

Misogyny: Witches and Wicked Bodies (London, 18 Mar 15)

Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, Mar 18, 2015

Katy Deepwell

Misogyny: Witches and Wicked Bodies

ICA (Cinema)

3-6pm, Wed 18th March 2015

Keynote Speaker: Deanna Petherbridge, artist and curator of Witches and Wicked Bodies

Respondents: Lynne Segal, Alexandra Kokoli and Katy Deepwell.

Deanna Petherbridge's exhibition, *Witches and Wicked Bodies* (British Museum, 5 Sept 2014-11 Jan 2015 and Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, 27th July - 3rd Nov 2013), provided an intriguing and original historical overview of representations of witches from classical representations on Graeco/Roman pottery through to Symbolist works at the turn of the twentieth century.

This ICA/Middlesex University mini-conference aims to discuss this exhibition's presentation of misogyny through the persistence of extremely potent and disturbing images of hideous old hags and desirable young sirens, as it has been revisited, restructured and represented throughout different periods of Western art history. The respondents will then introduce questions about the representation of older women in art, culture and society in the past and present and look at how different approaches within feminism have taken the figure of the witch and attempted to transform it.

Lynne Segal is Professor in Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck College, University of London. Her recent books include: *Out of Time: The Pleasures and Perils Ageing* (Verso, 2013); *Making Trouble: Life and Politics* (Serpents Tail, 2007); *Straight Sex: The Politics of Pleasure* (Virago, 1994; Verso, 2014). She will address the exhibition and its topic from the perspective of her extensive research into gender, sexualities and shifts and continuities in portrayals of ageing.

Alexandra Kokoli, Senior Lecturer in Visual Culture (Fine Art), Middlesex University, is completing a monograph on the feminist uncanny, (Bloomsbury Academic, forthcoming). Her talk will examine the figure of the witch in 1970s French feminisms informed by psychoanalysis, including Catherine Clément's contribution to *The Newly Born Woman* (co-authored with Hélène Cixous) and the bimonthly journal *Sorcières* (1976-1981). In psychoanalytic second-wave feminist discourse, the witch emerges as victim and heroine in one, bearing the marks of the most extreme misogynistic violence yet also embodying the potential for a feminist revolution.

Katy Deepwell is Professor of Contemporary Art, Theory and Criticism, Middlesex University, and

editor of *n.paradoxa*: international feminist art journal and *Feminist Art Manifestos: An Anthology* (KT press, 2014). In her talk, she will address how feminist thought and research, notably Mathilda Joselyn Gage, Mary Daly and Silvia Federici, has analysed the witchcraze and how this emerges as a means to reconceptualise the question of heresies, cosmology, and relations of church and state for feminism, while at the same time providing potent imagery for feminist art works.

The event will be chaired by Professor Hilary Robinson, Dean of the School of Art and Design, editor of the anthology *Feminism-Art-Theory 1968-2014* (Wiley-Blackwell, second edition, forthcoming 2015).

This mini-symposium is organized by Create/Feminisms, a research cluster in the School of Art and Design, Middlesex University and is a collaboration between the School of Art and Design and the ICA.

Free to all Middlesex Students on presentation of their ICA membership or student card.
Tickets available to the public: £8 full price/£5 concessions/£3 ICA members.

Tickets available to purchase at:-
<https://www.ica.org.uk/whats-on/misogyny-witches-and-wicked-bodies>

Link to Middlesex University page:
<http://adri.mdx.ac.uk/contentcurator.net/misogyny-witches-wicked-bodies-ica>

Reference:

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