

Imaging Disaster

Internationales Wissenschaftsforum, Heidelberg, Mar 1–03, 2012

Noura Dirani

International Conference

"IMAGING DISASTER"

organised by

Prof. Monica Juneja (Heidelberg) and Prof. Gerrit Jasper Schenk (Darmstadt)

The violence unleashed by natural disasters exposes human beings to the most elemental of borderline situations. Human will and capacities, poised on the precarious frontier between nature and culture – a frontier defined differently by each epoch and culture – are forced to undergo an ordeal of life and death. Disaster – viewed as a condition of emergency – becomes the site of survival or failure not only of individuals but of entire communities. The conference will investigate specific culturally formed patterns of action and collective ways of coping brought forth by catastrophic events. This makes all disasters, even those which unfold in the heart of “nature”, profoundly socio-cultural happenings. For survivors the experience of disaster can become a search for meaning: in what terms is the encounter with elemental violence perceived, interpreted, described and interiorized? In order to express that which defies description, cultures take recourse to visual media: verbal images, myths, signs, symbols and films. Representations of calamities domesticate and contain them as icon. Various dimensions of the event - signs of imminent danger, the shock of disaster, destruction and ruin, escape and rescue, overcoming danger, victory over the elements, help for the victims – have generated a repertoire of motifs with a view to portray disaster through a wide range of media, across time and history. The analysis of the ways disasters are imagined and visualized is the theme of this conference, in two senses. First, it will address methodological questions pertaining to a transcultural vocabulary and iconography of disasters and second, it intends to systematically analyze the event of disaster and its medial representation as a complex and composite socio-cultural process.

Conference registration is only possible via email: dirani@asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de (Please understand that the number of guests is limited).

Thursday, March 1, 2012

9.00 Welcome

Monica Juneja (Heidelberg), Gerrit Jasper Schenk (Darmstadt)

9.30 to 10.15 Keynote Lecture

Jörg Trempler (Berlin)

Pictures of Catastrophe and the Turning Point in the History of Images in the 18th Century

10.15 to 10.30 Discussion

10.30 to 11.00 Coffee Break

Section I: Sign, Prediction and Vision

Chair: Monica Juneja (Heidelberg)

11.00 to 12.00

Charles Zika (Melbourne)

Visual Signs of Imminent Disaster in the 16th-Century Zurich Archive of Johann Jakob Wick

Peter Parshall (Washington)

Pieter Bruegel the Elder and the Towers of Babel:

12.00 to 12.30 Discussion

12.30 to 14.00 Lunch Break

14.00 to 15.00

Alexa Weik von Mossner (Fribourg)

Disasters Foretold: Climate Change Documentaries and the Anticipation of Catastrophe

Birgit Schneider (Potsdam)

Red Futures in Climate Change Expert Graphics

15.00 to 15.30 Discussion

15.30 to 16.00 Coffee Break

Section II: The Event

Chair: Michael Falser (Heidelberg)

16.00 to 17.00 Perception

Peter Ludes (Bremen) and Jianxi Hao (Bremen)

Key Visuals of Catastrophes in Chinese and German TV Annual Reviews since 2008

Martin Döring (Hamburg)

Imaging Comets: A Study on Visual Representations of Comets in French Canards at the Turn of the 16th and 17th Century

17.00 to 17.30 Discussion

18.00 Dinner

20.00 "Disaster Films"

Presentation by Sven Waskönig (ARTE)

Friday, March 2, 2012

Section II: The Event

Chair : Gerrit Jasper Schenk (Darmstadt)

9.00 to 10.30 Interpretation

Rosmarie Zeller (Basel)

„Kann uns der Himmel nicht bekehren, so soll uns doch die Erde lehren“. Reading Images of Natu-

ral Disasters in Wonderbooks and Prints of the Early Modern Period

Fabrizio Nevola (Bath)

Urban Responses to Earthquakes in Renaissance Italy: Images and Rituals

Nazrul Islam (Dhaka)

Natural Disasters as Depicted in Contemporary Arts of Bangladesh

10.30 to 11.00 Discussion

11.00 to 11.30 Coffee Break

Section III: Reaction (Relief, Solidarity, Coping)

Chair: Rudolf Wagner (Heidelberg)

11.30 to 12.30

Gabi Schlag (Frankfurt)

A Buddha to Protect. Nargis and the Visual Politics of Security

Kay Kirchmann (Erlangen)

Constructions of Otherness. Images of Pain, Suffering Stoicism during Japanese Disaster, 2011

12.30 to 13.00 Discussion

13.00 to 14.30 Lunch Break

Section IV: Memory

Chair: Diamantis Panagiotopoulos (Heidelberg)

14.30 to 15.30

Greg Bankoff (Hull)

The Ascetics of Danger: Seismic Architecture through the Ages

Daniel Levy (New York)

The Mediat(iz)ation of Disasters and the Cosmopolitanization of Time

15.30 to 16.00 Discussion

16.00 to 16.30 Coffee Break

16.30 to 17.30

Gennifer Weisenfeld (Durham)

Laughing in the Face of Calamity: Visual Satire after the Great Kant? Earthquake

Jeffrey H. Jackson (Memphis)

Narratives of Destruction and Recovery in the 1910 Paris Flood

17.30 to 18.00 Discussion

18.00 Dinner

20.00 Photo Exhibition with Aric Mayer and Kazu Ahmed. Venue: DAI Heidelberg

Saturday, March 3, 2012

Section V: Prevention

Chair: Dominik Collet (Göttingen)

9.00 to 10.30

Charles Schencking (Hong Kong)

Constructing Japan's 1923 Earthquake Calamity for Relief and Reconstruction

Anna Andreeva (Heidelberg)

Divine Movers and Shakers: Conceptualising Disasters in Pre-modern Japan.

Pattaratorn Chirapravati (Sacramento)

Inundations: Images of Disaster in Southeast Asian Art

10.30 to 11.00 Discussion

11.00 to 11.30 Coffee Break

11.30 to 12.30 Final Discussion

12.30 Lunch

Reference:

CONF: Imaging Disaster. In: Arthist.net, Feb 17, 2012 (accessed Apr 19, 2025),
<<https://arthist.net/archive/2727>>.