Art History and Sound (London, 2012/13)

The Courtauld Institute of Art, Research Forum, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN
Deadline: Sep 28, 2012

Ingrid Guiot

Art History and Sound - Workshop series: 'The Listening Art Historian'

Three workshops to be held on:
6 December 2012, 14 March and 30 May 2013 (10.00 – 12.00)

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Art historians constantly encounter traces of sound. These can take the form of notes in an illuminated manuscript, a textual echo of past noise and lost voices, or depictions of instruments, singers and dancers, captured on panel, canvas, paper, film or in wood, marble and bronze or spaces that have been specifically designed and built to embrace and amplify sound: pulpits, choir stalls, opera houses, the floor of the stock exchange. The aural is continuously intertwined with visual arts as content or context. In the 20th and 21st centuries especially artists have variously incorporated sounds, live and recorded, in their performances, happenings and multi-media installations putting into question the silence and fixity of visual art.

As a result of the collapse in the Enlightenment of the Renaissance notion of the unity of the arts and the substitution of a modern division of temporal from spatial art forms, art historians have generally limited their research and interpretation exclusively to the visual aspects of art and have disregarded the existence, never mind the significance, of the aural. Despite the recent broadening of art history's disciplinary boundaries to include 'non-traditional' media as well as related fields, art historians are primarily trained to analyse and explain the non-ephemeral dimensions of art. When the visual approaches the transient qualities of the aural it raises problems of methodology and terminology.

This workshop series aims to explore both historical and contemporary instances of sound in art history, as well as some of the theoretical and methodological questions arising from this preoccupation. It is designed to provide an open platform for all art historians concerned with collecting, analysing, interpreting and describing sound(s) to meet and discuss ways of hearing visual art.

Topics for discussion may include, but are not limited to:

- In what kind of media do art historians encounter notions of sound such as music, voice or noise and with what methods do they explore these traces of the aural?

- How do art historians, with their specific background in the analysis of visual arts, collect, listen to, 'process' and write about sound?

- In regards to aurality, can research fields such as soundscape, Klangkunst, acousmatic voice, developed by neighbouring disciplines, be fruitfully used in and adapted for art history?

- How does our preoccupation with the aural inform or perhaps change our understanding of the visual, and vice versa?

This workshop series will be hosted at the The Courtauld Institute of Art on three different occasions throughout the academic year 2012/13. Each workshop will consist of four papers that will function as catalysts for a subsequent round table discussion, and each workshop will address the dynamics existing between aurality and art historical material, tools and methods from a different angle, generated around the proposals we receive.

We welcome proposals of 20 minutes long papers in all periods, media and regions that deal either with case studies or broader methodological questions. Please send your abstracts of 250 – 300 words and a short biography to irene.noy@courtauld.ac.uk and michaela.zoschg@courtauld.ac.uk by 28 September 2012. For organisational purposes, we also kindly ask you to indicate on which of the dates (indicated above) you would like to present and whether you will be able to attend all three workshops.

We cannot offer travel subsidies for speakers, and therefore students from outside London are encouraged to apply to their institutions for funding to attend the workshops.

Organised by Irene Noy and Michaela Zöschg with Dr Katie Scott (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Further information here:
http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/researchforum/events/2012/autumn/Dec6_ArtHistoryandSound.shtml

Reference:
CFP: Art History and Sound (London, 2012/13). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 3, 2012 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/3685>.