Dismantling the Body (online, 18-19 May 22)

Online, May 18–19, 2022
Deadline: Nov 20, 2021

Or Vallah, Ananya Sikand, Giordano Conticelli

Dismantling the Body: Possibilities and Limitations in Art Making

The Dismantling the Body: Possibilities and Limitations in Art Making Symposium (May 18th- 19th 2022) invites graduate students, early career scholars, and artists, to submit proposals for 20-minute presentations, performances, or moderated artist talks. Proposals should reflect on the limitations the body encounters in the art-making process, but also opportunities that such limitations offer. The symposium aims to foster transdisciplinary debate and is open to contributions that critically discuss and invite reflection on the role of the body, employing any chronological, geographical and/or methodological focus.

The Graduate Students of Art History (GSAH) at the University of Washington reckons with questions of access, diversity, equity, inclusion, and their implications on our field through our reading group, Dismantling the Canon. During the 2020-21 academic year, we hosted scholars and curators for a series of public lectures focusing on decoloniality. The Symposium will conclude our program for 2021-22, which will focus on the crossroads between art history, disability studies, and the sensorium. Disabilities, as part of the range of possibilities of human embodiment, offer new understandings and ways of being in the world and therefore expose valuable knowledge which we hope to expand on through the subject of art-making.

Throughout art's history, the human body has been a site of tensions, subject to regulations, overcoming or submitting to physical challenges, but also offering far-reaching opportunities for self-expression. Artists explore their bodies' restrictions by working with resisting materials and complex formats, performing in ways that put their bodies at risk, and using technologies to take the body beyond its capabilities. Viewed as an instrument of art-making, the artist's body offers a unique arena for questioning. At times, the body appears directly in artworks, as in self-portraits, performance art, or in castings of body parts, while at others, the finished artwork might obscure the role of the body as an instrument. Paintings and sculptures in an exhibition setting are typically disconnected from the sensorial act of art-making. This conference offers artists' embodied experiences as a source of knowledge that can lead to diverse understandings of human possibilities and invites speakers to explore new ways of reconnecting the act of making with its outcomes.

How can Performance Studies and Affect Theory help us think of the art-making process when observing a static artwork? How can bodily extensions, virtual and digital manifestations of the body shape and redefine arts practices? What changes can be observed in art-making in the cultu-

ral imagination, and how are these changes informed by social ideas of the body as shaped by Gender Studies, Queer Theory, and Critical Race Theory? How do religious and social roles enforced on the body in different localities and periods affect art-making practices? How might Cherríe Moraga's proposal of routing theory to the materiality and physicality of the body and in lived experience i.e. a "theory in the flesh" allow for new readings of the artist's body? Can José Esteban Muñoz's "disidentification," a worldmaking practice and performance of politics by and through which 'othered' bodies navigate mainstream culture enable cross-cultural and cross-historical scholarly engagements? This conference seeks new approaches to studying the body in the process of art-making, as well as its communities, performances, and subjectivities.

Proposals may consider, but also go beyond, the following topics:
- "Disidentification"
- Embodiment (sensory, political, transsexual)
- Performance/Performativity (including liturgy, courtierly practices)
- Religious or Social rules enforced on the body
- The artist and their extensions
- The digital, virtual, or non-human body
- The disabled body
- The disassembled or broken body, the body in pain
- The gendered or ungendered body
- "Theory in the flesh"

Please email proposals comprising of 200-word abstracts and 150-word biographies in English to gsah@uw.edu with Dismantling the Body and your full name as the subject by November 20th, 2021.

The symposium will take place online via zoom between May 18th-19th, 2022.

Reference:
CFP: Dismantling the Body (online, 18-19 May 22). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 19, 2021 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/35123>.