Anthology "Contemporary Art & Classical Myth"

Isabelle Loring Wallace

Contemporary Art / Classical Myth

Call for Abstracts: 9/30/2007

Due Date for Completed Papers: 9/30/2008

Ancient myth has always provided fertile ground for Western artists and theorists of the visual. Yet art historians tend to associate classical mythology with historical styles and only rarely with the art of the present. Indeed, current writing on contemporary art is, with few exceptions, curiously devoid of mythological content, despite demonstrable interest in myth on the part of several contemporary artists, ranging from earlier figures such as Louise Bourgeois and Cy Twombly to more recent arrivals such as Gregory Crewdson, Fred Wilson, Bill Viola, Ann Hamilton, and John Currin. While some artists' work invokes the power of classical mythology explicitly, as in an expressly narcissistic video by Patty Chang (Fountain, 1999) or an Orpheus-inspired installation by Felix Gonzales-Torres (Untitled (Orpheus, Twice), 1991), others gesture toward myth in more subtle ways, as do for example, Gerhard Richter's mirrored installations and paintings. Also of note is the preoccupation with myth on the part of several twentieth-century theorists and philosophers, all of whom have made a significant mark on the discipline of art history: Theodore Adorno, Maurice Blanchot, Hélène Cixous, Sigmund Freud, Herbert Marcuse, Jacques Lacan, Paul de Man, Louis Marin, Gayatri Spivak, et al.

In light of these and other connections, this anthology aims to explore (and to some extent establish) the multifaceted intersection of contemporary art and classical myth. Essays addressing this topic may concentrate on a single work or series as it relates to a specific myth or on a single artist whose work seems driven by an overarching agenda, for which a certain myth makes a particularly apt metaphor. Essays that employ myth for the purpose of grappling with dominant trends in contemporary art are also welcome, as are mythologically inflected meditations on the concept of the visual art object as theorized, deployed, and constructed within contemporary art and culture. Essays may focus on traditional as well as new

media, and contributions may adopt strategies not limited to the approaches outlined above.

Interested parties should send a 500-word abstract together with a curriculum vitae and brief bio to Isabelle Wallace and/or Jennie Hirsh by September 30, 2007. Completed essays of 5,000 words will be due September 30, 2008. Initial inquiries are welcome.

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Reference:

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