

## Working Wonder (Newcastle upon Tyne, 14 Jun 13)

Newcastle University, UK, Jun 14, 2013

Registration deadline: Jun 14, 2013

Christian Mieves

### Working Wonder Conference

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 Malmborg 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.

Venue: Fine Art Department, Newcastle University, UK

## Programme

09.15-09.45

Registration and Coffee

09.45-10.00

Welcome

Irene Brown, Newcastle University, UK

Dr Christian Mieves, University of Wolverhampton, UK

Keynote

10.00-10.30

Keynote Speaker: Jane Wildgoose, Independent Curator, Writer and Researcher

## Session 1

10.30-11.50

Anne Hilker Sack, Parsons School for Design, New York

Toward an Archaeology of Wonder: the Case of the Snow Globe

Runette Kruger, Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa

Wonder, subversion and newness

Emma Hughes, University of Victoria, Canada

Absence of Wonders: Descriptions and Observations of Objects within Catalogues of the Royal Society and its Fellows

Laura Kuch, Artist, Germany and UK

Wunderkammer of the now – Romanticising as a contemporary fine art practice

11.50-12.10

Break

## Session 2

12.10-01.30

Michaela French, University of Hertfordshire, UK

Light and the Experience of Wonder

Martin Griffiths, Artist, UK

Wonder and its role in contemporary creative practice

Dr Carla Cesare, Columbus College of Art & Design, Ohio, USA

Forms of Wonder: theorizing the cabinet of curiosities

Dawn Felicia Knox, Artist and Curator, UK

Returning to the Philosophers' Table

01.30-02.30

Break

### Session 3

02.30-03.50

Dr Pippa Little, Limerick Institute of Technology, Limerick, Ireland

The paradox of fascination and fixation: a qualitative exploration of the artistic cycle

Michelle Rheeston-Humphreys and Dr. Katrinka Wilson, (h)edge kelektiv, UK

Paradoxical Realism: Liminality Encountered Through Illusionistic Practices

Alison Dalwood, University of Hertfordshire, UK and Artbetween.org

Dr Shirley Chubb, University of Chichester, UK

One Hour: visual practice exploring a collective history

03.50-04.10

Break

### Session 4

04.10-05.50

Rachel McDermott, independent Researcher, Newcastle, UK

How many things can begin with ten points in space?

Dr Celina Jeffery, University of Ottawa, Canada

Preternatural: Curating Wonder

Dr Brain Degger, Independent Artist Researcher, UK

Microcosms, Microscopes and 'Getting your Eye in'

Chris McHugh, University of Sunderland, UK

Articulating Wonder and Context: Ceramics and Museum Engagement

Dr Will Buckingham, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

Wonder and Weird tools: Divining the Donkey-Rat

Plenary

05.50-06.30

Plenary

07.00-08.00

Exhibition Opening, Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle

from 08.00

Conference Dinner

Contact:

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

Fees:

£25 (full), £10 (Student)

Reference:

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