

Foreign artists in Paris (Paris, 6–7 Nov 13)

Paris, Nov 6–07, 2013

Deadline: Sep 1, 2013

Pauline Chevalier

Passing through Paris - Passages à Paris - Les artistes étrangers à Paris de la fin du XIXe à nos jours

International conference

6th - 7th November 2013, Paris, INHA

Submission deadline : September 1st 2013

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<http://hicsa.univ-paris1.fr/page.php?r=3&id=631&lang=fr>

Migrations, population displacements, and diasporas have always been of great interest for historians (cf. in France, Antoine Marès, Pierre Milza or Michel Espagne and Michael Werner). Art historians have been looking at that phenomenon quite recently. The role played by the circulation of artists in the development of artistic movements and in the constitution of social networks is now a field of research dealing with different geographical areas (cf. the work done by France Nerlich and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel). The topic is rather important when dealing with the “passage” of artists through a given place, such as Paris, for example. Historical upheavals, from colonization to decolonization, national liberation struggles, or oppression from dictatorships, or communism in Eastern Europe, generated important movements of circulation of artists and intellectuals across the world. « Thinking somewhere else » has become a leitmotiv of the modern world (cf. Nicole Lapierre) and contributed to forging the identities of the Parisian avant-gardes of the early 20th century.

Furthermore, passing through or settling in Paris, marked several generations of artists who came to encounter a myth or a community, sometimes looking for an artistic filiation by rooting themselves in Paris. These stays often constituted major stages in the artists' lives at key moments in their careers, from the obligatory training to the quest for a fantasy of modernity.

This interdisciplinary conference aims at discussing the reasons, the conditions, and the potential consequences of these decisive times abroad, in Paris, for foreign artists. It wishes to analyze the induced exchanges between artists, critics, gallery owners, collectors, as well as the essential mutations of the different socio-political contexts that could have contributed or that could have

been catalysts for the circulation of artists, sometimes going against the generally acknowledged models. The constitution of national and international communities with artists coming from geographic areas that tend to gain a better insight in today's historiography (Central and South America, Africa, Eastern Europe, etc.) will be of a greater interest. Taking into account the stay in Paris and its effects tends to change the main narratives, and to slightly shift the debate that prompts to directly oppose Paris and New York in the middle of the 20th century.

1. The persistence of the myth : the « City of Lights »

If Paris loses part of its international aura starting in the middle of the 20th century, foreign artists did not stop to settle here, sometimes trying to find the image of a long-gone Paris, contributing to the myth: Paris as the « capital of modernity » (cf. Walter Benjamin, David Harvey, Patrice Higonnet). How has the image of Paris evolve since the end of the 19th century? Is it possible to notice any historical gaps, any anachronisms, in the perception of Paris by foreign artists during the 20th century? This conference will try to deepen our understanding of how the French capital has been seen according to the different artistic and intellectual national contexts. To what extent did artists associate settling in Paris with constructing a connection with the historical avant-gardes of the early 20th century, even several decades later? What are the fantasies or utopias that foreign artists contributed to building or deconstructing about Paris? It will also be necessary to look closely at the media and carriers of the myth : the press, correspondence between artists, as well as literature and cinema.

2. Artist' life in Paris

Artists' long-term visits in Paris bring to light the constitution of interesting social networks. In conjunction with actual research (work on the French-German exchanges lead by France Nerlich at the Université François-Rabelais in Tours, French-American by Eric de Chassey at the ENS-Lyon, or the ARTL@S project by Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel at the ENS-Ulm), this second topic ranges from the private space of the studio to the more mundane life of the Salons, galleries, as well as more informal gathering places.

Training and learning places – workshops, studios, schools – show the recurring presence of foreign artists : how did they open to foreign students and how did some of them welcome several generations of artists in exile or traveling artists? Communication proposals could dwell upon some spaces that were of special interest to foreign artists, as well as their integration among a cosmopolitan artistic community. The studio as political space, or on the contrary as apolitical space, should be analyzed in order to better understand the studio as an intellectual and cultural melting pot.

As training and learning places cannot be reduced to studios and schools, communication proposals dealing with other forms of social and gathering places - galleries, art patrons' houses, cafes, or Parisian neighborhoods - will be welcome. These places constituted in themselves a training environment or « milieu », a theatre for artistic education that will have to be taken into account, leading to a potential artistic cartography of Paris.

3. Paris' experience– Individual paths and communities

Besides an attraction for the « capital of modernity », one of the reasons of the Parisian exile is the quest of the artist's life in Paris, the fantasized life of the Bohemia that some artists will be searching until the 1980s. Their installation was often made easier by the settlement of various national communities over the course of several generations. How did these national networks

develop in Paris? The attitudes of the national communities between cultural melting pot, disorientation and nostalgic fallback position, can be studied in their nuances and their specificities.

Beyond well-known exiles who established in Paris and developed there the main part of their career, there are many artists who passed through the capital and developed a singular relation with the city, its institutions, its artistic communities. Some found a political refuge there, running away from dictatorships for example - the example of the State supporting the artists and the Greek intellectuals fleeing the Greek military junta is one among many - or an artistic refuge when others try to find a way out of national artistic movements which they consider as oppressive - for example artists such as Nancy Spero or Leon Golub who left the United States for Paris. The individual path will not become an exemplary nature, but seeks to further understand the intricacy of the personal, artistic, political, and national motives bringing artists to Paris.

4. Institutional Paris and foreign artists

The study of the settling modes of foreign artists in Paris shows the existence of institutional networks which provide financial support, but also residences and exhibition places, etc. How did the French public collections benefit from the presence of foreign artists in Paris?

Furthermore, the State regularly supported and financed artists' stays, in particular in the case of political exiles. What were these supporting modalities and what impact did they have on the French artistic scene? At the same time, the foreign authorities also supported these stays. What networks of international collaborations are then set up and what are the aesthetic, legal or political implications?

The opening of Parisian institutions to foreign artists also takes place through the press, and the art critique: could be studied the factors of reception and the critical reviews testifying an interest - or a rejection - for these artists and for a "poetics of the diverse". Expectations from institutions, reception of this Parisian cosmopolitanism by the public and the press will have to be envisioned through the study of public collections, but also through the analysis of private patronage, newspapers reviews and art publications.

5. Leaving Paris

Considering the passage in Paris by the motives, the modalities and the settling places in the capital is not enough to grasp the complexity of the topic: we can also wonder about the return trip, or about the journeys extending a Parisian stay. How and when does one leave Paris? Did the artists return there? The departure is sometimes synonymic of new settling, outside of Paris, for example in the South of France, in Normandy or in Touraine. It can also become a new exile, extending singular forms of the "Grand Tour". Furthermore, the artists having settled down in Paris sometimes saw their practice being transformed according to their environment, their relations with other fellow artists and intellectuals: what did they draw from it? What did they take away with them? Also, it can be useful to initiate a comparative approach between Paris and other artistic capitals (Vienna, London, Berlin, New York, etc.) in order to better grasp Paris' specificity among an international network. Some quantitative analysis could provide a singular perspective to the moments when Paris was neglected, and a better understanding of the artist's movement within the political and intellectual mutations, both French and international.

Proposals - title, abstract (about 1500 signs) with a brief CV - should be emailed by September 1st to passages.paris@gmail.com

The notification of the Scientific Committee will be sent to you via email by September 10th, 2013

Scientific Committee

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