On Whose Authority? (Riverside, 16 May 15)

Riverside, California, May 16, 2015
Deadline: Feb 27, 2015

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On Whose Authority? (Re)Assessing the Malleable Nature of a Canon of Visuality

4th Annual University of California, Riverside History of Art Graduate Student Conference

Although the term canon implies rigidity, internal and external pressures have often forced canons to be re-evaluated and reformed. A look at art and objects on a global scale, from past to present, inevitably reveals the complexity as well as the exclusionary quality of canonicity. As such, a canon can be shown to have a malleable nature, one that yields or resists challenges to authority. Because the concept of a canon in relation to visuality permeates a wide variety of disciplines, this multi-disciplinary conference seeks to explore the relationship between canonicity and the arts, in any of its forms, within an expanding, global context.

Giorgio Vasari, author of The Lives of the Most Eminent Italian Architects, Painters, and Sculptors from Cimabue to Our Times, is commonly regarded as one of the “fathers” of art history. Vasari’s sixteenth-century project aimed to document the technical progress of artists over time and to establish the superiority of Florentine art, thus constructing the first canon of art history. As discourses about aesthetics, representation, and politics developed, scholars and artists alike began to question and challenge the seemingly purposeful exclusion of various identity groups from discussions of the visual arts. Investigations of the canon, however, are not limited to who is included or excluded. Rather, the inclusion and valuation of media is also an important topic to address. Consider, here, the perceptions of photography upon its invention in the early 19th century. These examples, while not exhaustive, serve to demonstrate our interest in the malleable nature of the canon within the context of the arts.

Some of the questions we seek to address include: What role(s) does the canon play within a globalized art history or study of the arts? What are the implications of reevaluating the canon? Who, or what, determines the Canon? How does the canon demonstrate points of intersection and divergence among academic disciplines? How does an examination of the canon illuminate historical and ideological shifts? How have its parameters shifted as the discipline of art history has changed? Approaches to these questions could come in the forms of fine art, historical objects and documents, art history, fashion, design, architecture, visual culture, literature, religious objects, artifacts, and many more.

We invite abstracts of no more than 300 words for 20-minute paper presentations examining the construction, perpetuation, and/or role of a canon in the context of visual culture. We encourage papers that demonstrate an interdisciplinary approach to the art-historical record.

Please email abstracts to ahgsa.ucr@gmail.com by Friday, February 27, 2015. The conference will be held at the California Museum of Photography in downtown Riverside, CA, on Saturday, May 16, 2015.

Keynote Speaker: Rafael Cardozo, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro

Reference:

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