100 Years of Abstract Art (Bremen, 9-13 May 13)

School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Jacobs University, Bremen, Germany, May 9–13, 2013
Deadline: Mar 31, 2012

Prof. Dr. Isabel Wünsche, Jacobs University Bremen

100 Years of Abstract Art: Theory and Practice
International Conference

Concept and Organization: Prof. Dr. Isabel Wünsche

It was one hundred years ago that the public for the first time was confronted with non-objective painting. The artists, including Wassily Kandinsky, František Kupka, Kazimir Malevich, and Piet Mondrian, are today widely known, and abstract art, in the broadest sense, is (still) one of the most viable artistic idioms of the twentieth-century in the Western world; it not only changed our understanding of the production, meaning, and reception of art in aesthetics and art history, it also found its way into the discourses in fields such as philosophy, psychology, history, cultural and media studies, and even politics.

The early pioneers of this non-objective art form recognized that art, far from being a means to merely reproduce visible reality, could be an expression of the absolute, a medium to advance human creative evolution and initiate spiritual renewal. The interwar period saw a secularization of such early abstractionist concerns; abstract art soon became the trademark of a modernist Zeitgeist, one shaped by urbanization, industrialization, rapid social change, major advances in science and technology, new modes of transportation, and global communication. Then, with the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany, the doctrine of Socialist realism in the Soviet Union, and the growth of Regionalism in the United States in the 1930s, abstract art found itself increasingly at the center of heated political debates that extended well into the Cold War era. The post-war period saw the emergence of Abstract Expressionism in the United States and the Art Informel movement in Europe; gradually, due to the efforts of art critics such as Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg and art historian Werner Haftmann, abstract art began to gain mainstream acceptance in the 1950s. The various movements of the 1960s and 1970s took abstract art beyond the medium of conventional painting, opening

up a wide range of new artistic possibilities. Most recently, the use of digital media by artists and the application of new methods of visualization in the life sciences, medical research, and nanotechnology in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, have moved the question of abstraction in art beyond the realm of art history and into the emerging field of visual studies.

The conference will examine the role that abstract art has played in visual art and culture of the last one hundred years with a particular focus on the following aspects of abstract art:
- Origins and concepts
- As style or process and concepts of creativity
- Metaphysical thought and modern science
- Art instruction and reform education
- Anthropology and concepts of interculturality
- Twentieth-century ideological battles
- Today and beyond (21st century)

We invite paper proposals to the sessions specified above from a variety of fields, including art history, philosophy, cultural history, visual culture, media studies, and practicing artists. Please submit an abstract (300 words) plus a brief CV (300 words) along with your contact information in one single Word or PDF file by March 31, 2012, to abstraction@jacobs-university.de

Reference:
CFP: 100 Years of Abstract Art (Bremen, 9-13 May 13). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 28, 2012 (accessed Nov 19, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/2798>.