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CIHA2012
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The Challenge of the Object

Die Herausforderung des Objekts

33rd Congress of the International Committee
of the History of Art, Nuremberg, 15th-20th July 2012

**Congress Program with
Abstracts of all Sections and Lectures**

BRAVO LÓPEZ, Laura (Puerto Rico)**Félix González Torres: the Fleeting Life of Flesh and Objects**

Cuban artist Félix González Torres (1957-1996) devised a physically consumable and fleeting artistic production in order to create a broad and spine-chilling symbolism infused with the transience of life. Although he is one of the most significant artists in the latter part of the 20th century, whose practice is related to Minimalism and Conceptual Art, his artwork and its dramatic intensity are deeply rooted in a Baroque painting genre par excellence: vanitas. Cloaking his artistic production in a moralizing tone, González Torres encourages viewers to take pieces of his artwork with themselves out of the galleries, thereby instilling in himself a detachment from material possessions, since these are ephemeral and do not remain after death.

Through an iconographic analysis comparing some key issues of this 17th century religious genre and González Torres' installations, it is possible to draw a visual parallel between the characteristic elements of vanitas and this artist's repertory of objects, which are a metaphor in absentia of the human body and flesh. Thus, these artistic objects (which include bulbs, candies, cheap wall clocks, photographs of an empty bed on billboards and large offset prints on paper) keep an ordinary and everyday appearance in the emptiness of the exhibition galleries or even on the streets. However, when the exhibition visitors are invited to take pieces of some of these installations, the artworks exhaust themselves, creating a heartbreaking metaphor: the relentless advancement of time, the deterioration of flesh, the dramatic loss of life and the pain caused by the absence of things we appreciate and people we love.

*(english)***CV**

Laura Bravo holds a PhD in Art History from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. She is an Associate Professor of Art Theory at the University of Puerto Rico, she works regularly as a curator and art critic, and contributes to international conferences and journals. She is the author and coauthor of more than ten books on art history and visual culture.

Thanks to several grants awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, she has been a researcher at the Tate Britain, the Museum of Modern Art (New York), and La Maison Européenne de la Photographie (Paris). She has worked as an assistant curator at the Círculo de Bellas Artes (Madrid) and at the International Center of Photography (New York). During her tenure at the UPR, Laura Bravo has organized several international art conferences and exhibitions, and has held the positions of curator and director of the University Art Gallery and Art Museum.

Publications

- Laura Bravo: Identity parades: identidad, parada y parodias por Carlos Ruiz-Valarino. In: Las nuevas experiencias estéticas. Exhib.cat. Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico (forthcoming, 2012).
- Laura Bravo: La fotografía como doble de la realidad: bondades y perversiones de la reproducción en la evolución de la historia del arte. In: La historia del arte y sus enemigos. Estudios sobre Juan Antonio Ramírez. Ed. by Julián Díaz/Carlos Reyero. Madrid 2010.
- Laura Bravo: Recuerdos, acumulación y Kitsch: las instalaciones de Pepón Osorio y la tradición latina de los objetos de altar. In: XVII Congreso Nacional de Historia del Arte: Arte y Memoria. Ed. by Comité Español de Historia del Arte. Barcelona 2010.
- Laura Bravo: Ficciones certificadas: Invención y apariencia en la creación fotográfica (1975-2000), Metáforas del Movimiento Moderno. Madrid 2006.
- Laura Bravo: De la ficción como realidad a la realidad como ficción: un recorrido fotográfico desde los ochenta hasta hoy. In: Tendencias del arte y arte de tendencia. Ed. by Juan Antonio Ramírez. Madrid 2004.

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GRAU, Oliver (Austria)**Media Art's Challenge for our Societies**

Over the last forty years Media Art has evolved into a vivid contemporary factor. Digital Art became "the art of our time" but has still not "arrived" in the core cultural institutions of our societies. Although there are well attended festivals worldwide, funded collaborative projects, discussion forums and database documentation projects, media art is still rarely collected by museums, not included or supported within the mainframe of art history and nearly inaccessible for the non north-western public and their scholars. Thus, due to changing media, we witness the erasure of a significant portion of recent cultural-historical memory. What is urgently needed is an appropriate international structure to support media art documentation, collection, preservation and its research. The development of the field is supported in an increasingly enduring manner by new scientific instruments like online image and text archives, which attempt to document collectively the art and theory production of the last decades. By discussing examples from a variety of projects from the humanities and the natural sciences, this talk tries to demonstrate the strategic importance of these collective projects, especially in their growing importance for the humanities. The primary question is: what can we learn from other fields to develop a strategy to solve the problems of Media Art and its research, to answer the challenges Image Science faces today in the framework of the Digital Humanities? This question opens up a perspective to overcome the typical placement of Media Arts in an academic ghetto.

*(english)***CV**

Oliver Grau is Chair Professor for Image Science at Danube University since 2005. His works are translated in 12 languages and presented more than 200 invited lectures (60 keynotes). Grau chaired research projects in the field of media art research supported by DFG, BMBF, VW, at Humboldt University Berlin. He conceived new scientific tools for Image Science: Archive of Digital Art www.virtualaart.at, text platform for MediaArtHistories www.mediaarthistories.org, Goettweig Graphic Collection Online: www.gssg.at. Grau received several awards, is reviewer for DFG, NSF, SNF, DAAD and ARC and developed international curricula for advanced studies in Image Science MA and MediaArtHistories MA. 2003-2005 Grau was founding director of The International Conference Series on the Histories of Media Art, Banff 2005, Berlin 2007, Melbourne 2009, Liverpool 2011, Riga 2013 (1800 applications so far).

Publications

- Imagery in the 21st Century. Ed. by Oliver Grau. Cambridge (Mass.) 2011.
- MediaArtHistories. Ed. by Oliver Grau. Cambridge (Mass.) 2007.
- Mediale Emotionen. Ed. by Oliver Grau. Frankfurt 2005.
- Oliver Grau: Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion. Cambridge (Mass.) 2003.

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– SECTION 14 –
DÜRER'S LIFE AND WORK – THE OBJECT AS A KEY TO THE SUBJECT?

Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) was arguably the first Renaissance artist who enjoyed a European-wide reputation based on his art as well as his theoretic writings. At the same time, Dürer is one of the first artists whose biography seemingly can be reconstructed directly from his works. With his inclusion of self-portraits and other personal references, Dürer encouraged the reading of his works as examples of self-fashioning or Ego-documents. Through the early cult around his person and its subsequent broad dissemination, Dürer's works, even early on, were taken as evidence of an ideal, detailed artist biography. Many objects from his oeuvre continue to be subject primarily to biographical interpretation. Groups of objects, such as the landscape watercolors, are heralded as milestones of an incomparable artist's success story and are, thereby, biographically allegorized. Yet the underlying question about the actual and often limited utility of an object as a biographical document remains. This fixation with the biographical interpretation of the object often obscures consideration of its function and its role in the artist's process of development.

This fragile interaction of work/original and biography/historiography will be addressed in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum's exhibition "Der frühe Dürer/The Early Dürer," which will coincide with the Congress. It presents trends and highlights of Dürer's creations up to 1505. For a better understanding of the works and of Dürer's ambitions, it represents the

social, intellectual, and artistic environment as well as the respective development processes and the different functions of the works in sharper focus for the first time.

This section will address the issue of the interaction between the artist and the work of art as well as the limits of biographic interpretation. It will consider the repercussions of the early onset of the cult of personality on Dürer's art and his own efforts of self-fashioning. How does this affect the archiving, dating, ordering, and labelling of his art? How do changes in the traditional work and object categories, such as a design drawing now augmented with a date, signature, or caption, come to be viewed as evidence of the master's artistic genius and personal success? How selective is the preservation of the "complete works", which already early on promoted the cult of the artist? What role did the original versus replica and copy play in this exchange?

In addition to contributions on Dürer, papers may address how the concept of "life and work" affects the interpretation and biography of other early modern artists. Does good biographical material automatically serve as a means for interpreting the "object" as the source for understanding the "subject" and, therefore, inextricably linking the work with the artist's biography? Art history or artist's history? is a question about the primacy of the object or the subject.

SMITH, Jeffrey Chipps (USA)

CV

Prof. Jeffrey Chipps Smith, the Kay Fortson Chair in European Art, joined the faculty at the University of Texas at Austin in 1979 after receiving his PhD from Columbia University. He specializes in early modern German and Netherlandish art. Smith was the Anna-Marie Kellen Berlin Prize Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin during the first half of 2010.

Publications

- Jeffrey Chipps Smith: Dürer (forthcoming with Phaidon Press, 2012).
- Jeffrey Chipps Smith: Sensuous Worship: The Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany. 2002.
- Jeffrey Chipps Smith: German Sculpture of the Later Renaissance, c. 1520–1580: Art in an Age of Uncertainty. 1994.
- Jeffrey Chipps Smith: Nuremberg, A Renaissance City, 1500–1618. 1983.

HESS, Daniel (Germany)

CV

Daniel Hess, PhD (born 1963). Studied Art History, Ecclesiastical History and Literature at the University of Zurich. Received PhD from the University of Stuttgart (with dissertation on the Housebook Master), where recipient of scholarships from DAAD and the Landesgraduiertenförderung Baden-Württemberg. 1992–1998 scholar at Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi in Freiburg i.Br.; with external funding from the Hessische Kulturstiftung and the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, author of volume on medieval stained glass in Frankfurt and Hesse. Since 1998 head of the collections "Painting before 1800" and "Stained Glass" at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum; since 2007 deputy director. Main areas of research: Painting and stained glass in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period.

Publications

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