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Forms of Anachronism in Literature, Art and Music (Berlin, 18–19 Oct 24)

Universität der Künste, Hardenbergstrasse 33, 10623 Berlin, Room 110, Oct 18–19, 2024
Registration deadline: Oct 17, 2024

Paula Rüschel

Anticipation and Belatedness, Forms of Anachronism in Literature, Art and Music.
A conference at the Universität der Künste Berlin, in cooperation with the University of Oxford.

With contributions by: Heike-Karin Föll, Anthony Gardner, Dorothea Hilzinger, Eva Kernbauer, Aurea Klarskov, Karen Leeder, Stefan Neuner, André Rottmann, Luke O'Sullivan, Dörte Schmidt, Helen Small and Barbara Wittmann.

The conference examines artistic processes and forms that deliberately challenge continuous time or break with chronology. This can mean, for example, that writers, musicians or artists repeat themselves, take up supposedly obsolete (media) techniques, work in outdated genres or simply ignore the current developments of an artistic field. The articulation and evocation of the experience of no longer being a contemporary of one's own epoch has often been described as a typical feature of late works and theorized as such. But the phenomenon can also be found where the course of history is undermined or ignored, because artists or writers are not part of a literature and art market or knowingly do not want to participate in its dynamics. Equally it applies to works that, for political reasons such as dissidence, did not take part in the historical development of an 'official literature' or 'state-sponsored art'.
Literary and art criticism along with musicology tend to assume (explicitly or implicitly) the linear development of an artistic or literary oeuvre in line with historical experience. However, when studying the work of a writer, an artist or a composer, it is often precisely those phenomena that run counter to such development that catch one's attention: phenomena of prolepsis and deliberate anticipation, of return and repetition, of regression, belatedness and of withdrawal from the present. The presentations will investigate the conditions that provoke such forms of belatedness and anticipation, as well as the way philology, music and art history deal with these complex temporal phenomena.

The event is part of a collaborative project between two working groups of Humanities scholars from the University of Oxford and the UdK Berlin (curated and organized by Karen Leeder and Barbara Wittmann). It is financed by the seed funding 'Oxford x UdK. Partnership in Arts and Humani-

ties' from both universities, as well as a grant from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the UdK.

Program

Friday, 18 October 2024

14.00-14.15 Karen Leeder (University of Oxford) & Barbara Wittmann (UdK Berlin):
Welcome Address and Introduction

14.15-15.15 Stefan Neuner (UdK Berlin):
Polytemporality in Carpaccio

15.15-16.15 Luke O'Sullivan (University of Oxford):
'Quelque transposition de chronologie': Writing out of Time in Montaigne's 'Essais'

Coffee Break

16.30-17.30 Dorothea Hilzinger (UdK Berlin):
Pluritemporality in Symphonies – Musical Modernisms Reconsidered

17.30-18.30 Helen Small (University of Oxford):
Nietzsche's Cynicism – In and Out of Time

Appetizers and Drinks

19.00-19.30 Obsolescence and Late Style in Contemporary Art and Theory
Heike-Karin Föll (UdK) in conversation with André Rottmann (Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt Oder)

Saturday, 19 October 2024

10.00-11.00 Uhr Aurea Klarskov (UdK Berlin):
A Clock Seen in Profile: On Time in the Works of Marcel Duchamp

11.00-12.00 Barbara Wittmann (UdK Berlin):
'Late Early Works': Time and Fiction in the Works of Kazimir Malevič

Lunch Break

13:15-14:15 Dörte Schmidt (UdK Berlin):
Temporality and Displacement: Chamber Music Diasporas after WW II

14:15-15:15 Karen Leeder (University of Oxford):
Anachronism and the Haunting of the Berlin Republic

Coffee Break

15:45-16:45 Eva Kernbauer (Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien):
Artistic Temporality and the Presence of Anachronism

16:30-17:30 Anthony Gardner (Ruskin School of Art, Oxford):
On Belatedness and Latency: Two Case Studies

Coffee break

18.15-19.00 Concluding Session

Contact:
Desiree Borsky
Institut für Kunstwissenschaft und Ästhetik
Universität der Künste
Hardenbergstraße 33
10623 Berlin
d.borsky@udk-berlin.de

Abstracts

Anthony Gardner (Ruskin School of Art, Oxford)
On Belatedness and Latency: Two Case Studies
This paper will explore contemporary art's complex engagement with temporal shifts during times of crisis. In particular, I want to consider the importance of latency as an important strategy distinct from either belatedness or anticipation. Using two recent case studies from the Venice Biennale and the Biennale Matter of Art in Prague and Lidice, I will explore the different temporal but also politico-cultural registers of latency and belatedness within these biennale and what they suggest for a broader contemporary cultural theorization

Dorothea Hilzinger (UdK Berlin)
Pluritemporality in Symphonies – Musical Modernisms Reconsidered

Composers outside the mainstream of music history around 1900 are often viewed as being 'late', especially British composers. This perception persists due to the belief that they lacked a continuous tradition and only began composing in major forms in the 1880s. Additionally, their music is often associated with the long 19th century and 'late romanticism', rather than modernism, which is why composers like Edward Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams or even Hubert Parry and Charles Villiers Stanford are not typically considered modernists.
The paper argues that this perceived belatedness stems from the construction of music history. If we instead focus on their self-image as modernists and their compositional choices, modernism becomes more diverse. British symphonies reflect modern, accelerated perceptions of time, multiple temporal layers, and a backward glance to the past. These temporal stratifications represent musical self-reflection, a key feature of modernism. In summary, both the sense of being late and modern coexist, but the latter has been overlooked by music historians. By recognizing several styles of music as modern, even outside the musical mainstream, many musical modernisms across Europe will come into focus.

Eva Kernbauer (Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien)
Artistic Temporality and the Presence of Anachronism

My contribution will focus on the practice of R. H. Quaytman, especially the painter's interest in both applying and subverting temporal and art historical categories. Quaytman regularly integrates earlier art historical styles and positions and also applies a strict archival and art-historical systematics onto her own practice. These unique anachronic strategies are useful for furthering a chronopolitical urgency that I will explore with references to my publication, 'Art, History, and Anachronic Interventions Since 1990', while also addressing the ghostly aspects of anachronism in artistic practices of the present.

Aurea Klarskov (UdK Berlin)
A Clock Seen in Profile: On Time in the Works of Marcel Duchamp

In Marcel Duchamp's artistic practice time is part of the work in various ways. Be it the media and materials he used (photography, print, cast, replica); how he spent his time working on one project for decades ('Étant donnés'); his allusions to the fourth dimension as a temporal dimension, or manifestations of Henri Bergson's philosophy of time in his language and motifs. The presentation focuses on this last point, particularly on how Bergson's analytical terms 'temps' and 'durée' interlink in Duchamp's large-scale work on glass, 'The Large Glass'. Both artistically and philosophically the temporally complicated structures of Duchamp's works are analyzed, that is their 'anachronic' (Nagel and Wood) properties, with the intent to get at larger questions of how artworks are situated in time.

Karen Leeder (University of Oxford)
Anachronism and the Haunting of the Berlin Republic

This paper will examine the use of spectres in literature and art works that treat the overwritten or forgotten pasts of the Berlin Republic. After Derrida ('Spectres of Marx'), the spectre is seen as the key figure signalling disrupted temporalities and times out of joint. In the case of modern work dealing with the particular past of the former GDR it has a special function. The paper will examine some of the plethora of manifestations of the undead in modern literature, film, art and photography referencing especially fraught German pasts, and ask how the anachronistic use of various pasts in the form of spectres can be made to ask questions about the present and create aesthetic alternatives to it.

Stefan Neuner (UdK Berlin)
Polytemporality in Carpaccio

Manfredo Tafuri saw the Renaissance as characterized by a conflict between two orders of time: 'the wordly and contigent time of technology and markets' on the one hand, 'the transcendent and providential time' of religious belief on the other. The talk will show how this conflict is not only inscribed in a specific polytemporal narrative structure in a famous example of Venetian painting, Vittore Carpaccio's 'Healing of the Possessed Man by the Patriarch of Grado', but is also explicitly addressed by the painter. The starting point is an impresa, which has not yet been correctly analysed and which appears in the painting as embroidery on the costume of the member of a 'compagnia della calza' (a theatrical association) – made up of a foliot escapement and a siren.

Luke O'Sullivan (University of Oxford)
'Quelque transposition de chronologie': Writing out of Time in Montaigne's 'Essais'

This paper reads the disordered composition of the 'Essais', which Montaigne describes as being shaped by a 'transposition de chronologie', as a response to the experience of living in a late age and in a society running out of time. Presenting himself as a latter-day Danaid drawing endlessly with his leaky colander from the well of Seneca and Plutarch, Montaigne developed a literary practice obsessed with the temporality of composition and conspicuously negligent of its chronological order. Reading the leakiness of Montaigne's compositional flow alongside early modern emblems depicting the Danaids frames his muddling of the chronological moments of composition not as an infernal labour of private interrogation but as a desperate act of radical authenticity. Writing out of time, Montaigne writes for a society at the end of the line, a society on the precipice: 'Tournons les yeux par tout, tout crolle autour de nous' [Look around, everything is crumbling around us]. Montaigne's practices of revision constitute an effort to extend and communicate the patterns, the chronologies of thinking such that the 'Essais' might serve as a 'truchement de l'ame' [interpreter of the soul]. 'Nous ne sommes hommes, et ne nous tenons les uns aux autres que par la parole' [We are men, and hold onto one another, only through words]. Writing out of time, Montaigne works not to return to a lost age of peace and concord but rather to salvage what 'bonne foi' remains in the present.

Dörte Schmidt (UdK Berlin)
Temporality and Displacement: Chamber Music Diasporas after WW II

It is no coincidence that the Nazi break with civilization is understood as a prominent example of Enlightenment dialectics. The National Socialists' appropriation of modernity is one of the central uncertainties about historical place that the post-war period has had to grapple with. This is also, if not perhaps especially, true of the arts. How does one approach a history that does not allow for autonomy? How does the violent disruption of cultural consistency affect the question of historical references? How does violent geographical displacement and the associated experience of the failure of modernist hopes for progress affect aesthetic positioning in history? What are the implications of modernist debates in the countries of exile?
The paper will explore these questions using examples from the British and German chamber music scenes of the first two post-war decades. Not only did composers and performers need to come to terms with history in general, but exiles also had to position themselves in relation to their home and exiled cultures. The question of the constructedness of such continuities and ruptures is raised by reference to the genres of song and string quartet, which enabled both continuities and ruptures, delays and avant-gardes.

Helen Small (University of Oxford)
Nietzsche's Cynicism - In and Out of Time

This paper will trace the outlines of Nietzsche's career-long fascination with classical Cynicism as a figure for productive critical anachronism. Starting from his early philological studies of 'Lives of the Eminent Philosophers', it will examine how Nietzsche looked to Diogenes Laertius and his Cynic subjects for models of form and style—charismatically flexible, quasi-oral, wittily confrontational and patently out-of-time. Attention will be paid to the role of Cynicism within Nietzsche's critique of Socratic and Platonic rationalism; his deployment of Cynic characterizations to aid reflec-

tion on the modes, audiences, and purposes of philosophy; the salience of Cynic debasement of morality to the 'Genealogy'; and the intensifying late efforts to counter a convention-defying Cynicism's tendency to become, itself, conventional.

Barbara Wittmann (UdK Berlin)
'Late Early Works': Time and Fiction in the Works of Kazimir Malevič

The history of modern art is often described as a period in which the singularity of the artwork has increasingly been replaced by the self-production of the artists. However, the rise of the oeuvre as the imagined sum of all works has been overlooked. Its new significance is evident, among other things, in the fact that early works are no longer merely considered as preparatory studies for the 'actual' work. The relevance of early production is now also measured by how it relates to the history of the avant-gardes.

The presentation will focus on the late work of the Suprematist Kazimir Malevich, who began painting 'early works' in the 1920s. These impressionist and cubist paintings could either be repetitions of lost paintings or – more likely – were created without any precedent around 1930 and backdated. This belated early production represents a highly constructive self-historicization, an attempt to escape the pressure of art history and its notion of linear development by consistently fictionalizing the work.