Canvases and Careers Today (Frankfurt aM 15-16 Dec 07)

Stefan Unterburger

Symposium: Canvases and Careers Today
Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Saturday, 15 December, 3 p.m. Aula, Städelschule
Sunday, 16 December, 2 p.m. Theater of Immanence, Portikus

This conference takes up the propositions of Harrison and Cynthia White's seminal study, "Canvases and Careers" (1965). It deliberately avoids the usual pessimistic accounts that deplore criticism's supposed powerlessness. Instead of mourning its obsolescence thereby adopting the perspective of a history of decay, we propose a different take on the situation. We want to assess the changes resulting from the current "market-imperialism" (Ulrich Bröckling) as structural and functional changes. As much as new competence profiles have emerged, criticism's function seems to be renegotiated as well. It is the premise of this conference that criticism is faced with new constraints AND new spaces of possibility. While it is certainly true that criticism has very little impact on the secondary market, it nevertheless represents a commodity that is highly in demand in other spheres since an economy based on knowledge production desperately wants to incorporate it.

Harrison and Cynthia White famously coined the term "dealer-critic-system". According to them, it replaced the academic system in late 19th century due to the special needs of the impressionist movement. We want to ask if it is still a "dealer-critic-system" that makes an artist's career? Wouldn't it be more precise to speak of a "dealer-collector-system"? There can be no doubt that we are currently faced with a high degree of mobility between the commercial and the institutional spheres. Presently clearly circumscribed competence profiles have become fluid. New types of critic-curators, collector-dealers or artist-gallerist-critics emerge everywhere. Is this a sign of an emancipatory end of a formerly rigid division of labor? Or does this enlargement of competence simply correspond to the postfordist call for flexibility and mobility?

We look forward to discussing these matters with you at our conference!

Please take note:
- No accreditation required.
- In the Theater of Immanence in Portikus seats are limited.

The Symposium is organized by the Institut für Kunstkritik,
Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste - Städelschule.
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Schedule:

Saturday 15th December

Aula, Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste – Städelschule,
Dürerstr. 10, 60596 Frankfurt am Main, Germany

3:00 p.m. Welcome: Daniel Birnbaum
Introduction: Isabelle Graw: Long live criticism!

3:20 p.m. George Baker: Late Criticism
3:40 p.m. Response: André Rottmann
Followed by discussion

4:30 p.m. Johanna Burton: More Than This
4:50 p.m. Response: Julia Voss
Followed by discussion

5:30 p.m. John Kelsey: Headless Criticism
6:00 p.m. Response: Merlin Carpenter
Discussion/End

Sunday 16th December

Theater of Immanence, Portikus, Alte Brücke 2,
60311 Frankfurt am Main, Germany

2:00 p.m. Resumé: Daniel Birnbaum/Isabelle Graw

2:10 p.m. Branden Joseph: Later than Late
2:30 p.m. Response: Tom Holert
Followed by discussion

3:00 p.m. Melanie Gilligan: The Contemporary Social Market.
3:30 p.m. Response: Isabelle Graw
Followed by discussion

4-4:30 p.m. END

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