Circulations of Pedagogies (Paris, 12-13 Dec 24)

INHA Auditorium, Paris, Dec 12–13, 2024
Deadline: May 22, 2024

Aurélie Petiot

CIRCULATIONS OF PEDAGOGIES: Craft Teaching in a Colonial and Post-Colonoal Context.
Organised by COLINE DESPORTES (EHESS/INHA) and AURÉLIE PETIOT (Université Paris Nanterre/InVisu CNRS/INHA).

This conference will look at the circulation of the transmission of gestures and techniques in a colonial and post-colonial context, from the 19th to the 21st century. Art historian Victoria L. Rovine points out that, like its classificatory equivalents 'art' and 'artefact', craft is a Western concept, applied to objects from other cultures with the aim of absorbing them into collection and exhibition practices. Indeed, while she argues that the European exoticization of Africans and their material culture certainly did not begin with the modern colonial era, craft acquired symbolic and economic significance as a tool of empire during the interwar period. Focusing on the teaching and transmission of crafts in a colonial context enables us to examine their definition and uses - including political and ideological ones - in a colonial and post-colonial context, as closely as possible to their local conceptualisation. Without denying the various forms of education (guilds, schools) that existed prior to colonization, what interests us here is the circulation of knowledge, gestures, techniques, and patterns, as well as forces of resistance or cooperation with (pre-)existing structures and heritage. We will consider the colonial context as that of Western colonisation in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania, but also that of colonisation now considered as internal, as in the United States or Australia.

While the circulation of techniques, objects and forms of craft have been the subject of recent colloquia (Rhapsodic Objects, 2019, Global Legacies of the Arts and Crafts Movement, 2023), the circulation of teaching methods and processes organized by colonisers has been less studied. The work and experiments carried out by the LaRGA laboratory (Laboratoire de recherche du geste artisanal) and those of the Projekt laboratory (Université de Nîmes) on the transmission of gesture and design pedagogy have initiated a field of study on the pedagogy of craft and design. Founding works such as The Craftsman, by Richard Sennett (2010), and Making: anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture, by Tim Ingold (2013) look at the history of craft and the process at work in creation, from gesture to technique; Global Design History (2011), by Glenn Adamson and Global objects: towards a connected art history, by Edward S. Cooke Jr (2022) analyse the history of objects in a globalised context.

Yet, long underdeveloped in favour of fine art studies, work on the teaching of craft practices in colonial and post-colonial contexts is growing. The 2017 exhibition on John Lockwood Kipling's teaching of craft in colonial India (V&A/Bard Graduate centre) has opened up museum thinking on

these issues. The work of Tanya Harrods on the teaching of ceramist Michael Cardew at Achimota, Ghana (2013) as well as that of kąrî'kąchä seid'ou on this same institution (2014) or Jessica Gerschultz's book on the teaching of decorative arts in Tunisia from a gendered perspective (2019), have greatly enriched this field. The symposium “Producteurs et acteurs des 'arts indigènes' dans l'Empire français (1893-1962)” (2022) also addressed this issue in the context of the French Empire.

The aim here is to open up both the geographical and temporal boundaries to the teaching of crafts from the colonial period to the ultra-contemporary period. We will be looking at the objects used as teaching aids, the theories and ideologies that underpin them, and the ways in which they were adopted, invented and appropriated by students and local players. Some papers may also focus on methodological approaches such as critical craft studies, decolonial aesthetics and intersectional approaches. Papers from several disciplinary fields (anthropology, history, art history) and from artists working on the following issues are strongly encouraged:

Axis 1. The question of sources on the transmission of gestures and techniques: methods, manuals, books of drawings and models, local museum sources, the study of tools, the writings of teachers and students, oral history, technical drawings, objects produced, the use (or rejection) of machines, etc.

Axis 2. The form of these schools and apprenticeships and the careers of the teachers: state schools, missionary schools, study periods in Western schools, the context of cooperation and cooperating teachers, etc.

Axis 3. Production in a learning context: exhibition of works, commissions, sale of these objects, employment of pupils in restoration projects, development of taste based on a school's production, etc.

Axis 4. Circulations and cultural transfers: hybridity of production, invention of tradition, cultural appropriation, links with endogenous structures of teaching, situated knowledge, student agency, South-South circulations, etc.

Axis 5. Political and economic issues: location and audience of these schools, gendered division, competition with other colonising countries, official discourse on the need to teach crafts, the concept of village communities to counter the rural exodus, etc.

Axis 6. Adapting techniques and materials: taking into account or rejecting vernacular materials, the climate for firing and drying ceramic or textile pieces, local dye plants, the ecological dimension, etc.

Axis 7. Defining and using craft in a colonial and post-colonial context: what are the definitions of craft and how do teachers and students use them? What contestations of this category or post-colonial reappropriations, etc.

Papers may be presented in French or English.
Proposals of 2000 characters should be sent to Coline Desportes (colinedesportes@gmail.com) and Aurélie Petiot (apetiot@inha.fr) before 22 May 2024. Succesful applicants will be notified beginning of July 2024.

Applications from artists and researchers from non-Western universities are particularly welcome. Please do not hesitate to contact us beforehand!

Scientific committee
Baptiste Buob (CNRS, LESC), Marie-Charlotte Calafat (MUCEM), Rachel Dedman (Victoria and Albert Museum), Coline Desportes (EHESS), Jessica Gerschultz (University of St Andrews), Sarah Ligner (Musée du quai Branly), Maureen Murphy (Université Paris Nanterre, HAR), Aurélie Petiot (Paris Nanterre/InVisu) Victoria L. Rovine (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Mercedes Volait (CNRS, InVisu), Filiz Yenişehirlioğlu (Koç Üniversitesi).

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