

Working Wonder (Newcastle, 14 Jun 2013)

Newcastle, Newcastle University, Jun 14, 2013

Deadline: Feb 28, 2013

Christian Mieves

Advanced call for papers

Working Wonder

Venue: Newcastle University, UK Date: 14th June 2013

E-mail: wonder.conference@ncl.ac.uk

Website: <http://conferences.ncl.ac.uk/wonderconference/>

Call for papers

Wonder has always been understood as a place outside of the familiar cultural framework. It has been linked to the fascination of change, the coincidence of oppositions, often placed at the threshold between aesthetic and scientific realms. The wondrous object becomes therefore not only the carrier of the inexplicable, but moreover exposes our relationship to the alien, enigmatic and perplexing. Recent scholarship has been focused on a variety of topics ranging from shifting aspects of curiosity and wonder (Benedict 2001), discursive qualities of the curiosity cabinet (Kenny 2004; Daston and Park 2001) the stability of the frame of wonder chamber (Stafford and Terpak, 2001), the destabilising effect of wonder on established norms (Platt 1999) and wonder within digital media (Gehl 2009; Beardon and Malmberg 2002; Buscher 1999 and others).

Wonder cabinets firmly establish the position of the subject, for whom the view was constituted, reaffirming the relationship between the object and the viewer. It is this scopic regime, which has the potential to enthrall and transfix us, which shall be explored here. To what extent can wonder be seen as intense level of attention and as a 'possibility of a fixation, of beholding something in wonder or contemplation, in which the attentive subject is both immobile and ungrounded' (Crary 2000, 10).

A plethora of recent exhibitions underline the urgency of Wonder within contemporary visual art (MOMA Wunderkammer, 2008; Getty Institute Devices of Wonder, 2002, NGCA Wonders of the Visible World, 2012; Hayward Touring: Curiosity: Art and The Pleasures of Knowing, 2013).

This conference sets out to investigate the circumstances and motivations for the re-emergence of wonder in contemporary artistic practice and discourse. How do artists deal in their practice with fixation and the levels of attention often referred to as Wonder. The conference provides a platform for cross-disciplinary debate and the presentation of new practice-led research.

Possible topics:

- the phenomenon of absorption or fixation of the viewer as response to the visual impact.
- wonder as strategy of breaching the dichotomy of science and art
- wonder in the age of new media
- wonder as questioning modes of representation and visibility
- wonder and its role in contemporary creative practice
- wonder's role rendering the strange conceivable

Please submit abstracts of up to 250 words to:
wonder.conference@ncl.ac.uk

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Reference:

CFP: Working Wonder (Newcastle, 14 Jun 2013). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 8, 2013 (accessed Dec 19, 2025),
<<https://arthist.net/archive/4473>>.