

## New Babel. Challenges of the Plural World (Barcelona, 4-5 Nov 21)

Online and Facultat de Geografia i Història, Universitat de Barcelona, Nov 4-05, 2021  
Deadline: Sep 6, 2021

Maria Bendito

Second International Symposium  
'New Babel. Challenges of the Plural World'

### Proposal

Historically, the myth of Babel has assumed responsibility for the geographical, cultural, and linguistic division. Moreover, it is proposed as an explanatory account of the origins of the concept of social. It represents the longing for the conquest of the utopian heaven and the consequent seizure of power to exercise a new order and subjugation; an attitude sanctioned by division, confusion, and diaspora. This historical problem, which in myth has its origin in the Judeo-Christian hermeneutic, explains, in the same way, many other historical phenomena such as that of translation understood as a tool of homogenization, restitution of unity and the penultimate of the exegeses of myth.

Starting with the ideas of conquest, punishment, difference and dispersion as its primary meanings, the meaning of Babel has expanded through the different historical phases until reaching our contemporary times.

This multiplication of meanings begins to become visible in parallel to the disintegration of the medieval theological world that had sustained its representation and meaning until the 16th century, to become a pictorial and literary object, transforming the tower of Genesis into a civil image, a permeable and undefined symbol of multiple identities.

From this moment on, Babel has served as a semantic framework for subsequent historical processes: from the exploration of the New World in the 16th century as the origin of global cartography, through the technological revolution of the 19th century, the commercial conquest of the sky in the 20th century, to the invasion of the virtual in life processes in the 21st.

In this prolonged diachrony, Babel remains a nuclear explanation for the why and how of the present day. Our current historical paradigm, which we call Globalization, has appeared as an attempt to twin the multiculturality that was mythologically born in Babylon. On the other hand, and as far as the visual formulation of the myth is concerned, the ubiquity and horizontal expansion of the virtual network has replaced the physical materiality of the tower and its aspiration and representation of the vertical axis.

However, Globalization as a process especially present in the western geography of the planet,

which has built so many vertical, national, racial, identity and historical towers of Babel, has proved futile, with great weaknesses, gaps and limits.

On this basis, the seminar aims to open a debate around various questions that will enable us to:

- re-conceptualize the ideas of social models, national identity, limits, transgressions...
- to think about current social dynamics and their translation into artistic practices
- relativize national approaches in favor of global cartographies
- decompose the hierarchical, chronological, or formal reading of history
- to expose examples of studies/practices based on the rhizomatic/cartographic model
- explore the potential of disorder and simultaneity as new methodologies
- reconsider cultural multiplication and difference as a valid social schema
- rethink the utopia/dystopia semantic arc today
- to hypothesize on Globalization as a real or transitional scenario
- to point out the value of the COVID-19 pandemic in the construction of a new social model
- to expose the evolutionary mismatch between technological development and policy management in our current scenario

Deadlines and conditions:

Individual or collective proposals are accepted.

Proposals must contain a title, abstract (500 words) and BIO/CV (250 words).

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Languages: Spanish and English

Duration of the presentation: 20 minutes

Deadline: until September 6, 2021

Keynotes November 4, 2021:

Isabel Valverde, Departament d'Humanitats, Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

Anthony Cascardi, Dean of Art and Humanities, University of California, Berkeley.

Keynotes November 5, 2021:

Joan Sureda, Departament d'Història de l'Art, Universitat de Barcelona.

Francisco Jarauta, Departamento de Filosofía, Universidad de Murcia.

Director:

María Bendito, Departament d'Història de l'Art, Universitat de Barcelona.

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Director:

Anna Maria Guasch

In collaboration with:

Departament d'Història de l'Art, Facultat de Geografia i Història, Universitat de Barcelona.

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