

Towards a Synaesthetic Modernity (Wesleyan Univ, 29 Mar 2008)

Andre Dombrowski

On behalf of the organizing committee, Wesleyan University and Smith College, we are pleased to announce our symposium,

"Towards a Synaesthetic Modernity,"

to be held on

Saturday, March 29th, 2008, at Wesleyan University, 9:00am - 6:00pm.

<http://modernity.wesleyan.edu/>

This symposium examines the practical and conceptual exchanges between different artistic media-and painting and music in particular-in European art between 1860 and 1910. Revising existing narratives that equate painterly modernism with the purity and isolation of each artistic medium, this symposium focuses on the historical formulation of three concepts: synaesthesia, the Gesamtkunstwerk, and the idea that all arts aspire to the condition of music. While there has been a recent surge in scholarship related to these three concepts, the existing literature examines each one in isolation and normally within a specific national framework. Synaesthesia is most often associated with the writings of Charles Baudelaire and French modern art; studies of the Gesamtkunstwerk most often focus on Germany and the reception of the philosophy and music of Richard Wagner; while the elevation of music as a dominant art form has most often been discussed within the context of English aestheticism. This symposium seeks to make an original contribution by examining the inter-relationship between these three models of artistic interaction and by weighing their respective importance to the history of painterly modernism.

The related exhibition "Music and Modernism in the Graphic Arts, 1860-1910" at the Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University, organized by Clare Rogan, will be open from Friday, March 28 until Sunday, May 25. Hours: Tuesday - Sunday, noon - 4:00pm.

The event will be held at The Russell House, 350 High Street, Middletown CT 06459. If you would like to participate in the event, please register at our website, where you will also find directions. All talks are free and open to the public: <http://modernity.wesleyan.edu/>

PROGRAM SCHEDULE:

Saturday, March 29th

Coffee will be served from 9:00-9:30am

9:30-9:45am Introduction

André Dombrowski, Smith College

9:45-10:45am "Invisible Wagner"

Juliet Koss, Scripps College

10:45-11:45am "Interiorizing Wagner: the Nabis and the
Gesamtkunstwerk"

Katherine Kuenzli, Wesleyan University

Lunch break

1:15-2:15pm "Belgian Art Nouveau, or the Colonial Gesamtkunstwerk"

Debora Silverman, UCLA

2:15-3:15pm "Art, Music, Landscape: Synaesthesia and genus loci in
British Culture, 1900-1918"

Timothy Barringer, Yale University

Coffee Break

3:30-4:30pm "Listening to Der Sturm in Berlin"

Jenny Anger, Grinnell College

4:45-5:15pm "Music and Modernism in the Graphic Arts, 1860-1910"

A gallery talk at the the Davison Art Center with Clare Rogan, Curator
and Yonatan Malin, Dept. of Music, Wesleyan University

5:15-6:00pm Reception, Davison Art Center

This event has been jointly funded by Wesleyan University and Smith
College, as well as by the Departments of Art History, Music, Romance
Languages, and German Studies at Wesleyan University.

For further information, please contact Katherine Kuenzli
(kkuenzli@wesleyan.edu), or André Dombrowski (adombrow@smith.edu).

Reference:

CONF: Towards a Synaesthetic Modernity (Wesleyan Univ, 29 Mar 2008). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 7, 2008
(accessed Aug 1, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/30206>>.