

Thinking through Affekt (Maastricht, 8-9 Sept 2006)

H-ArtHist Redaktion

Thinking through Affect

A two-day symposium on body, affect, emotion and moving images

Friday 8 - Saturday 9 September

Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht

In Deleuze and Spinoza's view the body is not considered a substance but a kinetic and dynamic thing that is organised by "a capacity for affecting and being affected." Affect exists only as relation between two bodies and transgresses the borders between self and other, between subject and object. Affect takes place on an automatic level not consciously registered unless it is actualized into feeling or emotion. According to Brian Massumi affect operates on a 'superlinear' level that is registered by the skin and the visceral senses as 'intensity,' virtual and unqualified experience.

This symposium will closely draw on theories on visual media, especially cinema and media studies, since technological media confront us with forms of perception that are non-intentional and a-subjective, not subdued to the laws of representation and meaning. They can create a shortcut to sensual and bodily experiences and have the capacity to intensify, alter or distort the affective dimensions of an image, sound, voice, face or gesture. Since the meaning and intensity of an image are not necessarily congruent with each other, affect can be and is easily exploited for political or commercial use.

Apart from the philosophical and aesthetic discourse on affect and embodiment, recent findings in empirical psychology and neurobiology have shown that the effects of affect are real and point to an intelligence of emotions, as well as an intelligence of the body; they operate on a different level than that of the rational mind. How do non-conscious automatic reactions affect and shape the viewer's experience? How can we write and think about affect? Which concepts from philosophy and art theory but also from science can be useful? And how does this level of corporeal experience resonate with conscious emotions and with processes of recognition and interpretation?

Keywords:

- affect, feeling, emotion
- viscerality, tactility, synaesthesia, proprioception
- the body-mind as movement, process, becoming

- duration, intuition, memory
- affective mimicry and feedback reactions
- emotional and tactile contagion

Program:

Day one

10:30

registration

11:00

introduction by IIs Huygens (Theory Department, Jan Van Eyck Academie)

11:30

Barbara M. Kennedy (Film Studies School, University of Staffordshire)

Thinking ontologies of the mind/body relational: fragile faces and fugitive graces in the processuality of creativity and performativity

12:15

Monika Bakke (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan)

I'm too sad to tell you...the story of the Grizzly Man

13:00

Lunch break

14:00

Steven Shaviro (DeRoy Professor of English, Wayne State University, Detroit)

Back with an 808: affective expression in recent music videos

14:45

Maaïke Bleeker (Theater Studies, Amsterdam University)

'Hit Me, if You Can'; Martin, Massumi and The Matrix

15:30

Break

16:00

Lesley Stern (Dept of Visual Arts, University of California, San Diego)

Motility, transference and conversion: an exploration of cinematic affect as exemplified in Black Narcissus

Day two

11:00

Norman Bryson (Professor of Art History, University of California, San Diego)

Affect, Sensation, Empiricism

11:45

Tarja Laine (Media and Culture Dept, University of Amsterdam)
Eija-Liisa Ahtila's affective images in *The House*

12:30

Lunch break

13:30

Tim Stüttgen (Theory Dept. Jan Van Eyck)
Bodies that shatter: watching porns with Williams, Deleuze and Preciado. A reconsideration of Linda Williams' term 'body-genre'

14:15

Anna Powell (Sr Lecturer in Film and English, Manchester Metropolitan University)
Jack the Ripper's Bodies Without Organs: affect under the scalpel in *From Hell*

15:00 break

15:15

Erin Manning (director of The Sense Lab, Concordia University, Montreal)
How Leni Riefenstahl moves through fascism: from biopolitics to biograms

Admission: free

Language: English

Organisation: IIs Huygens
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Advance booking and online registration are recommended.
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Reference:

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