

Ghostly Social Aspects of Cinema (Maastr. 14-16 Apr 05)

Kim Thehu

Jan van Eyck Event:

The Ghostly Social Aspects of Cinema
Film and Biopolitics

14 - 16 April 2005

Jan van Eyck Academie
Academieplein1
6211 KM Maastricht

From Thursday 14 to Saturday 16 April (inclusive) the Jan van Eyck Academie organises the conference The Ghostly Social Aspects of Cinema. The conference will approach post-classical and post-avant-garde film work from a biopolitical viewpoint. Speakers will be Sabeth Buchmann, Helmut Draxler, Stephan Geene, Drehli Robnik, Katja Diefenbach, Tanja Widmann, Eric de Bruyn, Clemens Krümmel and Bert Rebhandl.

Cinema's mythical universe is strongly affected by metaphors of life and death. To invade life, to engender or to preserve it, and even to remove it from the surface of living bodies are common phrases in film theory. They can be understood as final fulfilments of the avant-garde's old dream of reconciling art and life. The biopolitical approach, initiated by Michel Foucault in the 1970s, allows a less mythical understanding of the issue. It questions critically any conception of life and death as a-historical moments of the human condition, and rather connects them to modern and contemporary modes of production, economic and social, and therefore raises the crucial question of representation.

Whereas classical cinema and the avant-garde struggled over the degree of reality in their representations – and over the reality of representation itself – nowadays, post-classical cinema and post-avant-garde film works seem to converge much more due to a common interest in loss and memory. They both got involved in reconstructing history in more or less nostalgic ways, in addressing the media's history, e.g. the 'Death of Cinema' in the discourses on New Media, or,

in shaping the history of their characters in terms of dramatic-traumatic experiences. Compare the different approaches of Steven Spielberg and Pedro Almodovar, of Roberto Begnini or Charlie Kaufmann, Stan Douglas or Isaac Julien. Instead of the 'immediacy' of classical narrative styles and of avant-garde strategies to overcome the distance of the viewers, the new 'film languages' seem to filter life and death and keep the viewers at a distance, aware of the ongoing mediation through history, social conditions and narration.

The questions raised at the conference will concern issues of history and representation: which and whose histories can or cannot be narrated, from which perspective, how is history itself shaped by narration? In the many attempts to represent the non-representable – the Holocaust or nuclear strikes – the issue no longer seems to be the authentic or false representations of reality in the past, but how history has become the battlefield of representations, constituting the present symbolic, economic and political realities.

Programme

Thursday 14 April

19:00

Christian Petzold

Ghosts (film screening)

Friday 15 April

12:00

Registration

13:00

Sabeth Buchmann, Helmut Draxler, Stephan Geene (advising researchers
Theory department, Jan van Eyck Academie)

- Introduction

14:00

Drehli Robnik (film historian, Vienna)

- Among other things: Cinema's vitalism of whatever-beings

15:30

Katja Diefenbach (political theorist, Berlin)

- Ghostly value-form

17:00

Break

18:00

Thomas Elsässer (film historian, Amsterdam)

- Body, Time, Agency: From post-modern to post-mortem cinema

Saturday April 16

11:00

Registration

12:00

Tanja Widmann (artist, Vienna)

- How Life invades Work (as Emotion). Abbas Kiarostami and Andrea Fraser.

13:30

Eric de Bruyn (art historian, Groningen)

- A Cinematic Politics of Translation: Lawrence Weiner's First and Second Quarter

15:00

break

16:00

Clemens Krümmel (art critic, Berlin)

- "I sow for all winds". Motifs of Bios, Movement and Fertility in Imamura's Cinema of Chaos

17:30

Bert Rebhandl (film critic, Berlin)

- The Biopolitical Aesthetic. Is there a Culture to 'Life and nothing But'?

Practical information

Language: English

Admission

15 euro / Students: 10 euro

Information & Registration

www.janvaneyck.nl/biopolitics

Questions:

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The conference is organized by Sabeth Buchmann, Helmut Draxler and Stephan Geene within the framework of their research project Film and Biopolitics which is being conducted at the Jan van Eyck Academie.

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