

15:30 Jens Baumgarten Federal University of São Paulo, Brazil

A Sacred Las Vegas in São Paulo: Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel and the Foundation of Brazilian Art History

Postcolonial theory defines the 'in between' as a central theoretical and methodological position. As an early Brazilian position in the art historical discourse in the first half of the 20th Century, it had its predecessors in the modernist concepts of 'anthropophagy'. This 'digestion' of different cultures created a genuine autochthonous Brazilian art is related to notions of Renaissance and Baroque from a European perspective. Parallel to the modernist art production, a variety of different simulacra were created in a complex visual system – constructing and deconstructing layers of identity discourses. The art historical debate depreciated, for example, copies of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel in Brazilian churches of the 20th century as kitsch. The focus of the paper will be on the aesthetic, religious, and political contexts and on the problem of the Western canon of art in regards to South America and the proper definition and place of postcolonial debates.

16:00 Break

SESSION FIVE

Chair: Mateusz Kapustka University of Zurich

16:30 Arnold Bartetzky University of Leipzig

'Paläste für die Werktätigen'. Die Neo-Renaissance in der Architektur und Massenkultur im Osteuropa der Stalinzeit

According to the theory of Socialist Realism, the art doctrine of the Stalinist Soviet Union and its satellite states, the Renaissance was an epoch characterized by a particularly strong revolutionary impetus. Consequently, it was seen as a significant part of the 'progressive traditions' that were to form the base for the establishment of socialist culture. The reference to the Renaissance model was most obvious in architecture. Renaissance forms were even used for new mass housing complexes. The construction of these 'Palaces for the Working Class' was accompanied by enormous multi-media propaganda campaigns in newspapers, books, posters, cinema newsreels and even popular films. In this way, Renaissance forms were granted an afterlife not only in housing sites of the working class but also in the visual mass culture of socialist modernity. This paper focuses both on the adaptation of Renaissance forms in Stalinist architecture and their dissemination through mass-media propaganda.

17:00 Berthold Hub University of Vienna

"Rome is no Longer in Rome, Rome is at Yamoussoukro." A Replica of St. Peter's Basilica in Côte d'Ivoire

The world's largest church building stands in Yamoussoukro, the new capital of Côte d'Ivoire. The Catholic Basilica of Our Lady of Peace is an imitation of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Designed in 1985 by the Lebanese architect Pierre Fakhoury and consecrated by Pope John Paul II in 1990, its renaissance and baroque architecture and interior decoration epitomize European aesthetic and religious traditions. The 300.000.000 USD building decorated with Italian marble and French stained glass raises questions about post-colonial identity and the representation of rulership in a poverty-stricken and multicultural country. This paper will also discuss the ideological uses and abuses of renaissance and baroque architectural styles within globalism, the notion of the simulacrum competing with its archetype, the channels and meanings of 'influence', and the 'migration of forms' through mass media.

17:30 Martino Stierli ETH Zurich

Die Wiederaufführung Italiens: Zur postmodernen Reproduktion von Bildwelten der Renaissance in Las Vegas

For postmodernism, a return to authenticity is neither feasible nor desirable because it never existed in the first place. The inevitability of 'repetition' has been the topic of great concern in cultural theory (Baudrillard, Eco). On the contrary, critics like Genette have indicated that 'second degree' artefacts resulting from postmodern strategies of production are not debased copies, but produce their own reality. What deserves attention is not their secondary nature, but their inherent constructedness. The reproduction of the Renaissance imagery of Italian architecture will be discussed by looking at hotel and resort architecture in Las Vegas that references Italian town- and cityscapes (The Venetian, Caesars Palace, Bellagio). The paper will argue that these 'replications' do not intend to substitute the 'authentic' with the artificial. Rather, the mechanisms of such scenographic displays may be compared with what film and literary theory call the 'suspension of disbelief'.

18:30 Concert

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Location

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Spiegelgasse 1

CH-8001 Zürich

www.cabaretvoltaire.ch

Free and open to all

In keeping with the international character of the event, some papers will be delivered in English, others in German

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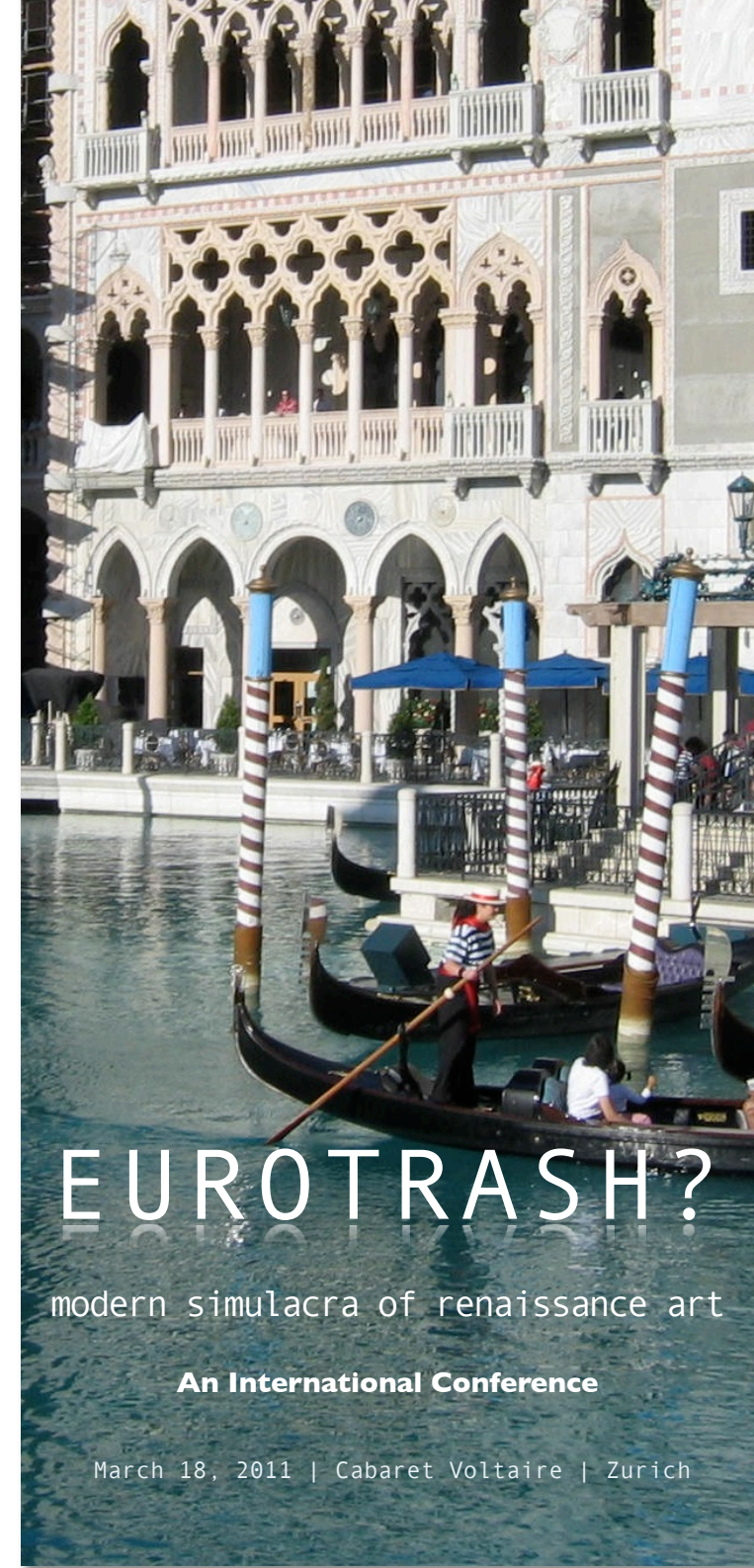


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EUROTRASH?

modern simulacra of renaissance art

An International Conference

March 18, 2011 | Cabaret Voltaire | Zurich

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An international conference presented by
Dartmouth College and the University of Zurich

Program

09:00 Adrian W. B. Randolph Dartmouth College

Introductory Remarks

Tristan Weddigen University of Zurich

Forest Lawn, Glendale: Californian Simulacra of Renaissance Art

SESSION ONE

Chair: Beate Fricke University of California, Berkeley

09:30 Johannes Endres University of California Riverside

Freud's Renaissance

Freud's reception of Renaissance art and the Renaissance artist had a major effect on the popularization of the era and some of its central figures. His essays on Leonardo and Michelangelo have not only attracted the interest of scholars in the fields of psychoanalysis and critical theory, they also created a standard in how to approach the Renaissance era as such. The reason for the pervasiveness and success of 'Freud's model' lies in a radical change of perspective: one that for the first time combined the admiration of the Renaissance with the idea of its psychological commensurability. The contribution will on the one hand critically examine Freud's strategies of 'reading' the Renaissance, while it will on the other hand focus on Freud's relevance for the intellectual proliferation of Renaissance's 'anima'.

10:00 Joseph Imorde University of Siegen

Michelangelo's David Globalized

Probably no other work of the Italian Renaissance left stronger traces in our daily popular culture than Michelangelo's 'David'. He is part of our 'collective memory' and personifies for almost everyone a heroic form of beauty, strength and wellness. This may be one of the reasons that we can find reproduction of the sculpture almost everywhere in the world. His presence in camp and trash can be understood as a profanation and at the same time proliferation of an idealistic image of the young male body – an image that was then and that is now open for all kinds of ideological reading and misreading. The presentation will try to map the range of appreciation and appropriation of this notorious master piece (from David Hasselhoff to Homer Simpson) and combine the analysis of some examples with theoretical considerations about the role of the simulacrum in contemporary mass culture.

10:30 Break

SESSION TWO

Chair: Julia Gelshorn University of Vienna

11:00 Melissa Renn Harvard Art Museums

Even Better than the Real Thing? Life Magazine's Illuminations

This paper is a case study of Illuminations, an exhibition that 'Life', with the assistance of the American Federation of Arts, organized in 1956. Part of the larger educational mission of 'Life', 'Illuminations' consisted of full-size color photographic reproductions of what 'Life' considered the fifty greatest works of art, from Giotto to Mondrian, and included a scale replica of the Sistine Chapel, which 'Life' installed on the ceiling as part of the show. Opening at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 'Illuminations' traveled throughout the United States before it was exported abroad. The exhibition promised to take the visitor on a virtual '15,000-mile journey', emphasizing that it was an opportunity for many to see these works, all together in one place, for the first time. Drawing on the writings of Barthes, Baudrillard, and Benjamin, the paper examines how, through technological innovations in mechanical reproduction, 'Life' brought works of art from all over the world to new audiences and further examines the implications of the appropriation, reproduction, and dissemination of the art of the Western canon.

11:30 Jeanette Kohl University of California Riverside

He-Man and It-Girl. The Afterlife of the Machiavellian Prince in

Contemporary Political Imagery

Putin, Schwarzenegger, Berlusconi, Sarkozy: At the beginning of the 21st century, a new generation of political rulers create images of contemporary leadership, largely inspired by modern popular culture and fashion. Yet on a closer look, their 'self-fashioning' draws heavily on Renaissance iconography – for good reasons: The Machiavellian prince sported a combination of sexual prowess with antique clichés of military command and intellectual authority, as reflected in the images of equestrian statues and bust portraits. In post-modern times, one would suspect that such traditional image concepts had moved to the realm of kitsch and conservative shelf decoration. This paper, however, will investigate the serious afterlife of Renaissance concepts of heroism in recent contemporary political representation, asking three central questions: How do political leaders and public figures create an image related to Renaissance ideals? In what ways is this reflected in their public commissions? And what is female politicians' public persona?

12:00 Beat Wyss Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design

Vasari's Chimaera and Totemism in Modern Art

The icon of the 'Lupa Capitolina', mass reproduced in every size, on squares, desks, and letterheads, during the Annitrenta represented the 'Romanità' of the Mussolini regime. Since 2006 we know the bronze to be a medieval simulacrum. Nevertheless, it still works as a totem of cultural identity. The paper will discuss the 'simulacrum' and 'totemism' as terms that both connote two different but constitutive processes in the fabrication of cultural identity. Giorgio Vasari emphasized the totemistic value of Etruscan culture. The discovery of the 'Chimaera' in Arezzo plays a crucial role in his concept of 'rinascita'. There are primarily subjects of extinguished cultures that are fit for totemization in the strict Freudian sense. Transatlantic Modernism follows Vasari's 'rinascita' pattern by cannibalizing the cultural heritage of colonized natives, harvested in ethnological museums, as models of contemporary art.

13:00 Break

SESSION THREE

Chair: Stefan Neuner University of Basel

14:00 Jörg Scheller Swiss Institute for Art Research, Zurich

Oration on the Dignity of Muscle. The Afterlife of Humanist Thought in Bodybuilding and Fitness

At first glance, the fitness and bodybuilding movement is a genuine modern invention. The paper presents some heuristic hypotheses in which Renaissance humanist thought and the today's 'body craze' are interpreted as two distinct yet genealogically interconnected phenomena – not in terms of direct, deliberate transfers, but rather by applying a poststructuralist approach to the afterlife of mentalities and episteme in varying 'historical a priori' (Michel Foucault). The basic assumption is that seminal motives of Pico della Mirandola's 'Oration on the Dignity of Man' have resurfaced in the manifestos and image policies of bodybuilding and fitness promoters. The humanist ideal of constant quest for knowledge and increased human capacities in general translates into the constant quest for somatic ascension and somatic self-transgression. Hence bodybuilding is here considered as an attempt to transcend flesh precisely through flesh with a view to accomplishing an ideal form of the self, finally resulting in the sublime postmodern aestheticization of the body.

14:30 Valentin Nussbaum National Taiwan Normal

University

Renaissance 'de façade'. Treacherous Survival in Brian de Palma's Obsession

Haunted by the idea of the recreation of the same, Brian de Palma's 'Obsession' questions the issue of the simulacra. It is not by chance that Florence and the façade of San Miniato al Monte are both the stage and décor of the pivotal scene of the movie: the 'resurrection' of Michael Courtland's deceased wife in the person of an art restorer named Sandra Portinari. This specific setting, as well as Sandra's profession, seems to fit perfectly with Aby Warburg's concept of survival and rebirth commonly related to the city as the cradle of the Renaissance. This first layer of interpretation has also to be discussed in term of fiction and simulation. The artistic background related to Florence is a perfect pretext to address the issue of the artificial creation, and the treacherous machination, which has been staged to deceive Courtland.

SESSION FOUR

Chair: Wolfgang Brückle University of Bern

15:00 Douglas N. Dow Kansas State University

History and the Hyperreal: Assassin's Creed II, Simulation, and the Historical Act

The video game 'Assassin's Creed II' unfolds in expansive environments that represent the countryside and cities of late quattrocento Italy. This paper examines the game's 'Florence', which contains many recognizable monuments, omits others and modifies the city's plan. In light of Baudrillard's logic, this 'Florence' is a simulation that colonizes the gamer's experience of the 'real'. Furthermore, the detailed environments of the game fit Baudrillard's definition of hyperrealism. This hyperreal 'Florence' 'rejuvenates the fiction' of the 'real' Florence, which, dotted with replicas and neo-Gothic facades, is itself a simulation (Baudrillard's Disneyland). Finally, the game is a *mise en abyme*. Its 'Florence' is constructed in the mind of the game's character who explores the memories of a dead ancestor to uncover ancient wisdom. Thus, the gamer assumes the role of the historian, both of whom resurrect the lost people, places and events of the Renaissance in the pursuit of knowledge.