

## Speculative Art Histories (Rotterdam, 2 - 4 May 13)

Rotterdam, May 2-04, 2013

Sjoerd van Tuinen, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Speculative Art Histories

A three-day international research symposium

Center for Art and Philosophy (EUR) and Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art

Thursday 2, Friday 3, and Saturday 4 May, 2013

### PROGRAM

Thursday 2 May 2012

Location: Erasmus University, H5-32

Speculative Philosophy and Art

19h00 Panel

Armen Avanesian (FU Berlin) – Against the Regime of (aesthetical) Correlationism

Charlotte De Mille (Courtauld, Uni Sussex) – Immanence and Art's Histories: towards a Bergsonian methodology

Sarah Kolb (Akademie Vienna) – Diagonal Science and Philosophy of Art: Bergson after Duchamp after Caillois

Joost de Bloois (UvA) – 'Let us be communists like Mallarmé'. Speculative politics and aesthetics after Badiou

21h30 Reception

Friday 3 May 2013

Location: Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art

Diagrammatics and the Radical Picturesque

10h00 Welcome by Samuel Saelemakers (Witte de With)

Introduction by Sjoerd van Tuinen (EUR)

10h20 Keynote lecture by Lars Spuybroek (NOX, Georgia Tech) – The Politics of Beauty

Respondent: Andrej Radman (DSD, TU Delft)

11h45 Coffee break

12h00 Panel

Kamini Vellodi (Kingston Uni) – From the Speculative to the Constructive: Deleuze and Peirce on diagrammatics

Vlad Ionescu (Sint-Lucas Brussels) – The Rigorous and the Vague: On the Concepts of Wölfflin, Riegl and Worringer

Sjoerd van Tuinen (EUR) – Serpentine Life: A Speculative Reading of Mannerist Art Theory

13h30 Lunch

Speculative Conceptions

14h30 Keynote lecture by Reza Negarestani

Respondent: Henk Oosterling (EUR, Vakmanstad Rotterdam)

16h00 Coffee break

16h15 Roundtable with conference participants, including Armen Avanesian (FU Berlin), Bram Ieven (UU), Charlotte De Mille (Courtauld Uni., Sussex), Henk Oosterling (EUR), Bertrand Prévost (Uni. of Bordeaux)

17h00 Reception

Saturday 4 May 2013

Location: Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art

Speculative Presences

10h00 Keynote lecture by Elisabeth von Samsonow (Ak. bildenden Künste Wien) – The Plasticity of the Real

Respondent: Rick Dolphijn (UU)

11h30 Coffee break

11h45 Panel 3

Adi Efal (Uni. Cologne) – Ravaisson's 'Habitude' and the Past Reality of Things

Erik Bordeleau (McGill Uni.) – Tsai Ming-Liang and the Cosmopolitical Slowing Down of the Soul

Fleur Courtois L'Heureux (GECO/ULB) – From Etienne Souriau's L'ombre de Dieu to Mats Ek's Shadow of Carmen

13h15 Lunch break, soup served

Speculative Expressions

14h15 Keynote lecture Kerstin Thomas (Uni. of Mainz) – Expressive Things: Art Theories of Henri Focillon and Meyer Schapiro Reconsidered

Respondent: Adi Efal

15h45 Coffee break

16h00 Keynote lecture Bertrand Prévost (Uni. of Bordeaux) – What is a Plastic Idea? Light, Problem, Intensity

Respondent: Kamini Vellodi (Kingston Uni.)

17h30 Reception

On Friday 3 and Saturday 4 May, *Insurgence* (2013) will be on view at Witte de With. This documentary by Épopée groupe d'action cinema accounts the anonymous event of the Printemps Érablé, the 2012 student protests in Montreal.

Please consult <http://www.caponline.org/speculative-art-histories> for speaker's biographies, abstracts and program updates.

#### PRACTICAL

Language of the event:

English

Tickets and reservations:

Thursday 2 May 2013: free

Because of the limited number of seats, please register by e-mail with Monique Goense – 323450mg@student.eur.nl – if you want to participate.

Friday 3 and Saturday 4 May 2013:

One day ticket: € 15 full rate / € 7.5 reduction (students)

Two day ticket: € 25 full rate / € 12.50 reduction (students)

Book your tickets via [reservations@wdw.nl](mailto:reservations@wdw.nl) or call +31 (0)10 411 0144

Addresses:

Erasmus University Rotterdam

Complex Woudestein H5-32

Burgemeester Oudlaan 50

3062 PA Rotterdam

Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art

Witte de Withstraat 50

3012 BR Rotterdam

#### CONFERENCE THEME

Following the recent 'speculative turn' in Continental philosophy, prepared by Gilles Deleuze and

Alain Badiou and elaborated by Quentin Meillassoux, Brian Massumi, Graham Harman, Isabelle Stengers and Reza Negarestani among many others, the aim of this conference is to propose a counter-discourse of speculative approaches to art and, especially, to art history.

How could today's materialist, realist, pragmatist, vitalist or object-oriented speculations offer alternatives to the mere complementarity of philosophy of art and art history, often based on mutual recognition and critical limitation rather than imaginative crossovers? What new intermedial methodologies for art and art historical writing do they provide? Or vice versa, how can the encounter with art induce new forms of philosophy? How do speculative concepts of time, past and contingency challenge typically modern engagements with art's 'history'?

Is there, for example, an unexpected contemporary relevance for pre-modern, e.g. or mannerist or gothic ideas of art? And what is the speculative potential of works of art themselves? Does the speculative open up new ways of extending art into fields of biology, mathematics or the digital? What is the 'thing' or 'object' of art, whether inanimate or animate? What does it mean to have an 'idea'? And finally, what remains of 'beauty' and 'expressivity', after decades of critical mistrust and embarrassed deconstruction?

In the course of the 20th century, art history and philosophy of art have followed diverging trajectories. In order to establish itself as a scientific discipline, art history has inclined towards a positivist and objectivist approach to art, while professionalized philosophy of art, save for some developments in the philosophy of difference, has tended towards historicist hermeneutics and subjectivist phenomenology. Even the recent calls for more interdisciplinarity, heard in art criticism and art theory no less than in academic circles, seem to consolidate this divide more than they overcome it.

The guiding intuition of this conference is that both the modern gap between philosophy and art history and the postmodern call for more interdisciplinarity are inspired by a consensual abhorrence of more speculative approaches to art. That things could be otherwise can be learned from early formalist art historians such as Heinrich Wölfflin and Aloïs Riegl, who combined vitalist philosophy with empirical research in an almost proto-structuralist way and whose tradition was continued well into the 20th century by the likes of Henri Focillon and Henri Maldiney. In turn, philosophers as diverse as Henri Bergson, Étienne Souriau, Susanne Langer, and Walter Benjamin acknowledged the value of art historical research. What brings these approaches together is that they seek access to some speculative absolute (e.g. Will, Life, Experience) in defiance of the Kantian correlationism between the thing in itself (the object) and its enjoyment by us (the subject), and subsequently also in defiance of the bifurcation between artistic production and aesthetic reception, or the duality of aesthetics as theory of sensibility and theory of art.

## ORGANIZERS

This conference is organized by the Center for Art and Philosophy (CAP, [www.caponline.org](http://www.caponline.org)) in collaboration with Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art (<http://www.wdw.nl>). It is the outcome of the CAP reading group on speculative philosophy which runs from 2011 to 2013 at the Erasmus University Rotterdam and at Witte de With. It follows upon the Philosophers' Rally 2012, which was organized by students of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Erasmus University Rotterdam in collaboration with CAP and which also had the speculative turn in Continental philosophy

as its guiding thread (with Didier Debaise, Elisabeth von Samsonow, and Levy R. Bryant among the speakers).

Reference:

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