

The Turbulent Mind (Ghent, 16–17 May 14)

Ghent, Museum of Fine Arts, May 16–17, 2014

Jan Dirk Baetens, Radboud University Nijmegen

The Turbulent Mind: Madness, Moods and Melancholy in the Art of the Nineteenth Century

Ghent, Museum of Fine Arts, 16-17 May 2014

In collaboration with the Research Platform XIX and the European Society for Nineteenth-Century Art

With the support of the Research Foundation - Flanders, Flemish Art Collection, Museum of Fine Arts Ghent, Dutch Postgraduate School for Art History (OSK), Ghent University - Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

On 7 May 1824, Eugène Delacroix wrote in his diary: “I do not care for reasonable painting at all. I can see that my turbulent mind needs agitation, needs to free itself, to try a hundred different things before reaching the goal whose tyrannous call everywhere torments me. (...) If I am not quivering like a snake in the hands of Pythoness, I am cold; I must recognize it and submit to it; and to do so is happiness.”

In these lines, Delacroix evoked the age-old theme of the mad artist, tormented but divinely inspired, balancing on the verge of insanity and genius. The attraction of this idea to Delacroix was hardly an isolated phenomenon. The rise of romanticism saw an exploding interest in the irrational and its potential to liberate the arts, and even the world at large, and this interest resonated throughout the rest of the nineteenth century.

On the occasion of the Théodore Géricault exhibition in the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent, the museum joins forces with the Research Platform XIX and the European Society for Nineteenth-Century Art to organise a two-day conference to explore the theme of madness and art in the nineteenth century, a time when artists first deliberately turned for inspiration to the mentally deviant and fully developed the idea of art as an expression of the emotional self. The conference brings together international specialists in the field and deals with both the myth of the artistic temperament and representations of madness, moods or melancholy.

Friday 16 May 2014

10:15

Registration and coffee/tea

10:45

Introduction

Catherine de Zegher, director of the Museum of Fine Arts Ghent: Word of welcome

Bruno Fornari, curator at the Museum of Fine Arts Ghent: Introduction à l'exposition

Marjan Sterckx, Ghent University: Introduction to the conference

11:15

Session 1: The Birth of the Romantic Artist (chair: Jenny Reynaerts, Rijksmuseum)

11:15

Richard Wrigley, University of Nottingham:

Sanity and Sensibility in Rome

11:40

Heather Belnap Jensen, Brigham Young University:

Constance Mayer, Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, and the Melancholic Romantic Woman Artist

12:05

Teresa Ende, University of Bonn:

"Though this be madness, yet there is method in't" – On Hamlet's transformation in the works of Eugène Delacroix

12:30

Discussion

13:00

Lunch

14:15

Session 2: Artists' Self-Construction and Self Fashioning (chair: Cathérine Verleysen, Museum of Fine Arts Ghent)

14:15

Nina Amstutz, Yale Center for British Art:

The Split Self: Phrenology, Reason, and Madness in Romantic Self-Portraiture

14:40

Erika Schneider, Framingham University:

Art versus Law: The Mythology of Privation

15:05

Debra Hanson, Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar:

Thomas Eakins: Constructing the Melancholic Body

15:30

Discussion

16:00

Break (coffee/tea)

16:30

Keynote lectures (chair: Bruno Fornari, Museum of Fine Arts Ghent)

16:30

Bruno Chenique, chercheur indépendant:
Géricault face à la démence de Waterloo

17:00

Gregor Wedekind, Johannes Gutenberg Universität-Mainz:
Les Monomanes de Géricault

17:30

Albert Alhadeff, University of Colorado Boulder:
'Matelotage' and Candid Coupling in Géricault's Raft of the Medusa

18:00

Discussion

18:30

Visit to the Théodore Géricault Exhibition (private view)

All day during coffee and lunch breaks: Poster session

Ulrike Müller, Ghent University/University of Antwerp:
Belgian Private Collectors and the Emergence of a National Artistic Canon

Jana Wijnsouw, Ghent University:

In Search of a National (S)cul(p)ture: Belgian Sculptors Abroad and Foreign Sculptors in Belgium
(1830-1916)

Saturday 17 May 2014

9:45

Coffee/tea

10:15

Session 3: States of Distraction (chair: Koen Brosens, University of Leuven)

10:15

Evelien Jonckheere, Ghent University:
Madness by Distraction in Fin-de-Siècle French Café-Concert and its Modernist Representations

10:40

Katherine E. Manthorne, Grad Center CUNY:
Mind & Madness in Post-Civil War American Art

11:05

Allison Morehead, Queen's University, Kingston:
Representing Gambling Mania

11:30

Discussion

12:00

Lunch

13:15

Session 4: Artists' Mythologies (chair: Maité van Dijk, Van Gogh Museum)

13:15

Ekaterini Kepetzi, University of Köln:

A Fabricated Modernist: El Greco as Prototype of the Anti-Academic Artist

13:40

Roberta Crisci-Richardson, Federation University, Victoria Australia:

What Happened to the Mad Degas? Suppression and Repression of the Nervous in the Reputation of Edgar Degas (1834-1917)

14:05

Joan E. Greer, University of Alberta:

Vincent van Gogh and the Pathology of Artishood

14:30

Discussion

15:00

Break (coffee/tea)

15:30

Keynote lecture

Henri Zerner, Harvard University:

Géricault and the Lure of the Morbid

16:15

Closing remarks

Jan Dirk Baetens, Radboud University Nijmegen

More information:

Jan Dirk Baetens, Radboud University Nijmegen: j.baetens@let.ru.nl

Cathérine Verleysen, Museum of Fine Arts Ghent: catherine.verleysen@gent.be

Location:

Museum voor Schone Kunsten Gent

Auditorium

Hofbouwlaan 28

Ghent – Belgium

Admission:

€ 40 (students € 25)

Includes coffee breaks and lunch on 16 and 17 May

Max. registrations: 100

Registration:

Email to catherine.verleypsen@gent.be (mentioning your institutional affiliation), and transfer of the registration fee to:

AGB Kunsten en Design – Botermarkt 1 – B-9000 Ghent – Belgium

IBAN BE11 0910 1974 1448

BIC GKCCBEBB

Mentioning name of participant and 'The Turbulent Mind'

Confirmation of registration takes place only after receipt of the conference fee.

Languages:

English / Français

Organising committee: Jan Dirk Baetens (Radboud University, Nijmegen), Koen Brosens (KU Leuven), Rachel Esner (University of Amsterdam), Bruno Fornari (Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent), Jenny Reynaerts (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam), Johan De Smet (Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent), Marjan Sterckx (Ghent University) and Cathérine Verleypsen (Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent)

Scientific committee: Werner Adriaenssens (Royal Museum of Art and History, Brussels), Maite van Dijk (Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam), Mayken Jonkman (RKD, The Hague), Herwig Todts (Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp), Francisca Vandepitte (Royal Museums of Fine Arts, Brussels), Filip Vermeulen (Erasmus University, Rotterdam) and Catherine de Zegher (Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent)

<http://www.mskgent.be>

<http://www.werkgroep-xix.blogspot.be>

<http://esnaonline.wordpress.com>

Reference:

CONF: The Turbulent Mind (Ghent, 16-17 May 14). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 4, 2014 (accessed Jul 17, 2025),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/7373>>.