes, panel presentations and curated Q&As; web pages will include a comprehensive database of publications in magazine studies, links to global research centres and archives, and a noticeboard for worldwide research projects. Future States will be a landmark event in magazine studies, and provide a permanent online resource for twenty-first century scholarship.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, ideals of technological modernity and American consumerism had a normative influence on cultures across the globe: magazines in Europe, the US, Latin America, and Asia, inflected a shared internationalism and technological optimism. But there were equally powerful countervailing influences, of patriotic or insurgent nationalism, and of traditionalism, that promoted values of cultural differentiation. Future States explores these dialectical constructions of ideal modernity in the magazines of different countries, exploring how national cultures drew on – or resisted – currents in international modernism, and also informed and constituted this global culture: for example, Garcia Cabral's extraordinary covers for the Mexican weekly *Revista de Revistas* brought Art Deco to Latin America, and also presented a distinctive Latin American modernism to an international audience. Modern magazines embodied these dynamic cultural dialogues in their visual images and textual culture, offering a vision of what Partha Mitter calls the "decentred" modernism of the global twentieth century.

Under the general theme of modernity and national identity, and the visual and textual projection

of these ideals, Future States will present an eclectic, broad-based enquiry. Conference panels will explore periodicals from the late nineteenth century through to the end of the Second World War, taking in both mass-market and specialist titles.

Please send an outline (c. 300 wds) of a 20-minute presentation, and a copy of your current CV to: t.m.satterthwaite@brighton.ac.uk by 4 Nov 2019. Conference presentations can be in any language (but would need to be professionally subtitled in English); Q&As will be in English. If you have any queries, please feel free to contact us at: info@futurestates.org

Conference organisers:

Dr Tim Satterthwaite (University of Brighton)

Professor Andrew Thacker (Nottingham Trent University)

Reference:

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