

Uncontainable Materialities. Sculpture and its Mutable Bodies (online, 9 Jul 21)

Online/Goethe-University Frankfurt, Jul 09, 2021

Jenny Nachtigall

Uncontainable Materialities. Sculpture and its Mutable Bodies

A troubled relation to the materiality of sculpture runs deep in the history of art. It can be traced back to the persistent denials of ancient sculpture's polychrome skin, to anxieties of its backside and related demands of frontality, or to calls for suspending the exuberant physicality of its "theatrical" organisation of space. In its proximity to the tools, infrastructures and mundane materials that visibly and invisibly shape our lives – from brick and clay to aluminum and optical fiber – sculptural materiality always exceeded artistic codifications.

This study day engages with the myriad manifestations and promiscuous functions of an uncontainable materiality that has haunted theories of sculpture since the nineteenth century. Through a series of art historical, curatorial and artistic contributions, the one-day event will focus on how artists and art historians dramatized or downplayed sculptural mutability in the post-war era. What are the social, political and aesthetic implications of an object's material entanglement with the world? How have the hierarchies of race, gender, class or ability that define this world effected the production, reception and circulation of sculpture? What role has technology played in expanding the understanding of the medium beyond a coherent body? How and to what ends did artists mobilize the inherent instability of sculpture and its temporal conditions between art and objecthood?

In thinking through these and other questions the study day seeks to explore the past and present potentials of sculpture to unsettle art history's taxonomic impulses.

Programme

10.00. Stefanie Heraeus (Frankfurt): Welcome

10.15. Jenny Nachtigall (Frankfurt): Introduction

10.45. Patrizia Dander & Franziska Linhardt (Munich): Future Bodies from a Recent Past: An Exhibition in the Making

11.45. Antje Krause-Wahl (Frankfurt): Masculinity under the Dome - Sculpture and Reproduction c. 1970

12.30. break

1.30. June Crespo (Bilbao): Helmets. Recent and Future Works

2.15. Andrew Witt (Berlin): response

2.30. break

3.00. Stephanie Weber (Munich): Topologies and Spirits: On Senga Nengudi's Process

3.45. Briony Fer (London): Chronic Materialism

4.30. Closing Remarks

Click to enter Zoom event:

<https://uni-frankfurt.zoom.us/j/94812691977?pwd=aDdrR1NvTVo0bnZuS29sbUtJQmkxQT09>

The study day is organized by Jenny Nachtigall as part of her 2021 Chillida Visiting Professorship at the History of Art Department, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main. It is sponsored by the Etxepare Basque Institute.

Reference:

CONF: Uncontainable Materialities. Sculpture and its Mutable Bodies (online, 9 Jul 21). In: ArtHist.net, Jul 5, 2021 (accessed Mar 23, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/34529>>.